

Corporate Strategy 2025-30 and Business Plan 2025-26 Consultation feedback report

July 2025

**Healthier homes, fairer services, and trusting
relationships**

Contents

Introduction	3
Consultation process	4
Key themes	5
Corporate Strategy 2025-30 consultation analysis	6
Strategic objective 1: Provide an excellent, person-centred service	9
Strategic objective 2: Drive positive local complaint handling cultures.....	11
Strategic objective 3: Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence	13
Strategic objective 4: Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress	15
Strategic enabler: Organisation design	17
Business Plan 2025-30 consultation analysis	20
Strategic objective 1: Provide an excellent, person-centred service	23
Strategic objective 2: Drive positive local complaint handling cultures.....	25
Strategic objective 3: Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence	26
Strategic objective 4: Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress	29
Strategic enabler: Organisation design	31
Conclusion and next steps	33
Appendix	36

Introduction

As a public service that is funded by subscription from our members, which ultimately comes from residents' rent, it is important that the Housing Ombudsman Service (the Service) is accountable for the way we use our resources to deliver value for money. As we are an arm's length body of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, we are also accountable to Parliament.

It is hugely important to us that we continue to provide our members, and the residents who rely on them, with high-quality reliable services.

We know that behind every complaint that reaches us, there are real people who desperately want to resolve the issue and need our support to do so in a timely manner. Our vision of healthier homes, fairer services, and trusting relationships lies at the heart of our delivery.

This report highlights the main themes and issues emerging from the consultation on our **Corporate Strategy 2025-30** and **Business Plan 2025-26**, which ran together from 6 to 31 March 2025 inclusive.

Our **Corporate Strategy** sets out our vision and aspirations for the next 5 years, providing background and context for our priorities. It introduces 4 strategic objectives and a strategic enabler, presenting the aims and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) we will use to measure their success of each over the next 5 years.

Our **Business Plan** provides detail on planned activities between April 2025 and March 2026 to start to deliver the strategic objectives and enabler in year one.

Both documents are underpinned by our 4 strategic objectives:

1. Provide an excellent, person-centred service
2. Drive positive local complaints handling cultures
3. Support better services through insights, data, and intelligence
4. Extend powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress

This report is not intended to cover the detail of all the responses received but provides a summary of the feedback, which was largely supportive of our planned actions and KPIs. The feedback provides constructive challenges on how we set out to both achieve and measure the effectiveness of our delivery through our KPIs and will be used to inform our final Business Plan 2025-26 and associated operational delivery plans.

We aspire to become a truly person-centred organisation, involving our members, residents, and stakeholders in our decision making wherever possible. Their participation and feedback from this consultation is one example of how we engage and learn. We have considered all comments provided and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond.

Consultation process

The Housing Ombudsman Service published our Business Plan 2025-26 and Corporate Strategy 2025-30 on our digital engagement platform, Engagement HQ, on 6 March 2025. The consultation on both publications ran from 6 to 31 March 2025 inclusive.

We promoted the consultation through various channels including newsletters, Resident Panel meetings, stakeholder meetings, social media posts, and with our colleagues through internal communications, reaching a total audience of over 500,000 people. Consultees could respond through completing the online surveys, by email, or post. In addition, they could ask for support in completing the surveys through a dedicated phone service.

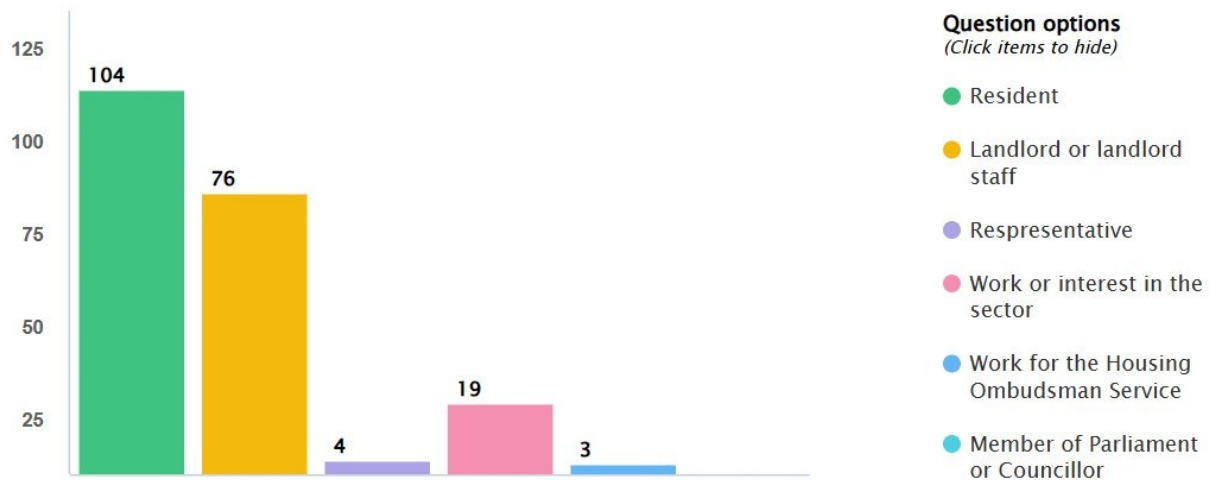
Overall, 1,431 people visited the consultation online, with 196 people choosing to complete the surveys, with an engagement rate of 14%. This resulted in 191 responses to the Corporate Strategy and 126 responses to the Business Plan. Cumulatively, the landlords who responded to the consultation represented 23% of the homes covered by our service, providing statistically valid and rich qualitative feedback to inform the final publications. Breaking this down further, housing association responses represented 30% of their total homes, Abbeyfields were at 13%, and local authorities were at 12%.

Key themes

There were consistent themes in the qualitative responses across both consultation surveys, including:

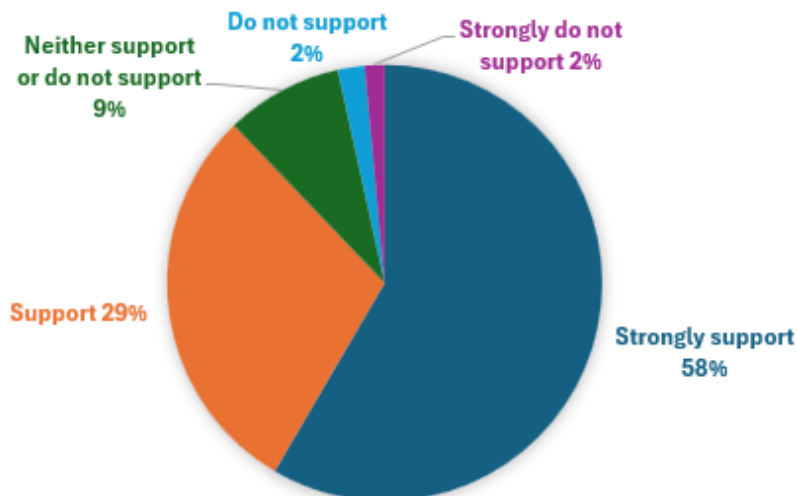
- **Deliverability of the KPIs** which were considered as stretching by landlords when correlated to growing demand for services, extension of new powers, and current delivery. Reference to timeframes for investigations and determinations were a particular focus. Diversity of opinion prevailed with residents considering the KPIs to not be stretching enough.
- **Definition of the KPIs** – further definition and detail required to be truly SMART with particular reference to strategic objective 4.
- **Implementing measurement of impact and outcomes** – respondents raised that a robust approach to measurement was required to capture true impact.
- **Delivery of the strategic enabler** was recognised as a critical success factor, tempered by concern that delivering the strategic enabler should not impact on our core activity.
- **Strong support for the lack of increase in fee levels for 2025-26 tempered by concerns** that our spend on Dispute Support and Resolution (DS&R) appeared to be reducing.
- **Tailoring our offer to members** based on their size, resources, and capability.
- **Assurance that the core delivery of casework and timely responses for social housing remains an absolute focus** with the potential widening of the operational scope and powers of the Service.

