

# Housing

Ombudsman Service



## Corporate Strategy 2025-30

July 2025

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



# Contents

3	<b>Who we are</b>
5	<b>Foreword</b>
7	<b>Our journey</b>
10	<b>Corporate Strategy 2025-30 context</b>
12	<b>Corporate strategy on a page</b>
13	<b>Strategic objectives</b>
14	<b>Strategic objective 1:</b> Provide an excellent, person-centred service
15	<b>Strategic objective 2:</b> Drive positive local complaint handling cultures
16	<b>Strategic objective 3:</b> Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence
17	<b>Strategic objective 4:</b> Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress
18	<b>Strategic enabler:</b> Organisation design
20	<b>Key performance indicators and fees</b>





# Who we are

## Our role

Our role is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme approved by the Secretary of State.

### The Ombudsman:

- makes the final decision on disputes between residents and member landlords
- sets and monitors compliance with a statutory Code of Practice for complaint handling by its members which promotes a positive complaint handling culture
- may issue Good Practice on the delivery of housing activities and order self-assessment against this
- orders reviews of policy and practice where the Ombudsman believes an issue in an individual complaint may give rise to further complaints
- investigates the root causes of complaints at both member and sector level, producing reports to share learning, improve services, and prevent recurrences

Our service is free to households eligible to use it. Our decisions are independent, impartial, and fair.

## Our membership

Membership of the Scheme is compulsory for social landlords, primarily housing associations who are or have been registered with the Regulator of Social Housing and local authority landlords. Additionally, some private landlords are voluntary members. The activities of members who are managing agents or selling some new homes fall within our Scheme. The Scheme is funded by subscriptions from members paid on a per housing unit basis.

We investigate complaints across a range of tenures, including social and private tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders of member landlords.

## Membership as of 31 March 2025



**1,647**  
member landlords  
(up from 1,596 in 23-24)



**5m**  
households  
(up from 4.9m in 23-24)





# Foreword

**W**e want to see the housing sector thrive – for our work to support it during challenging and changing times, to grasp new opportunities, and to champion healthier homes and fairer services.

I also want to see residents know their rights and be treated fairly and respectfully, whether their complaint comes to us or not, helping to make relationships between residents and landlords stronger and more trusting.

Our Corporate Strategy 2025-30 consolidates the considerable changes over the last 3 years which have made our service become more relevant to residents and landlords. This strategy continues to be driven by the devastating events at Grenfell Tower and Awaab Ishak's inquest which have seen our role, powers, and approach evolve.

It also looks to the future with the aim of developing the relationship between landlords and the Ombudsman. We will continue to provide accountability, redress, and transparency, but also do more to strengthen local resolution, build trust, and move from transactional engagement based on individual complaints to strategic support through our Centre for Learning for housing professionals and governing bodies.

The strategy also seeks to reimagine our relationship with residents, creating simpler and easier access to housing redress – doing so in a way that is person-centred, with faster decisions, and offering a genuine

alternative to legal action. This builds on our work to meet the unprecedented volumes of casework we have seen, with someone contacting us every 25 seconds, delivering over 7,000 investigations in the year.

Finally, it deepens our relationship with the wider regulatory system given the unique and independent perspective



“

*Our Corporate Strategy 2025-30 consolidates the considerable changes over the last 3 years which have made our service become more relevant to residents and landlords.*

we offer by providing insight, open data, and alerting it to emerging concerns for enforcement and regulatory bodies as well as policymakers. This could extend to an expanded relationship with the courts.

This would be success by 2030.

This matters because of the scale of the housing emergency. Our work involves the consequences of that emergency every day – from the human impact of poor housing or stretched services, to the interdependencies between housing, health, and welfare.

Too often the housing experience in this country across sectors can fall short of what people, communities, and the economy require in the 21st century.

The government is developing a long-term plan for housing, and it provides a decisive

opportunity to build a fairer and stronger housing offer. Maintaining existing homes must be a key part of this.

This could involve more and better-quality homes, both new and existing, as well as improved services and outcomes for residents. Significant steps have already been taken towards a more universal offer in the rented sector, from Awaab's Law and Decent Homes to energy standards.

An independent and impartial Ombudsman has a crucial role in supporting this future.



