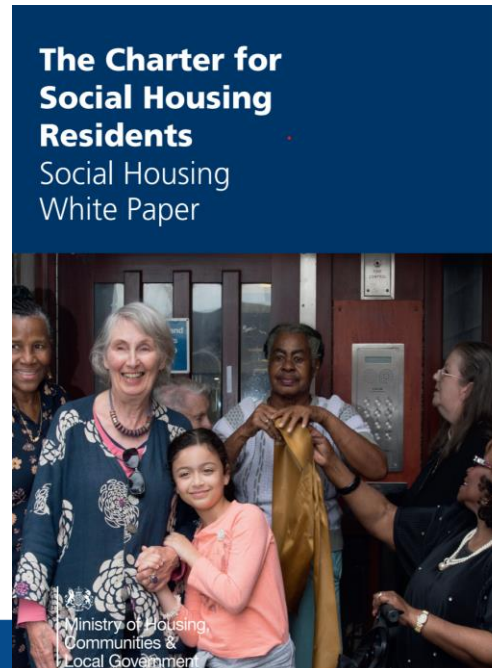


The Social Housing White Paper: what it means for almshouse charities

Roger Jarman, HQN Associate

Welcome

- Key changes proposed in the Social Housing White Paper (aka *The Charter for Social Housing Residents*)
- The implications for social housing providers including almshouse charities
- Practical advice on steps to take for your organisation



Four years ago this week.....

Grenfell Tower



Timetable for today

09.00 – 09.45: Introduction; Chapters 1 to 3

09.45 – 09.55: Q&A; discussion

09.55 – 10.05: Break

10.05 – 10.50: Chapters 4 to 6

10.50 – 11.00: Q&A; discussion



Applicability of the White Paper

- For registered providers only – around 300 are almshouses
- ***‘Our working assumption is that the requirements set out in the SHWP will apply to all registered providers. We will be testing the detail over the coming months, including impacts on smaller providers...Should there be a pressing case for change we may consider amending, but not yet in a position to confirm. I noted that the proactive inspection regime would apply to providers with 1000+ units. [The] RSH will also have powers to conduct additional inspections on a risk-based approach, so if there was something that concerned them regarding a smaller provider they may still inspect.’*** MHCLG official 19/05/21

Chapter 1: To be safe in your home (1)

Summary

- Aligns the building safety regime with social housing regulation
 - Building Safety Bill
 - Fire Safety Act
 - Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1
 - Building Safety Regulator
 - Construction Products Regulator
 - Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group (final report now published)
- Legally required nominated senior officer responsible for H&S compliance
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm requirement
- Electrical safety consultation



Chapter 1: To be safe in your home (2)

Implications & actions

- Nominate a senior officer to
 - Drive a strong culture of H&S
 - Ensure robust H&S systems are in place
 - Provide assurance on H&S risk management
 - Be visible and accessible to residents
- Launch a programme of smoke and carbon monoxide alarm installation
- Review electrical safety compliance against anticipated changes
- Monitor emerging requirements



Summary

- [illegible]

Chapter 2: To know how your landlord is performing (2)

Summary

- Introduction of a national set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures – the process
 - Now - Winter 2021: stakeholder engagement – 13 organisations on Sounding Board including Chartered Institute of Housing and National Housing Federation
 - Winter 2021 – Spring 2022: consultation on TSMs and technical guidance
 - Late Summer 2022: TSMs and technical guidance published
 - April 2023: first year of collection starts (for year 2022/23)

Chapter 2: To know how your landlord is performing (3)

Summary

- Introduction of financial measures
 - CEO salary
 - Executive remuneration
 - Management costs
- For private RPs, an 'access to information' scheme
- Nominate a senior officer responsible for consumer standard compliance



Chapter 2: To know how your landlord is performing (4)

Implications & actions

- Review current performance against proposed TSMs
- Review how accessible satisfaction data is for residents
- Develop required financial reporting mechanisms
- If a private RP, prepare for 'access to information' scheme
- Nominate a senior officer responsible for consumer standards compliance

Chapter 3: To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly (1)

Summary

- Removal of the “democratic filter” through the Building Safety Bill
- Increased powers of Housing Ombudsman to take action against landlords, including Complaint Handling Failure Order
- New powers for the Regulator – via the Ombudsman - to tackle systemic failure by landlords
- New Complaint Handling Code implemented from 1st January 2021

Chapter 3: To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly (2)

Summary

- A national awareness campaign by MHCLG on routes to redress held in March (online)
- Publication of complaints and determinations against individual landlords handled by the Housing Ombudsman (March 2021)
- Quarterly “Meet the Ombudsman” virtual events and launch of Resident Panel from February 2021



Chapter 3: To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly (3)

Implications & actions

- Comply with Complaint Handling Code
- Monitor Housing Ombudsman reports
- Prepare to respond to more complaints, including those made online
- Prepare for removal of 'democratic filter'
- Ensure you are learning from complaints



Q&A Discussion Break

Chapter 4: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator (1)

Summary

‘Government is re-booting consumer regulation to ensure landlords adopt the right behaviours and can be held to account for their actions by tenants.’