Corporate Strategy 2025-30 consultation analysis

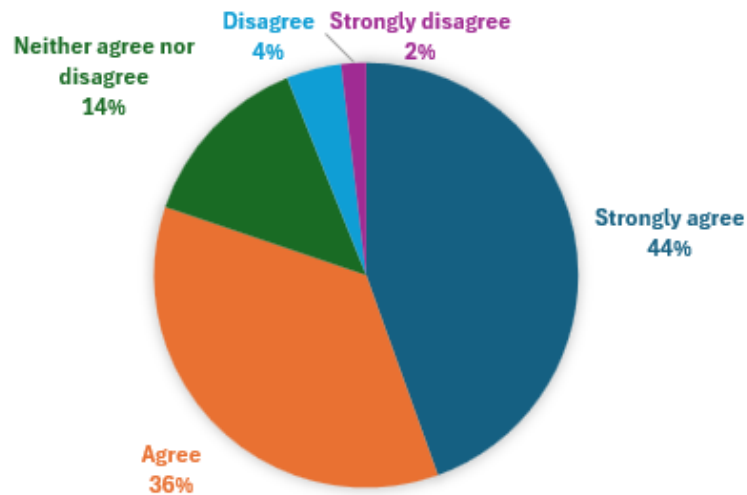


We received 191 responses to the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 survey. The greatest number of responses were from residents (104), with landlords or landlord staff providing fewer responses (76). Together these 2 groups provided approximately 94% of feedback.

Overall support for the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 strategic objectives



Overall support for the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 KPIs



Overall sentiment

Most respondents strongly support or support the proposed strategic objectives and KPIs presented within the Corporate Strategy 2025-30. While there is strong support for both as demonstrated by the quantitative analysis of each question, the free-text responses provide us with constructive challenges on how we can deliver and effectively measure the impact of our delivery. The breakdown of sentiment by strategic objective for the Corporate Strategy is as follows:

Strategic objective	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor do not support	Do not support	Strongly do not support
1	124 (64.9%)	50 (26.2%)	11 (5.8%)	4 (2.1%)	2 (1.0%)
2	112 (59.2%)	58 (30.4%)	13 (6.8%)	2 (1.0%)	5 (2.6%)
3	117 (61.3%)	56 (29.3%)	14 (7.3%)	2 (1.0%)	2 (1.0%)
4	94 (49.2%)	58 (30.4%)	30 (15.7%)	6 (3.1%)	3 (1.6%)
Strategic enabler	110 (57.6%)	59 (30.9%)	15 (7.9%)	5 (2.6%)	2 (1.0%)

Opinions are mixed on whether the KPIs are ambitious enough or too stretching, with commentary asking them to be better defined and written in plain English.

The breakdown of sentiment by KPI for each strategic objective for the Corporate Strategy is as follows:

KPIs	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
SO1	86 (45.0%)	74 (38.7%)	16 (8.4%)	11 (5.8%)	4 (2.1%)
SO2	94 (49.2%)	68 (35.6%)	15 (7.9%)	8 (4.2%)	6 (3.1%)
SO3	90 (47.1%)	74 (38.7%)	13 (6.8%)	11 (5.8%)	3 (1.6%)
SO4	66 (34.6%)	55 (28.8%)	61 (31.9%)	5 (2.6%)	4 (2.1%)
Strategic enabler	89 (46.6%)	70 (36.6%)	26 (13.6%)	5 (2.6%)	1 (0.5%)

“Agree with what are a standard set of KPIs. However, given current performance there is little confidence that these will be achievable. There would need to be a significant investment in staffing to meet targets on top of already significant recruitment.” –

Landlord or landlord staff

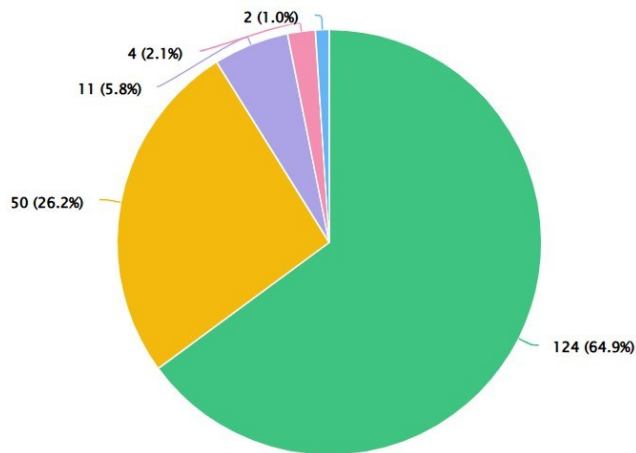
“Some of these are not at all SMART and are especially lacking any defined measurement.” – **Work or interest in the sector**

“Use of the word ‘aim’ is by definition an aspiration. I feel these should be commitments rather than aims.” – **Resident**

“Not particularly on this section but overall, the documents are quite jargony! I do understand that when dealing in depth with issues you have to use more and more detailed wording that means something to those familiar with it, but not necessarily to all readers.” – **Resident**

Strategic objective 1: Provide an excellent, person-centred service

Q8 Do you support strategic objective 1?

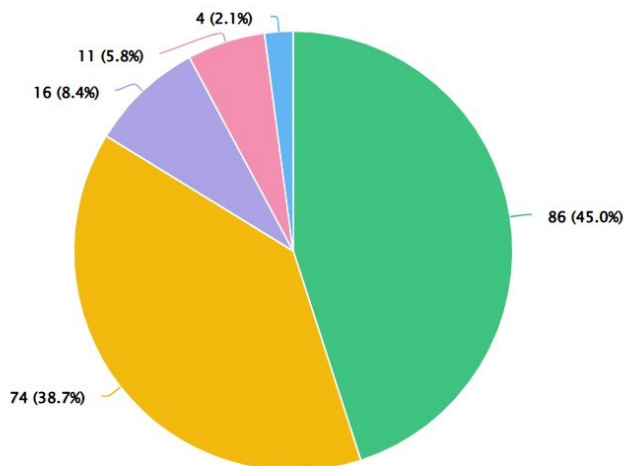


Question options
(Click items to hide)

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support or do not support
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

KPIs for strategic objective 1

Q9 Do you agree with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out above?



Question options
(Click items to hide)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Sentiment analysis and themes

There is strong support for strategic objective 1, with 65% of consultees strongly supporting it. Almost 84% of consultees either strongly support or support the associated KPIs.

Commentary to be considered when finalising the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 includes whether the KPIs are realistic and achievable, and ensuring that delivery is measured on an ongoing basis throughout the 5 years. The time investigations and determinations take remains a core concern of consultees.

Transparency around delivery timescales is a core focus of responses with an emphasis on communicating regularly with both landlords and residents and improving the quality of guidance around the complaints process.

“We support the Housing Ombudsman Service’s long-term focus on driving positive local complaint handling cultures and improving the customer journey including reducing casework timescales.” – **National Housing Federation (NHF)**

“We welcome the Ombudsman’s ongoing commitment to provide early resolution and particularly their recognition that services must be person-centred and based on engagement with both residents and landlords.” – **G15**

“The proposed KPI of completing investigations within 6 months seems a bit unrealistic. In 2023-24 it was 18%, 2024-25 assumed 30%, and 2025-26 proposed 50%.

“They then say that by the end of the 2025-30 strategy period it will be 95%. I’m not sure how this turnaround in KPI will be achieved.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“I strongly disagree with only measuring timescales at the end of the strategy period. Surely to be accountable to the sector you should be having interim targets for progress.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“The KPIs focus heavily on satisfaction scores and case resolution times, but they do not emphasise real consequences for landlords who fail to comply.” – **Resident**

“For the Housing Ombudsman to improve its case handling processes to make them more streamlined; they should improve communication with landlord complaint handling staff and increase consistency in approach across the country.” – **National Federation of ALMOs (NFA)**

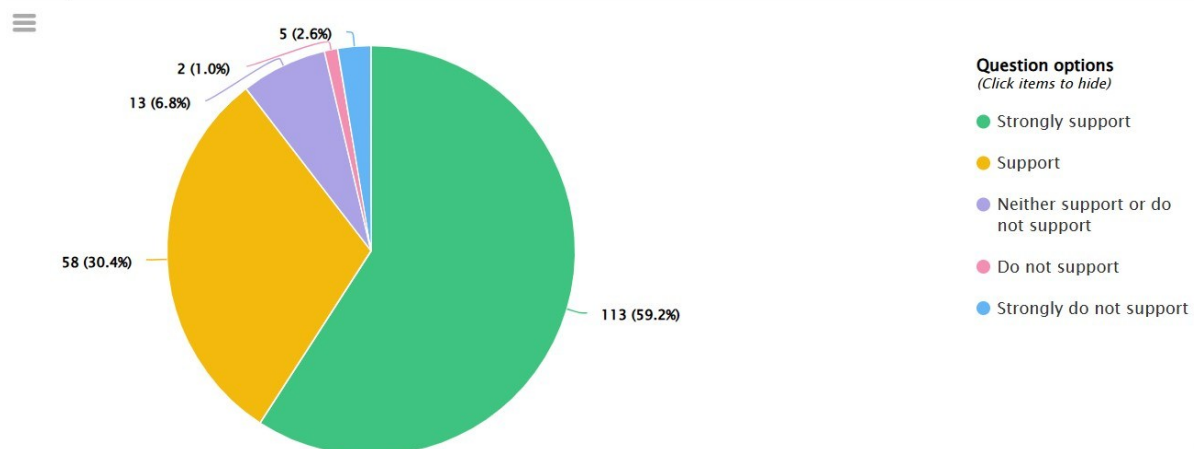
“Complainants should be kept better informed as to where their complaint is in the system. Could complainants have access to an online 'follow your complaint' portal where they can check on progress and hopefully see their complaint progressing in the 'queue'? As with a parcel delivery, it's reassuring to know your parcel is on its way, and not forgotten, even if it is still 6 hours away.” – **Resident**