**Richard Blakeway**  
Housing Ombudsman



“

*The government is developing a long-term plan for housing, and it provides a decisive opportunity to build a fairer and stronger housing offer. Maintaining existing homes must be a key part of this.*





# Our journey







**F**ive years ago in 2020-21 we received 16,000 enquiries and complaints. This year we handled 44,500 cases. This decade will continue to see high but unpredictable complaint volumes in this sector. The reasons for this are a negative ‘push’ and a positive ‘pull’. The negative drivers include aging homes, outdated service models, and stretched landlord budgets alongside policy changes introducing high property condition standards and clear expectations to fix homes that fail to meet these. The positive is that the complaint procedures are more accessible to residents who are also more aware of their right to escalate an unresolved dispute to the Ombudsman.

We have been resilient in the face of volatile casework volumes. We introduced triaging of cases and prioritised investigating high-risk cases. This has been successful with all such investigations completed within 6 months. We have also focused on reducing the wait time for investigations into other cases. We have substantially reduced the age of our caseload, bringing it to under 12 months old. We determine on average 600 formal investigations

At the mid-point of this decade, we have sought to do 3 things:

- improve local complaint handling so that complaints are handled fairly and resolved sooner by ending the postcode lottery on complaint handling through the statutory Complaint Handling Code
- share learning from complaints to improve service and prevent complaints from coming to us, including targeted interventions with individual landlords where we are seeing repeated problems
- expand our service to investigate higher volumes of casework

every month, but we want to do much better and reduce the time we take to investigate all cases, high-risk or not.

Our Corporate Strategy sets out the ambition to reduce investigation times over the next 5 years. This will be done in stages to ensure improvements are sustained, customer satisfaction remains high, and quality is maintained. We want to avoid creating new pressures that divert resources elsewhere.



We have responded to surges in casework volumes so far by recruiting more caseworkers. This will remain important but new approaches will be explored alongside this. In 2025-26 we will focus on trialling new approaches to case investigations and increasing our efficiency. These include the completion and evaluation of a pilot on faster and earlier resolution techniques which will contribute to determining more cases within 6 months.

Other more efficient ways of working include improved file preparation and more concise reports. We will also test reducing tasks for caseworkers, including moving compliance monitoring into a single team. New approaches to gathering evidence from landlords with also be explored, with delays to evidence being experienced on most cases.

The benefits from these trials will allow us to continue to stretch our timeliness targets in 2026-27, with

the aim of reducing the maximum time for all investigations from 12 to 6 months for 95% of cases by 2029-30 (see table 1 below). Meanwhile, we are confident we can reduce the time taken to investigate 90% of our high-risk cases during 2025-26 and have cut this target by a third.

The impact of our own timeliness improvements will be enhanced by further work to help strengthen landlords' own complaint handling and address the causes of complaints through our Centre for Learning. The cumulative effect will improve residents' experiences of living in their home.

Underpinning all the above will be our transformation programme. Launching at the start of 2025-26 this will drive further efficiencies and greater effectiveness from our processes and our systems, ensuring that these are future-proofed. It will also ensure we support our people to drive an organisation that is innovative and continuously improving.

**Table 1: Case time performance and targets**

KPI: Casework	2022-23 (actuals)	2023-24 (actuals)	2024-25 (actuals)	2025-26 (target)	By 2030 (ambition)
Determination timescales for high-risk cases	N/A	N/A	99% in 6 months	90% in 4 months	95% in 3 months
Cases determined within 6 months	54%	18%	46% (target 30%)	50%	95%
Cases determined within 12 months	87%	62%	89% (target 80%)	80%	99%

# Corporate Strategy 2025-30 context

## Housing Ombudsman context 2024-25

### Complaint handling



- received 44,500 enquiries and complaints, of which 11,900 were accepted for investigation (46% increase)
- issued 7,100 determinations (30% increase)
- 100% reduction in older cases (0 cases older than 12 months)
- made 26,800 remedies, including £5.4m of financial compensation
- upheld 85% of investigated cases
- achieved resident satisfaction KPI targets

### Systemic powers



- carried out 4 special investigations into individual landlords leading to a total of 57 recommendations
- issued 197 wider orders relating to policy or practice to prevent a recurrence for other residents
- published a Spotlight report on attitudes, respect and rights and evaluated the impact of the knowledge and information report
- consulted on our Complaint Handling Code and our approach to good practice

### Learning



- issued 2 learning reports on topics including service charges and pest infestation
- registered 8,800 landlord staff members on our Centre for Learning platform
- published our Annual Complaints Review alongside 271 (2024-25 not yet known) individual landlord reports

