



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Review of the regulatory framework for housing associations: summary of responses

Summary of responses to proposed changes to the regulatory statuses and standards.

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## Background

The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales has been in operation since January 2017 and applies to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Prior to commissioning this latest review, officials discussed the framework with the sector (including tenants) to determine the scope.

It was agreed the review should focus on:

- Proposed changes to the regulatory judgement dimensions of Governance (including services) and Financial Viability
- The scope and clarity of the performance standards
- The regulator's role in setting expectations about equality, diversity and inclusion

## The Consultation

When proposing changes of this nature, a formal consultation is required under the Housing Act 1996. The statutory requirement is to consult with one or more bodies representing the interests of RSLs, tenants and local housing authorities. In practice, we consult a wider group of representative bodies through the

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Regulatory Advisory Group membership which consists of a wide range of stakeholder representative bodies.

The consultation was issued in July 2021. 14 responses were received from a mixture of individual organisations and representative bodies.

We asked 5 specific questions in relation to the changes. Overall, the majority answered yes to the questions (see below) which provided a very strong mandate to proceed with the revisions as set out.

Respondents were able to provide any additional comments to explain their “yes or no” answers. The comments were generally positive and although a small number of themes emerged, there was little overall consistency. As a result, after careful analysis, we made some changes where there was clear merit in providing added clarity or context to the relevant outcome. As an example, in RS1, “delivers” has been added to make it clear it’s not enough just to set measurable commitments in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Where themes did emerge, they mainly related to positive strengthening of the standards. Examples of such strengthening can be seen in changes to the tenant related standards. For example, “Encourages tenants to influence strategic decision making” has been changed to “enabling and supporting.....”

Another change reflects that for an RSL to genuinely “enable tenants to understand the organisation’s approach to tenant involvement...” and so on, it needs to create the right organisational culture. The financial planning and management standard has been strengthened by adding “...including appropriate stress testing, scenario planning and use of internal thresholds”.

The changes made have been incorporated into the regulatory standards as published in the Regulatory Framework 2022.

Where feedback didn’t relate directly to the consultation questions, it was taken into account in and reflected in other documents including the revised regulatory framework which explains how we regulate and in the revised format for judgement reports.

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# Summary of responses to the specific questions

## **Q1. Are the revised Regulatory (Judgement) Statuses easy to understand in relation to an RSLs regulatory performance?**

Yes: 13

No: 0

The comments were overwhelmingly positive, indicating that the statuses were easy to understand and an improvement on those currently used. It was generally thought that the 'traffic light' system brought an improved level of clarity.

## **Q2. Are the revised Regulatory Standards easy to understand in relation to an RSLs regulatory performance?**

Yes: 12

No: 1

There was clear view that the proposed standards were easier to understand than those currently in use and that duplication had been removed. The focus on outcomes was also welcomed.

## **Q3. Do you agree the revised Regulatory Standards provide for tenants to have an appropriate level of influence and involvement?**

Yes: 10

No: 3

The majority of respondents agreed that the Regulatory Standards provide for tenants to have an appropriate level of influence and involvement, however some did not and proposed changes. This included wanting to see outcomes

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showing a culture of tenant engagement embedded across the organisation.

**Q4. Do the range of outcomes in the revised Regulatory Standards reflect an appropriate range of RSL activities?**

Yes: 10

No: 2

A majority of respondents agree the Regulatory Standards reflect an appropriate range of RSL activities. There were some detailed responses regarding suggestions for potential changes, but no obvious themes or consistency.

**Q5. Do you agree with the expectations set in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (included in RS1)?**

Yes: 12

No: 1

Respondents were generally supportive of the expectation set in RS1. There were a number of comments regarding potential improvements/changes to the wording.

NB – respondents did not always complete the response form and consequently sometimes did not answer the set questions. The comments were analysed but the response is not included in the yes/no count below.

## About this document

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