Feedback provided for consideration across the wider sector include:

- all housing associations and social housing providers need to have mandatory KPIs that are core and similar to facilitate benchmarking
- focusing on the vision of building trusting relationships should be adopted more widely by councils and social landlords whose reputations are at stake and whose honesty and work practices are being questioned

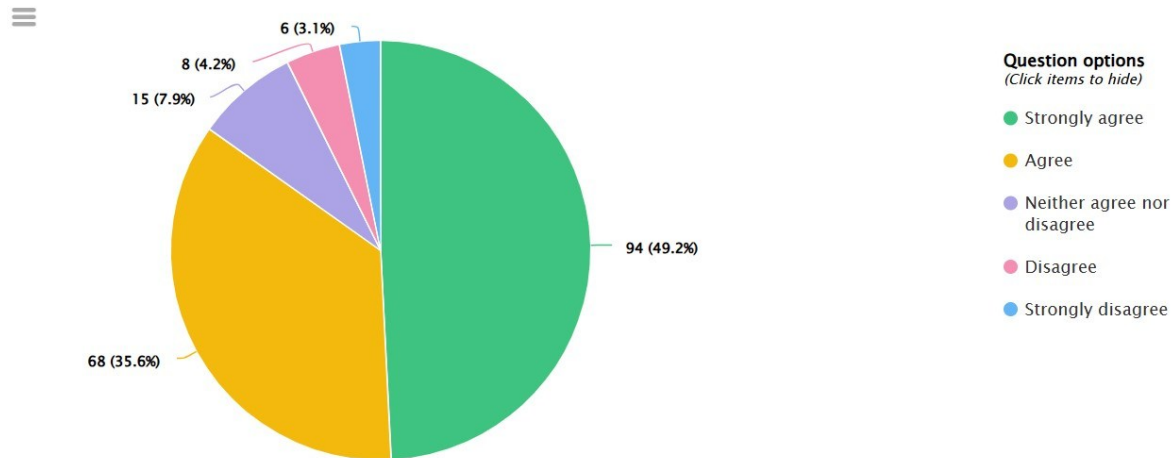
Strategic objective 2: Drive positive local complaint handling cultures

Q11 Do you support strategic objective 2?



KPIs for strategic objective 2

Q12 Do you agree with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out above?



Sentiment analysis and themes

There is strong support for strategic objective 2, with approximately 59% of consultees strongly supporting it. Approximately 85% support the associated KPIs.

The qualitative feedback is more measured with strong support for the Centre for Learning and our ongoing provision of tools and resources.

“We welcome the continued provision of tools to support learning within the sector and the Housing Ombudsman’s open engagement with stakeholders.” – **National Housing Federation (NHF)**

“We fully support the learning-first approach that the Ombudsman is taking, and we welcome the opportunities to learn and improve. We welcome any shared learning as we pursue continuous improvement and look forward to reading how others are embedding positive cultures within their organisations.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

Feedback was received on the KPIs which underpin the strategic objective and whether they are sufficient, which should be considered:

“The KPIs proposed in this consultation lack sufficient detail and further clarity on when additional detail will be available, specifically the evidence required, approach to evaluation, and frequency with which performance data will be published. For example, clarity is needed on how the Ombudsman will evidence, measure, and determine whether a landlord has a positive complaints handling culture.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

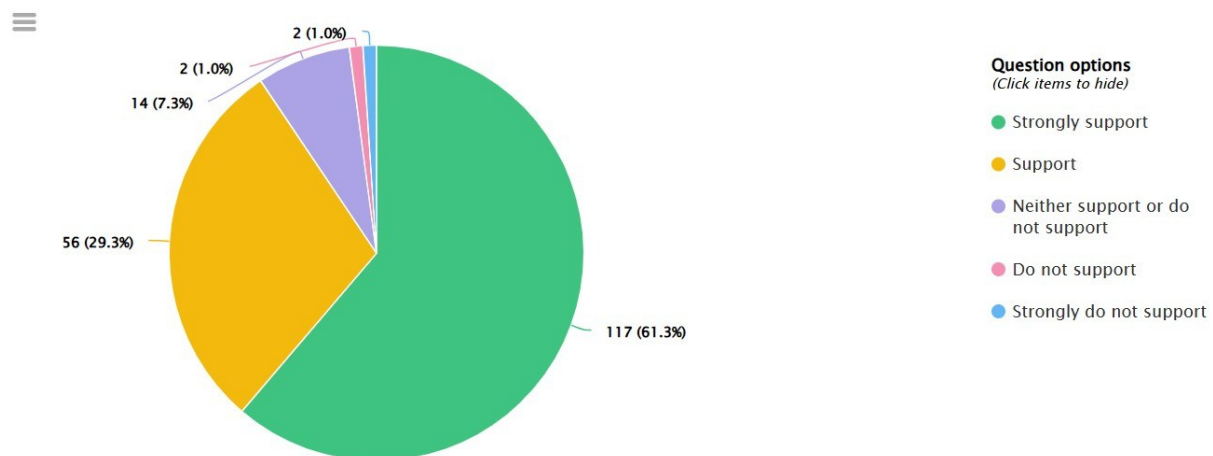
More clarity is required around resources to support the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints.

More widely, there is an ask for us to recognise the diversity of different organisations in the sector when considering what a positive complaint handling culture looks like.

“It is important the Housing Ombudsman recognises the impact of member size, resourcing, and delivery models on what a positive complaint handling culture looks like for an organisation We would welcome further Centre for Learning content on managing agents, expanding on the 2022 Spotlight report on this.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

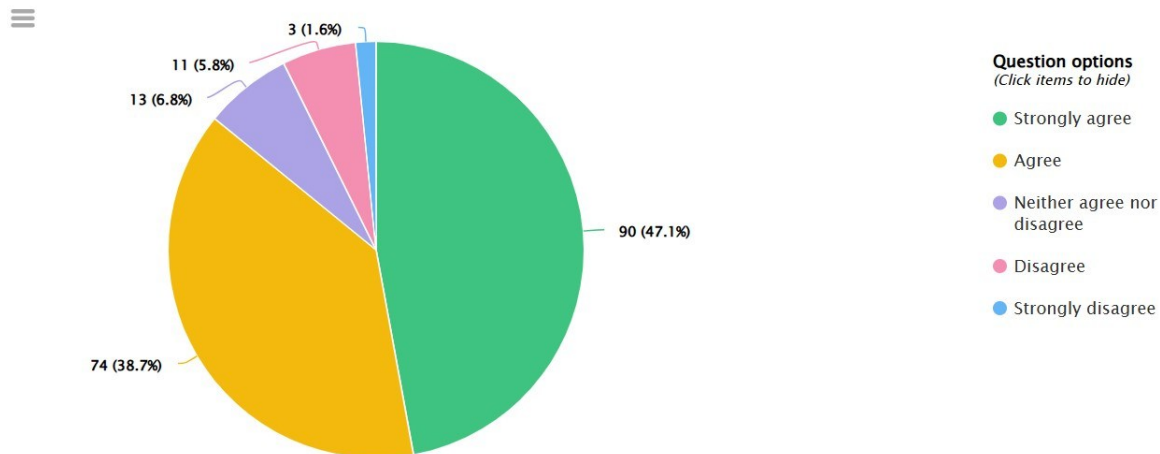
Strategic objective 3: Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence

Q14 Do you support strategic objective 3?



KPIs for strategic objective 3

Q15 Do you agree with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out above?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Approximately 61% of consultees strongly support strategic objective 3, with 85.8% strongly supporting or supporting the associated KPIs.

Once again, commentary in the free-text answers constructively challenges how we both deliver and measure the impact and outcomes of the aims through the KPIs presented and challenge what we propose to measure.