### Engagement



- hosted 7 Meet the Ombudsman events, reaching over 1,600 residents
- Hosted over 250 Members Responsible for Complaints at our first annual conference
- attended 54 conferences and events
- met with our Resident Panel 11 times on topics such as enquiries and access

## Evolving 2025-30 provider operating environment

- normalisation of proactive consumer regulation including publication of tenant satisfaction measures
- ongoing mergers in housing associations and in-housing of local authority housing management
- ongoing financial, supply chain, skills, and resourcing pressures
- ongoing focus on building safety remediation and energy efficiency
- emergence of higher property condition standards such as Awaab's Law and the revised Decent Homes Standard
- commitments to increase housing supply
- increasing additional needs of residents and pressure on related statutory services
- increasing use of AI to support service delivery
- convergence in landlord duties and redress between the social and private rented sectors

---

## Resident context

- imbalance of power with limited choices for residents
- variable service standards and delivery across landlords
- ageing homes and quality issues with some new builds
- cost of living pressures
- release of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report
- continued high levels of awareness of their right to complain and the Ombudsman
- ongoing media coverage and high-profile social media activists





# Corporate strategy on a page

## Vision

Healthier homes, fairer services, and trusting relationships

## Mission

Improving landlords' services and residents' lives through housing complaints

## Values

Fairness

Learning

Openness

Excellence

## Strategic objectives

Provide an excellent, person-centred service

Drive positive local complaints handling cultures

Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence

Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress

## Strategic enabler

Organisation design

## Enabling strategies

People

Environmental, social, and governance

Digital, data, and technology

## Mapping of strategic objectives to our values



**Fairness**



**Learning**



**Openness**



**Excellence**

Provide an excellent, person-centred service.



Drive positive local complaints handling cultures.



Support better services through our insights, data, and intelligence.



Extend our powers and engage with partners to support closing gaps in redress.





# Strategic objectives



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

Being in a dispute can be a challenging and emotional experience. As an alternative resolution provider, we can put people at the heart of our process and level the playing field between those with access to professional resources and those without, providing a genuine alternative to the court through a non-adversarial process.

During 2025-30 we want to improve the resident's experience as they journey through our service. Our impartiality does not mean we lose empathy for or sight of the person at

the centre of the dispute. We also want to find the most effective way to resolve disputes at the earliest opportunity and to prevent recurrences for other residents to ensure fair service delivery for all. We also want to help landlords to build more trusting relationships with their residents by developing more restorative remedies and helping them to learn where things went wrong in individual cases. We will also continue to review our approach to investigation where new requirements are placed on landlords, for example, in relation to property condition.

## SO1: Aims and measures of success



**Aim 1.1:** Our services are human-centric, trusted, and provide a positive customer experience for residents.

**Measures of success:**

- increased resident satisfaction with our service provision
- maintained casework quality

**Aim 1.2:** Our service uses a range of techniques to provide resolution at the earliest opportunity.

**Measures of success:**

- increased resident satisfaction with our service provision
- reduced casework timescales

**Aim 1.3:** Our remedies are effective, appropriate, restorative, and complied with by landlords.

**Measures of success:**

- increased resident satisfaction with our service provision
- maintained compliance with our orders

**Aim 1.4:** We continue to develop our approach to casework to drive fairness in service delivery and reflect changes to landlord duties.

**Aim 1.5:** Our investigations support landlords to understand what led to service failure, prevent future complaints, and fulfil their obligations.

**Measure of success:**

- our individual investigations lead to fairer service delivery



## Strategic objective 2: Drive positive local complaint handling cultures

A positive complaint handling culture is based on ensuring resident awareness of and access to the complaints process, being fair, putting things right, and learning from outcomes. Our Complaint Handling Code (Code) empowers all landlords to resolve complaints themselves so fewer escalate to our service.

In 2025-30 we want to build on our Code compliance monitoring work.

During the strategy period we will focus on governing body scrutiny and oversight, with a particular focus on the Member Responsible for Complaints. We will continue to take our approach of learning first – recommending to landlords where improvements would lead to better outcomes, sharing best practice from our cross-sector oversight, and producing a variety of learning tools hosted on our Centre for Learning.

