

Implementing the new consumer regulatory regime:

Directions to the Social Housing Regulator on mutual exchange and tenant involvement

30 March 2023

The Northern Housing Consortium is the 'Voice of Housing in the North' working with local authorities, housing associations and ALMOs. Our members manage 9 out of 10 socially rented homes in the North.

We bring our members together to develop insight, influence and solutions to create better homes and places.

Question 1: Do you agree with the strengthened outcomes we are setting in the direction, as set out in paragraphs 18-22?

Yes – many of our members are already working to the strengthened outcomes through their tenant / resident / customer engagement plans and activities.

Our members provide a wide range of opportunities to engage with people and they are working to follow best practice to meet the different needs that people have.

We support the proposed changes to give tenants and residents more opportunities to scrutinise strategies, policies, and services.

Question 2: Do you agree with requirements that are being removed, as set out in paragraphs 23-24?

Yes – we agree that people will benefit from expanded tenant engagement and more meaningful information, which is relevant to them.

Some of our members may also choose to continue to publish the current performance information even when it is no longer required, where this supports tenants and residents (for example, in their annual reporting).

While this change moves away from a more prescriptive approach, it remains important for government to be clear what is expected overall for both consistency and to support the strengthened outcomes.

Question 3: Do you agree with the additional requirement to offer support to tenants who would otherwise be unable to use the mutual exchange service, set out in paragraphs 28-29?

Yes – our members already provide a wide range of contact options and support for people to meet their needs (for example, home visits, phone appointments, etc). They also provide a range of wrap around services to help people with additional support where needed.

This would be best to be locally led and non-prescriptive, so it can help meet the needs of people in the different communities our members serve.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed approach to remove procedural details, as set out in paragraph 30?

Yes – offering more freedom will support the work our members do in the communities they serve and allow greater flexibility in responding to feedback from tenants and residents.

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