“The KPIs are too easy for the landlord to give themselves a favourable answer.” –

Resident

“Instead of focusing on whether landlords agree that services are ‘fairer’, the strategy should track actual improvements in service quality such as measurable reductions in disrepair complaints, faster resolution times, and stronger enforcement actions.” –

Resident

“We’re keen for these objectives to support accountability in order to increase trust.” –

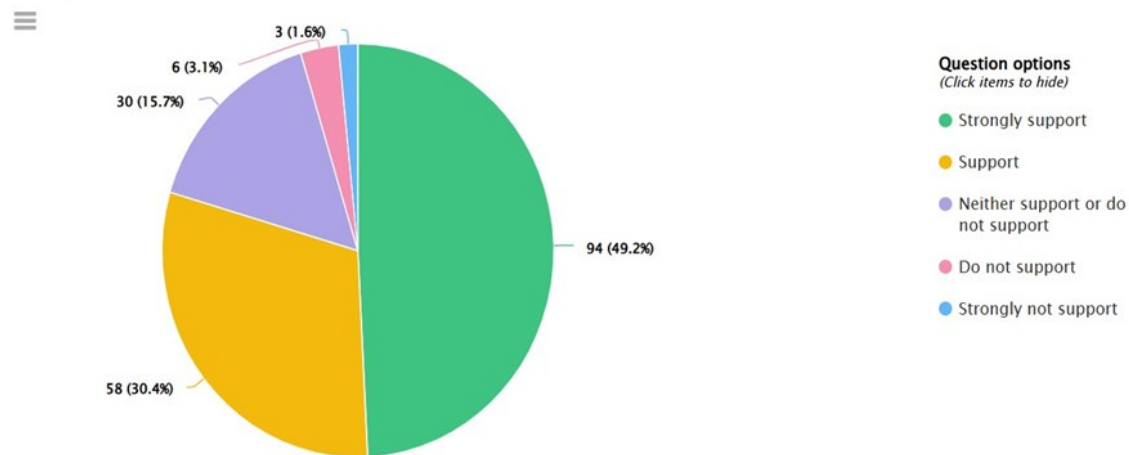
Landlord or landlord staff

Feedback suggests we should consider the different size and scale of landlords in the sector, their resources, and capability in relation to accessing and analysing data.

“Accessing and analysing complaint data at scale requires investment in systems and analytical capacity. For larger landlords, this is achievable, but smaller organisations may struggle without targeted support or funding. The Ombudsman could consider offering shared data platforms or analytical support to ensure all landlords can benefit equally from insights.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

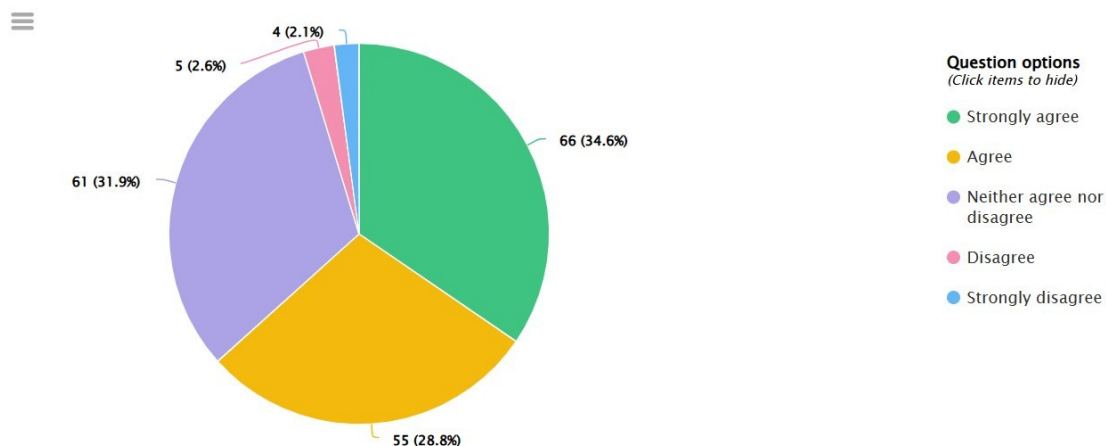
Strategic objective 4: Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress

Q17 Do you support strategic objective 4?



KPIs for strategic objective 4

Q18 Do you agree with the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set out above?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Approximately 49.2% of consultees strongly supported strategic objective 4, with an additional 30.4% supporting the objective as stated, providing an overall figure of approximately 80% who are supportive. Cumulatively, there are 63.4% of consultees who strongly support or support our proposed KPIs. This could be assumed to be connected to the uncertainty and ambiguity that surrounds extended powers and lack of knowledge of those consulted on what this means for both us and sector and the potential impact on core services provided to the social rental sector members.

“We would support the Housing Ombudsman to focus resources on reducing wait times and improving investigation quality, then focus on STAIRs when more details and clearer implementation timescales emerge.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Where there is the potential for new operational scope for the Housing Ombudsman (for example, if it is extended to include the service for private rented tenants), both landlords and residents would value assurance about how it will also ensure it maintains the focus on timely responses and quality casework for social housing residents.” – **Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)**

In addition, there are concerns about increased demand and the impact on delivery.

“Support in principle but concerned at how further demand increases will be managed sustainably.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

As with other strategic objectives, there is a call to review what is proposed in terms of measurement and the KPIs to make them specific and measurable.

“While extending redress and improving tenant access to information is a positive step, the lack of clear KPIs makes it impossible to measure whether this objective will actually improve outcomes. There should be specific, measurable targets for how many cases are successfully resolved through STAIRs, how long it takes to process and resolve tenant appeals, and what consequences landlords will face if they refuse to provide the requested information.

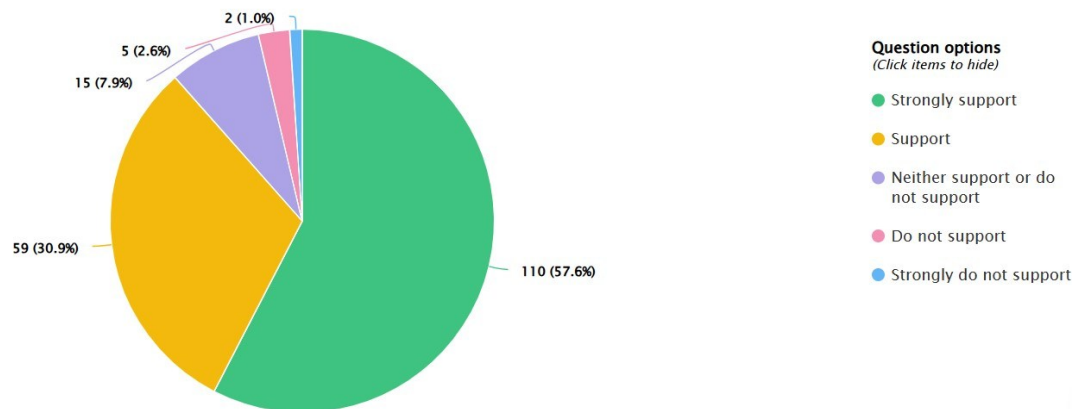
“Without concrete KPIs, there is no way to ensure this initiative will be effective or enforceable. I strongly urge the Ombudsman to develop clear, tenant focused performance measures to hold landlords accountable and ensure real improvements.” –

Resident

“Codesigning resident communication strategies with landlords would strengthen this objective.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

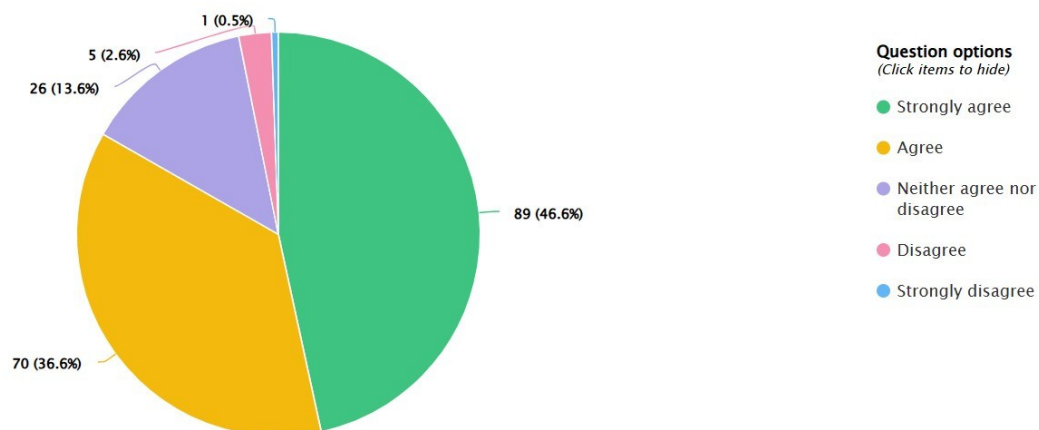
Strategic enabler: Organisation design

Q20 Do you support our strategic enabler?