‘This is the Heart of the White Paper’ – Jane Everton, MHCLG

Specifically Ministers plan to:

- Transform the RSH to proactively monitor and drive landlord compliance with improved consumer standards
- Retain the principle of ‘co-regulation’
- Remove the ‘serious detriment test’ and introduce routine inspections for the largest landlords (those with over 1,000 homes; over 95% of tenancies) every four years
- Change the regulator’s objectives to explicitly cover safety and transparency



Chapter 4: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator (2)


Summary

Ministers plan to:

- Give the Regulator the power to publish a Code of Practice on the consumer standards to be clear what landlords are required to deliver
- Strengthen the Regulator's enforcement powers to tackle failing landlords and to respond to new challenges facing the sector
- Give the RSH the power to physically inspect properties within 48 hours where safety is compromised

Chapter 4: To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator (3)

Implications and actions

- Self assess against the RSH's current consumer standards
 - Prepare to meet the Regulator's revised standards
 - Engage with discussions about the revised framework for consumer regulation especially on the new consumer standards and the prospective methodology for inspecting housing providers
- 
- A collage of business-related items. It includes a black calculator with white buttons, a silver metal paperclip, a black pen, and a document with the title 'Inspection Service' in large, bold, black letters. The document also contains some smaller, less legible text and a table with columns like 'Cash and', 'Suppl', 'Int', 'Financ', 'Other', 'Purch', 'Stock', 'Debt', 'Equity', 'Total'.



Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord (1)

Summary

‘Ministers believe stronger tenant engagement will give tenants a clearer voice so that they can hold landlords to account.’

Accordingly Government will introduce the following changes:

- Require landlords to address stigma and treat residents with respect
- Expect the RSH to require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with their residents
- Landlords will be expected to address loneliness experienced by some of their residents
- Similarly, landlords will be expected to offer support for residents suffering from mental health problems and assist with physical health needs too

Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord (2)

Summary

- Deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for residents, to support more effective engagement between landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account
- Review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service



Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord (3)

Implications and actions

- Seek out best practice to help engage more effectively with your residents
- Identify the obstacles to more effective engagement with your residents and look at ways to overcome them
- Review the representation of your residents on decision-making boards/panels/working groups
- Review the support for vulnerable residents (e.g. those suffering from poor mental health) and plan accordingly



Chapter 5: To have your voice heard by your landlord (4)

Implications and actions

- Assess the training needs of leaders/staff so that they can deliver higher standards of customer service
- Devise training programmes to ensure leaders/staff can meet the enhanced expectations of the RSH on service delivery
- Review organisational culture
- and change it if necessary



Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (1)

Summary

‘Government wants to ensure social residents have good quality decent homes and neighbourhoods, including access to green space and support for well being.’

As a result Government will:

- Review the Decent Homes Standard, including access to and the quality of green spaces
 - Sounding Board of experts currently reviewing the case for change
 - If the case is made, a new definition of decency will be developed between autumn 2021 and summer 2022

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (2)

Summary

‘Government wants to ensure social residents have good quality decent homes and neighbourhoods, including access to green space and support for well being.’

As a result Government will:

- Tackle anti-social behaviour by enabling tenants to know who is responsible for action and who can support and assist them if they are faced with such behaviour
- Consider the results of the allocations evidence collection exercise findings to ensure that housing is allocated in the fairest way possible and achieves the best outcomes for local places and communities

Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (3)

Implications and actions

- Plans are being devised to deliver Decent Homes 'Plus' standards that meet residents' needs and emerging Government objectives
- Actions are being taken to decarbonise housing stock and enhance building and personal safety for residents
- Measures are in hand to improve communal areas and green spaces on estates and more generally



Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (4)

Implications and actions

- Restated emphasis of role of social landlords supporting the mental and physical health of residents (in part through the creation of a safe, well managed and 'beautiful' environment)
- Revisit policies on pets which 'can bring joy, happiness and comfort to peoples lives'



Chapter 6: To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in (4)

Implications and actions

- Revisions to the handling of criminal and anti social behaviour are being considered to meet enhanced Government expectations
- Preparations are under way to address the Government's objective to ensure social housing is allocated more fairly
- Victims of domestic abuse are given appropriate support
- Statutory guidance is implemented that ensures those associated with the armed forces have reasonable access to social housing



The Queen's Speech

11th May

- The Building Safety Bill will "strengthen the regulatory system for building safety", changing the industry culture and "introducing rigorous safety standards for construction products and a clearer path to redress for homeowners."
- The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rents) Bill will "ensure leaseholders of new, long residential leases cannot be charged a financial ground rent for no tangible service."
- We will bring forward reforms to "deliver a fairer and more effective private rental market in England"
-*but no legislation to introduce the provisions of the White Paper*

Engaging with the Ministry

For those interested in raising issues about the White Paper with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, there is an email address that can be used to contact civil servants working on the legislation.

It is:

SHWPPMO@communities.gov.uk

Q&A

Discussion

Thank You
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