KPIs for the strategic enabler

Q21 Do you agree with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out above?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Approximately 58% strongly support our strategic enabler, with a further 31 agreeing. Approximately 83% of consultees strongly agree (46.6%) and agree (36.6%) with the associated proposed KPIs.

Qualitative feedback focuses on how the impact of organisation design would improve our case resolution or benefit tenants and our members. Once again, comments focus on whether we are measuring the right things through our proposed KPIs.

“While internal improvements in staffing, technology, and efficiency are important, the strategy does not make it clear how these changes will directly benefit tenants. The KPIs focus on staff engagement, cost efficiency, and external accreditations, but they do not outline measurable improvements in case resolution times, stronger enforcement actions against landlords, or better support for residents.” – **Resident**

“What does this really mean for residents who are the ones that are impacted? Make sure that ALL and every decision asks ‘so exactly how does this help residents and by when?’ It will help focus the mind.” – **Resident**

There is wide recognition of the importance of our people and their capability in the delivery of the strategy and how key they are to its success, alongside the improvements in technology and systems proposed.

“Employees are key to the success of the strategy and business. They must understand the sometimes-complex process handling complains within the housing sector and ensure that not only are they investigating complaints, but they are also providing clear guidelines and solutions.” – **Resident**

“We agree that modernising systems and improving staff capability will strengthen the Ombudsman’s service. Digital platforms that allow for real-time data exchange between landlords and the Ombudsman would improve resolution times and enhance consistency. The focus on staff development is positive – ensuring alignment with landlord training programmes could help reinforce shared learning.” – **Resident**

“It is vital the Ombudsman is sufficiently resourced to ensure residents and landlords have an efficient Ombudsman service that responds within timescales to complaints and investigates in a timely manner.” – **Work or interest in the sector**

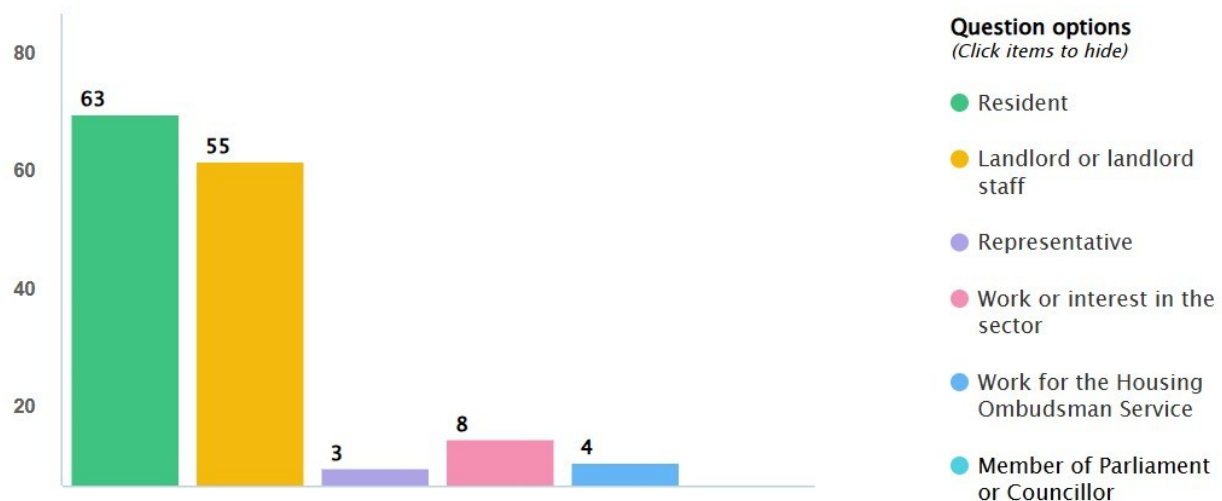
Feedback states that cost efficiencies should not be made if they compromise quality outcomes, and that improving case handling would directly reduce costs.

“Stakeholders must absolutely trust the quality of the work of the Housing Ombudsman and case outcomes. Cost efficiency must never compromise on quality outcomes.” – **Resident**

“More efficient case handling would directly reduce costs.” – **Resident**

Those who responded are largely satisfied with our proposed approach to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and its reporting.

Business Plan 2025-30 consultation analysis



We received 126 responses to the Business Plan 2025-26 survey, of which 50% came from residents and 43% can be attributed to landlords or landlord staff. There were fewer responses received than for the survey for the Corporate Strategy 2025-30.

Nonetheless, both the quantitative and qualitative feedback received provides valuable insights on sentiment and key themes of note, which reflect those identified from the survey for the Corporate Strategy 2025-30.

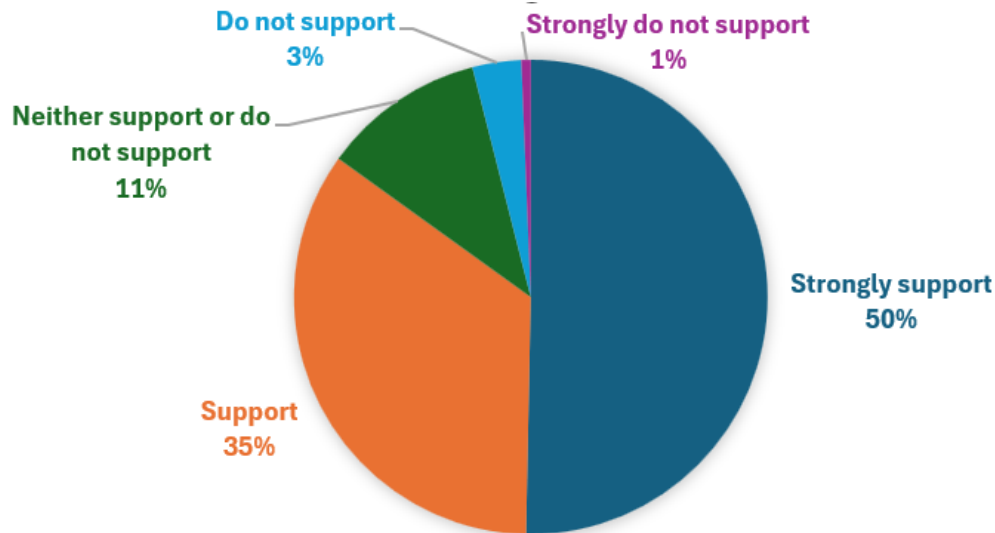
Key assumptions: consultation structure and design

Two separate online consultation surveys were run at the same time, for the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 and for the Business Plan 2025-26. This structure may have impacted the overall response rate for the Business Plan.

Given the complexity of both documents and their interdependencies and similarities between surveys, some potential consultees may have been discouraged from completing the Business Plan 2025-26 consultation survey. This could have been due to feeling of repetition if they had already contributed to the aligned survey on the Corporate Strategy 2025-30.

This was reinforced through the qualitative comments received from consultees, indicating that their responses to the survey for the Corporate Strategy were also relevant for the Business Plan, asking us to refer to their previous response.

Overarching sentiment and themes



The overarching sentiment towards the actions proposed for 2025-26 was supportive, with 85% of all consultees either strongly supporting (50%) or supporting (35%) our proposals and Business Plan 2025-26.

The breakdown of sentiment by strategic objective for the Business Plan is as follows:

Strategic objective	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor do not support	Do not support	Strongly do not support
1	67 (53.2%)	38 (30.2%)	13 (10.3%)	7 (5.6%)	1 (0.8%)
2	66 (52.4%)	44 (34.9%)	14 (11.1%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)
3	64 (50.8%)	50 (39.7%)	8 (6.3%)	4 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)
4	55 (43.7%)	44 (34.9%)	18 (14.3%)	6 (4.8%)	3 (2.4%)
Strategic enabler	65 (51.6%)	42 (33.3%)	17 (13.5%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Qualitative comments provide constructive challenge and suggestions on our approach to some of the activities set out and call for greater clarity and robustness over some KPIs (particularly those related to strategic objective 4 and strategic objective 2).

There is wide support for keeping our fee to members stable. However, concern was voiced about the challenge of delivering more for the same, due to our expanded powers and growth in complaint volumes.

In addition, a wider theme that prevails throughout for operational consideration, is tailoring our services to landlords of different sizes.

“Overall KPIs feel underdeveloped, and many are not actually measurable. Lots of the language used in this document is hard to understand and feels a little jargon-y.” –

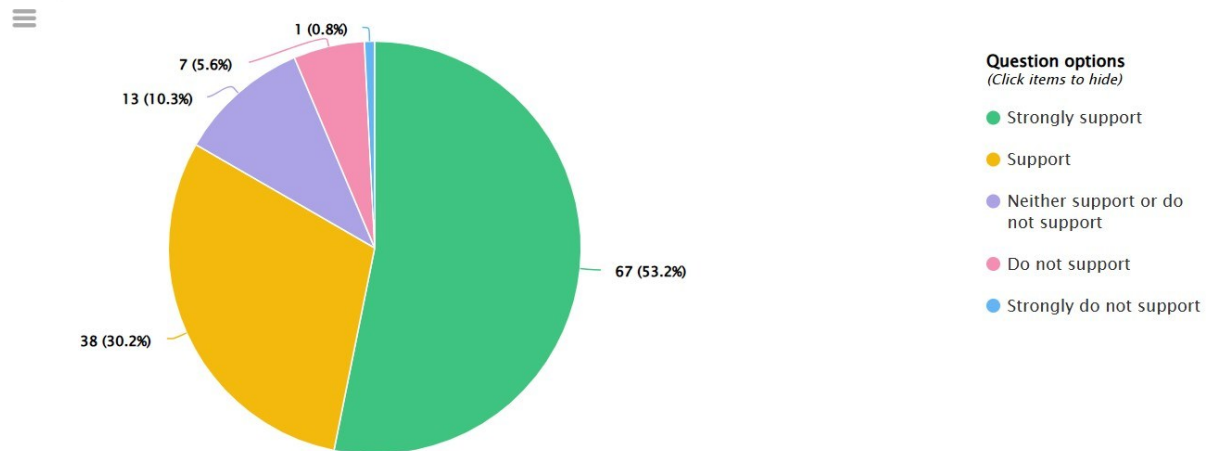
Housing Ombudsman Service employee

“We welcome the proposal to not increase fee levels from 2024-25 rates and the commitment from the Housing Ombudsman to deliver value for money and provide transparency on costs.” – **National Housing Federation (NHF)**

“The Ombudsman must ensure that their fees reflect their core purpose – dispute resolution. It is therefore concerning that the Ombudsman’s spend on dispute support and resolution is decreasing, with just over half of the 2025-26 budget allocated to this area, where costs allocated elsewhere are increasing.” – **G15**

Strategic objective 1: Provide an excellent, person-centred service

Q7 Do you support the actions planned for 2025-26 under strategic objective 1?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Most of the consultees support the actions planned under strategic objective 1, with 53.2% strongly supporting and 30.2% supporting the actions planned.

Key themes in the qualitative feedback include the desire for us to move from advisory and reactive to proactive and enforcement-driven and how we are going to adapt to accommodate Awaab's Law. Constructive challenge is given around measurement and KPIs being too challenging and the aims needing further refinement.

Other recurring themes include a mixed response to the compensation calculator, with concerns over trialling techniques for early resolution having potential onward consequences. In addition, there is desire for us to work with landlords to develop the early resolution process and remedies, improving communication and collaborating more effectively.

In addition, there is also a desire for more transparency around how we measure our own performance to allow our members to better align practices with our expectations. There is also concern voiced over the rise of claim farmers and their impact on landlords.

“The KPI targets are too high and too blunt a measure.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Aim 1.2 is too low a target.” – **Resident**

“The focus on satisfaction scores is useful, but measuring ‘fairer service delivery’ should not just be based on landlord feedback. The Ombudsman must ensure that residents have direct input in defining what fairness means in practice.” – **Resident**

“‘Trial techniques for early resolution’ must not result in cases being closed prematurely at the expense of thorough investigations and enforcement. The focus should be on proactive enforcement and holding landlords accountable, not just dispute resolution.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Understanding how the Housing Ombudsman measures its own performance, especially in relation to resolution times and the volume of complaints, will allow us to better align our practices with your expectations. We believe this transparency and consistency would improve collaboration, accountability, and trust.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“It will be important to monitor whether faster resolutions lead to better resident outcomes or simply shift problems further down the line.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Aim 1.1 should state: ‘Our services are human-centric, trusted, and provide a positive customer experience for residents and landlords.’” – **National Federation of ALMOs (NFA)**

“For Aims 1.2, 1.4, and 1.5, we agree on these aims but feel that they should be created with landlords.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“We ask that the HOS engages with providers to help find the best processes and ways of working to ensure new processes can be implemented as best as possible.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Has HOS considered what the impact on the timescales would be if there is an influx of high-risk cases (for example, more cases are likely in light of Awaab’s Law)?” –

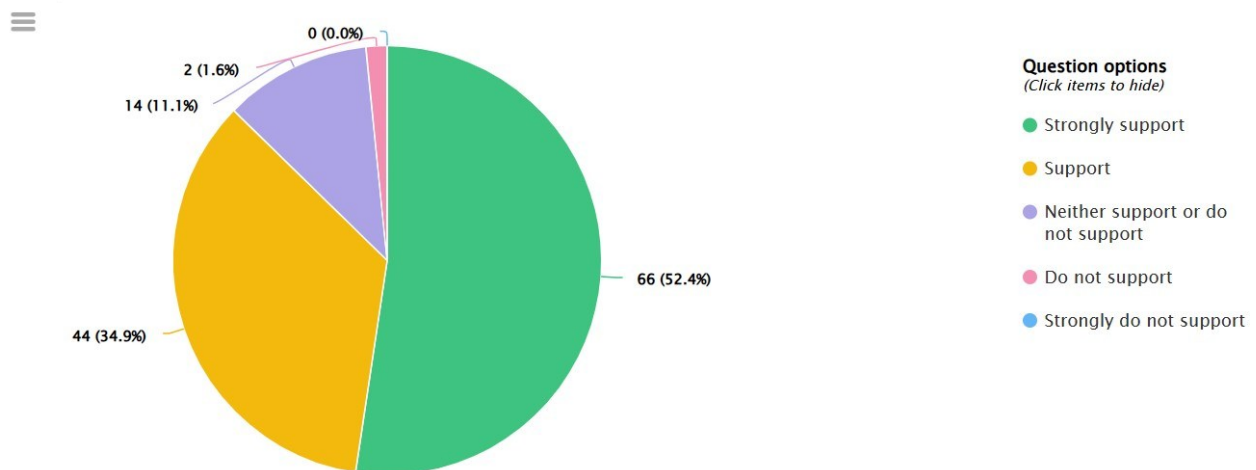
Landlord or landlord staff

“The Housing Ombudsman must shift from advisory and reactive to proactive and enforcement driven. While the proposed business plan includes important improvements, residents need stronger enforcement mechanisms, faster resolutions, and more transparency in decision-making.” – **Representative**

“The Housing Ombudsman should work with the government and the sector to reduce the impact of claims harvesters on tenants and landlords.” – **National Federation of ALMOs (NFA)**

Strategic objective 2: Drive positive local complaint handling cultures

Q9 Do you support the actions planned for 2025-26 under strategic objective 2?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Most of the consultees support the actions planned under strategic objective 2, with 52.4% of consultees strongly supporting a and further 34.9% of consultees supporting the actions planned.

Key themes include developing more training for residents, balancing our campaigns with demand on services, as well as expanding the Centre for Learning with more

training by landlord size. There is also an ask for more support for and clarity around the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints.

Feedback indicates a need for a clearer definition and communication of our role and responsibilities and providing clarity and differentiation from those of the Regulator to mitigate any potential scope creep.

“Without stronger enforcement mechanisms and greater transparency, the actions planned may not be enough to significantly shift the culture of complaint handling in the sector.” – **Representative**

“Clear guidance on how to address discrepancies between policy and practice would be valuable.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Professionalising complaint handling through formal training and recognition will help improve standards across the sector. The Ombudsman could strengthen this by introducing a recognised accreditation scheme for complaint handlers linked to ongoing professional development.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Ensure that the accreditation scheme is scalable and affordable for landlords of different sizes by developing shared resources and modular training options.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

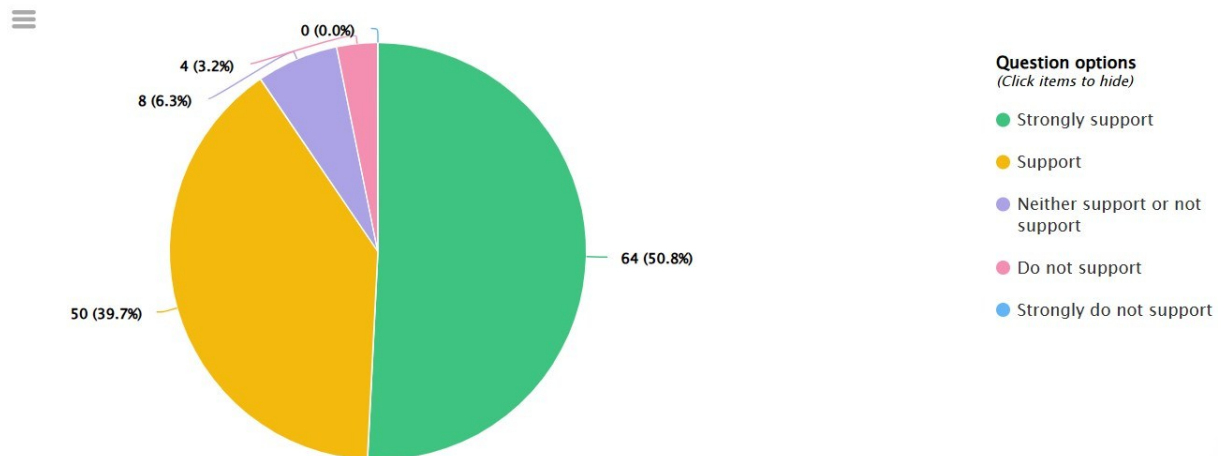
“Expand Centre for Learning content to reflect the operational challenges faced by landlords of different sizes and structures.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“It is important the Housing Ombudsman recognises the impact of member size, resourcing and delivery models on what a positive complaint handling culture looks like for an organisation.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“To improve outcomes for residents it is important for the Housing Ombudsman to complement the work of the Regulator of Social Housing so that respective roles and remits are clear and well defined for residents and social landlords.” – **National Housing Federation (NHF)**

Strategic objective 3: Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence

Q11 Do you support the actions planned for 2025-26 under strategic objective 3?



Sentiment analysis and themes

Most of the consultees support the actions planned under strategic objective 3, with 50.8% of strongly supporting and a further 39.7% supporting the actions planned.

The qualitative feedback revealed some key themes. These included commentary around specific actions to consider when finalising the Business Plan 2025-26.

A key concern raised is that that we are duplicating work with the Regulator and there is a real need to differentiate and explain the roles of both organisations. There are requests for increased transparency through our reporting and for us to deliver publications on complaint data and trends.

Looking at tailoring our insights and benchmarking data to the size of the landlord and ensuring that the recommendations are actionable and will drive improvements. There is a clear ask for us build better communication and collaboration with landlords.

In addition, there is wider feedback for us to consider in improving our services including, regularly reviewing, strengthening, and updating the Memorandum of Understanding with the Regulator of Social Housing. And for us to consider whether there is scope to undertake more detailed sector profiling of registered provider members, reflecting the different sizes and delivery models of members.

“Offer targeted benchmarking data and insights tailored to different landlord sizes and structures.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Ensure that thematic reviews focus on actionable insights that landlords can translate into operational improvements.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“Adopt a collaborative rather than punitive approach to addressing systemic issues.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“In addition to the existing mechanisms for sharing information and best practice there needs to be more proactive engagement from the Ombudsman to develop a relationship with social landlords through a designated contact and regular meetings.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“We fully support the Housing Ombudsman’s ambition of providing better services through insight, but not if the recommendations only deal with symptoms rather than root causes.” – **Landlord or landlord staff**

“It would be helpful if the HO could play a more positive role in what has changed, what has been done well, and use its platform with wider stakeholders to promote the good.” – **name redacted**

“Aims 3.1 and 3.2 could be easy for the landlord to report self-favourably.” – **Resident**

“Aims 3.1 and 3.2 require stronger powers on behalf of the Housing Ombudsman to compel landlords to hand over control to local councils.” – **Resident**

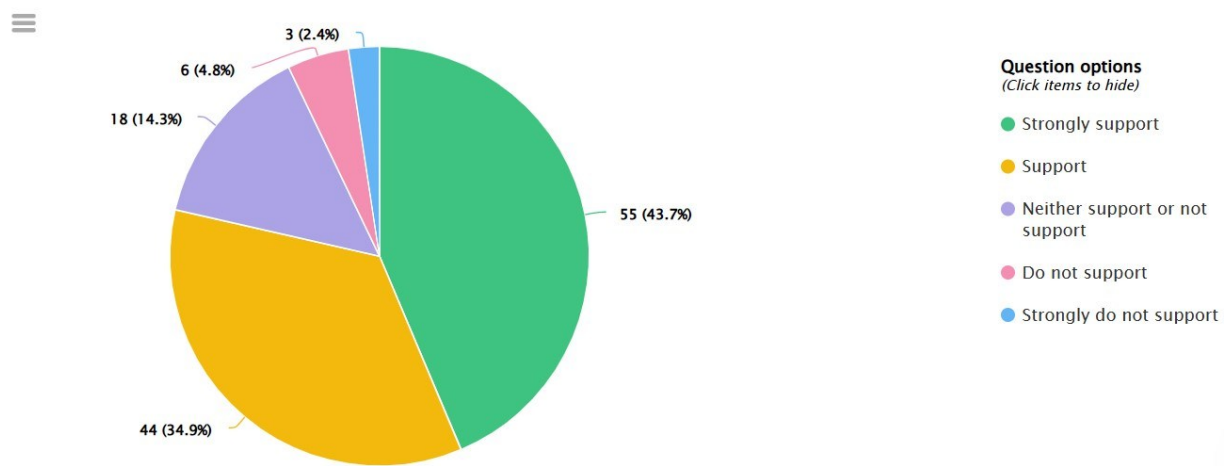
“Thematic reviews should not only influence policy but should also trigger mandatory compliance actions for landlords with repeated failures.” – **Representative**

“Aim 3.4 – the Ombudsman’s work should not only inform policy but also be used as evidence for legislative changes where failures persist.” – **Representative**

“Aim 3.5 – the decision to have no planned activities in 2025-26 for this objective is concerning. Open access to casework data is vital for accountability. There should be a commitment to publishing anonymised complaint data with clear trends, landlord performance comparisons, and outcomes.” – **Representative**

Strategic objective 4: Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress

Q13 Do you support the actions planned for 2025-26 under strategic objective 4?



Sentiment analysis and themes

The actions that underpin strategic objective 4 are strongly supported by 43.7% of consultees, with an additional 34.9% supporting the proposals. While 78.6% either strongly support or support the proposals, the support for the actions underpinning the objective for delivery in 2025-26, was lower than for other objectives.

This could be attributed in part to the ambiguity and lack of clarity that remains around the extension of certain of the Service’s powers such as the for the Private Rented Sector, STAIRs, and the implementation of Awaab’s Law and its potential impact on core delivery.

The qualitative feedback that was provided further reinforces this assumption. The sentiment articulated was very much that the KPIs for this objective and measures were insufficient and should be revisited once there is more clarity. The KPIs were perceived as not being clear enough within this objective to provide feedback. Additional feedback to take note of were concerns about the implementation of STAIRs, and any crossover with the work of the Information Commissioner's Office.

"Provide clear guidance on how STAIRs will be enforced consistently across different landlord types." – **Landlord or landlord staff**

"Strengthen communication and engagement with landlords to ensure consistent interpretation of STAIRs requirements." – **Landlord or landlord staff**

"Once the legal framework is known, it would be advantageous of the Housing Ombudsman to work with landlords to develop this objective further." – **Landlord or landlord staff**

"The creation of a Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman, if implemented, must ensure:

- Clear separation of functions – the Housing Ombudsman's role in social housing must not compromise its independence if it also administers private sector complaints. There should be a distinct structure ensuring impartiality.
- Binding enforcement mechanisms – Ombudsman decisions must be enforceable. Without clear sanctions for landlords who fail to comply, the system risks being ineffective.
- Defined success metrics – The absence of KPIs for this aim is concerning. There must be clear measures to assess whether the scheme leads to improved landlord accountability and tenant outcomes." – **Representative**

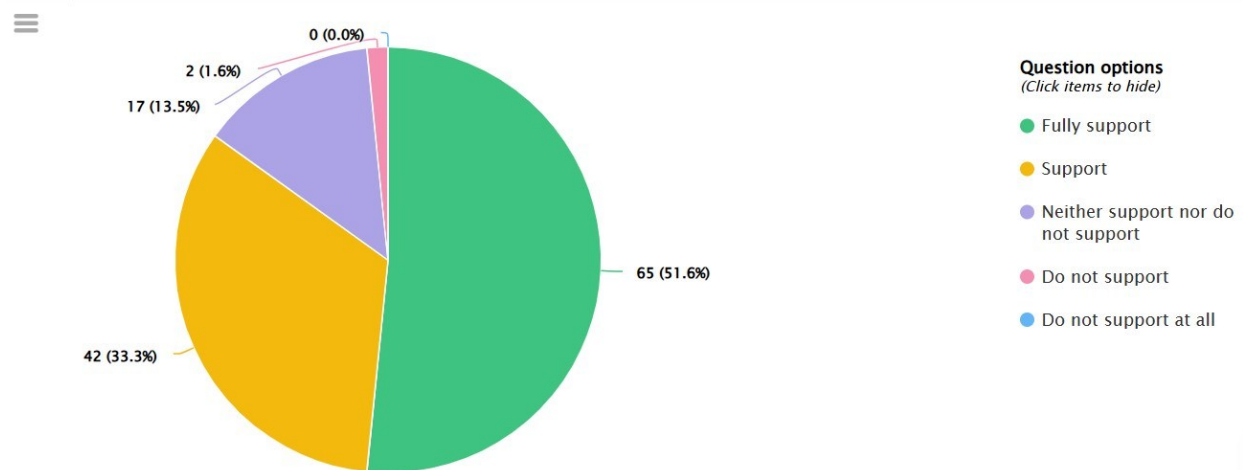
"The decision not to include any planned KPIs for Aim 4.1 is a significant oversight. Without measurable outcomes, there is no way to determine whether the proposed actions have successfully closed gaps in redress." – **Representative**

“Why don't you have any planned measures of success? That seems ludicrous having a goal but not measures on how it will be achieved.” – **Resident**

“Appears to be a crossover between STAIRs and SARs and the remit of the ICO.” –
Landlord or landlord staff

Strategic enabler: Organisation design

Q15 Do you support the actions planned for 2025-26 under our strategic enabler?



Sentiment analysis and themes

The actions planned for 2025-26 for our strategic enabler were strongly supported by 51.6% of the consultees, with a further 33.3% of consultees stating that they supported the actions.

The qualitative feedback, while largely supportive, also demonstrates reservations in terms of the benefits of the internal improvements to social housing tenants, and whether we are trying to do too much too quickly.

The move to body corporate is recognised as a positive, and feedback focuses on the need for transparent communication during this transition to maintain stakeholder confidence. This is alongside further clarity around the composition of the new governance body to ensure it reflects a balanced mix of housing sector knowledge, legal expertise, and resident representation.

Additional information is requested about the different 'fee regimes' that may be implemented with an ask that members be involved with any developments.

"While the proposed strategic enabler outlines valuable internal improvements, further clarity is needed on how these initiatives will directly benefit social housing tenants and improve dispute resolution processes. Strengthening accountability, ensuring that organisational changes lead to tangible service improvements, and preventing governance reforms from reducing independence should be prioritised." –

Representative

"The transition from a corporation sole to a body corporate presents an opportunity to strengthen governance and improve strategic oversight. However, clarity on the composition of the governance body will be essential to ensure balanced decision-making and sector-wide representation, including both large and small landlords." –

Landlord or landlord staff

"Looking at Aim E2.3, we feel this needs to be done in consultation with landlords." –

Landlord or landlord staff

Further feedback was received on the strategic enabler which will be shared with the wider business to ensure our plans take it into consideration in improving our operations and delivery.

Themes include ensuring sure artificial intelligence does not replace human interaction leading to a lack of trust with residents and providing complainants with ways to track their complaint to reduce enquiries.

Conclusion and next steps

Consultees broadly support the strategic objectives, actions, and KPIs as set out in our Corporate Strategy 2025-30 and our actions contained within our Business Plan 2025-26.

There was commonality between the key themes arising from the qualitative analysis of the free-text feedback responses for both publications. Comments were diverse and provide constructive challenge. These have been considered in the revisions made to both the Corporate Strategy 2025-30 and the Business Plan 2025-26.

The common themes are set out below along with how we have dealt with these:

Issue raised	Response
<p>Deliverability of the KPIs</p> <p>These were considered as stretching by landlords when correlated to growing demand for services, extension of new powers and current delivery.</p> <p>Reference to timeframes for investigations and determinations were a particular focus.</p> <p>Diversity of opinion prevailed with residents considering the KPIs to not be stretching enough.</p>	<p>We considered and reflected on the feedback received regarding targets for cases determined within 6 months.</p> <p>We have decided to retain our target of 50%. Achieving this will be stretching but we want to be ambitious and are committed to delivering a timely service, ensuring quality and good customer service.</p> <p>Achieving this will be dependent on demand, the number of caseworkers in-post during the year, and the impact of Awaab's Law.</p>

<p>Definition of the KPIs</p> <p>Further definition and detail required to be truly SMART with particular reference to strategic objective 4.</p>	<p>Strategic objective 4 has been clarified to state that the detail and measures of success will be updated if we are designated as PRSLO and prior to go-live of the STAIRs appeals service.</p> <p>Levels of targeted performance improvement have been added for those KPIs based on a 2024-25 baseline.</p> <p>Those to be baselined in 2025-26 have had a note added that the level of performance improvement will be set out (these will then be captured in the next updated publication).</p> <p>Measures of success without a related SMART KPI have been recorded as such and the entries in the KPI table in the strategy removed.</p>
<p>Implementing measurement of impact and outcomes</p> <p>Respondents raised that a robust approach to measurement was required to capture true impact.</p>	<p>This will be taken forward as part of the work to design impact measures for SO2 during 2025-26 and as and when we set measures for SO4.</p>
<p>Delivery of the strategic enabler</p> <p>This was recognised as a critical success factor, tempered by concern that delivering the strategic enabler should not impact on our core activity.</p>	<p>We have a small, dedicated team leading our transformation work set out in the strategic enabler with support from an external partner. Resources have not been taken from DS&R to deliver this, and appropriate testing will take place before any system changes or rollouts to avoid unnecessary disruption.</p>

<p>Strong support for the lack of increase in fee levels for 2025-26 tempered by concerns that our spend on DS&R appeared to be reducing.</p>	<p>Fee levels remain stable in our final Business Plan. The concern around reduced spend on DS&R came from the breakdown of income based on our fee in the consultation. We have restated this in the final version to be based on budget, incorporating the brought forward underspend which is funding increased resources.</p>
<p>Tailoring our offer to members based on their size, resources, and capability.</p>	<p>This has been passed on to the Centre for Learning team but is already baked into their approach to developing learning tools. We have also passed on other relevant feedback to other teams within the Service.</p>
<p>Assurance that the core delivery of casework and timely responses for social housing remains an absolute focus with the potential widening of the operational scope and powers of the Service.</p>	<p>This remains the case with 72% of our total FTE working in these areas of the business. 14% of our FTE work on delivering the Ombudsman's other duties and powers, leaving 10% focused on Finance and Corporate Services and the remaining 4% forming our temporary transformation team.</p>

The wider feedback submitted will be considered and will add value to each area of the Service's operational plans going forward. Helping us to deliver our vision of healthier homes, fairer services, and trusting relationships.

Appendix

From or on behalf of residents

- we received responses from 104 individual residents
- Tpas
- Livewest scrutiny group called InFocus

Trade bodies and other organisations

- G15
- National Housing Federation
- National Federation of ALMOs
- CIH

Individual landlords

Abbeyfield Living Society	Chesterfield Borough Council	Epping Forest District Council
Abri Group	Colchester Borough Homes	Estuary Housing association
Amplius Living	Community Campus 87	ForHousing
Aster Group	Community Housing	Funding Affordable
Bassetlaw District Council	Connexus	Homes Housing Association
believe Housing Limited	Co-operative Housing in Partnership	Futures Housing Group
bpha	Derive RP	Gateway Housing Association
Braughing Housing Association Ltd	Dorchester Almshouses	Great Places Housing Group
Castles & Coasts Housing Association	Eastlight Community Homes	Greatwell Homes
Centrepont	Elizabeth Dowell's Trust	

Greenhill Housing Association	Octavia
Haig Housing	Peabody
Hightown Housing Association	Places for People
Home Group	Portsmouth City Council
Incommunities	Sandwell MBC
Inspire North	Solihull Community Housing
Lambeth Council	South Kesteven District Council
Leeds City Council	South Liverpool Homes
Leeds Jewish Housing Association	Southern Housing
Legal and General Affordable Homes	Southway Housing Trust
Legal and General Affordable Homes	Thanet District Council
Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association	The Guinness Partnership
Livin Housing Ltd	The Riverside Group Ltd
Magenta Living	Thirteen Housing Group
Melton BC	Thrive Homes
Mid Devon District Council	VIVID
Midland Heart	Wakefield and District Housing
Mosscafe St Vincents Housing	Weaver Vale Housing Trust
MTVH	Wirral Council
Network Homes	whg
Norwich City Council	Yorkshire Housing