### SO2: Aims and measures of success



**Aim 2.1:** We evolve our duty to monitor compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.

**Aim 2.2:** We expand our Centre for Learning content to support better local complaint handling.

**Aim 2.3:** We focus on leadership and governance, in particular the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints in supporting positive complaint handling cultures.

**Measure of success:**

- social landlords demonstrate positive complaint handling cultures

**Aim 2.4:** Residents are aware of their right to complain, are adequately supported in accessing the complaints process, and are signposted to the Ombudsman.

**Measure of success:**

- maintained resident awareness of their right to complain



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

Complaints are more than individual transactions – they are strategic tools for learning. Complaints can be an early indicator of potential issues.

Over this strategy period landlords' operating environment will remain uncertain and pressurised. We want

to use our insights, data, and intelligence to extend learning into the system – providing horizon-scanning that identifies emerging risks, identifying programmes or policies that need to be reviewed, and informing future budget allocation and service development at both landlord- and sector-level.

### SO3: Aims and measures of success



**Aim 3.1:** We hold individual landlords to account where there are repeated service failures by engaging with them to address root causes.

**Aim 3.2:** We promote fairer outcomes in services where systemic failings are identified.

**Measure of success:**

- our work drives fairer services and healthier homes

**Aim 3.3:** We share information with regulators, enforcement bodies, and other delivery partners to promote accountability.

**Aim 3.4:** We are proactive in sharing our work with elected representatives, think tanks, and public policy makers to inform debate and policy proposals

**Aim 3.5:** We help to stimulate debate and support better understanding of the social housing sector by allowing open access to our casework data.

**Measure of success:**

- our work is referenced by a range of stakeholders (no KPIs)



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

Housing is arguably one of the most complicated sectors in England. The boundaries between public and private have become blurred and gaps in redress remain. In addition, residents within the social sector currently have uneven rights when it comes to obtaining information from their provider, depending on whether their landlord is a local authority or housing association.

During this strategy period we will discuss widening access to fair, independent, and impartial Ombudsman-level redress for residents with partners from across the sector, supported by straightforward customer journeys and consistent outcomes.

We will also take on a new area of complaints relating to the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) scheme – enabling tenants to come to us where they are dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of their request for information related to the management of their housing.

If we are designated as the Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman, we will update this strategic objective to include related aims, measures of success, and KPIs. We will also revise our aim, measures of success, and related KPIs prior to go-live of the STAIRs appeals service.

### SO4: Aims and measures of success



**Aim 4.1:** We will discuss gaps in independent, impartial, and accountable Ombudsman-level redress for residents, supported by straightforward customer journeys and consistent outcomes with partners from across the sector.

#### Measures of success:

- collaboration on the design and implementation of the Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman (no current KPIs)
- raising gaps in redress with partners (no KPIs)

**Aim 4.2:** We design and implement the STAIRs appeals service for housing associations.

#### Measure of success:

- an effective STAIRs service from the go-live date (detailed KPIs to be confirmed in advance of go-live)





# Strategic enabler: Organisation design

Our people are our greatest asset. To deliver our strategy successfully, we need to ensure we have access to colleagues who support our values, are keen to learn, and are willing to adapt as we grow and change. We also need to update our systems as these have not kept pace with our expansion to date, nor the customer service expectations of our residents and landlords. Additionally, we need to revisit our structures and processes to ensure these are optimised to

meet the expectations of a larger and growing organisation and allow us to deliver as efficiently as possible.

All of this combines into an overarching enabler looking at our organisation design to ensure that this supports the delivery of our strategy and embeds our culture. The scale of our ambitions as set out in our strategic objectives and the change required to deliver means we are treating these enablers as a transformation programme.

## Strategic enabler: Aims and measures of success



### People

**Aim E1.1:** We are a learning organisation, delivering continuous improvement and innovation.

**Aim E1.2:** Our people processes are values and behaviours-driven, health and wellbeing are prioritised, and we are inclusive and value the benefits that diversity brings.

**Aim E1.3:** We provide colleagues with clear pathways for career and skills development.

**Aim E1.4:** Colleague engagement is regularly checked and actively managed in our remote organisation.

#### Measures of success:

- colleagues support our values and behaviours, and engagement scores increase across all directorates
- colleagues participate in valued learning and development



## Strategic enabler: Aims and measures of success



### Structures and processes

**Aim E2.1:** We develop our governance, organisation design, and management practices to meet the needs of a larger and more complex organisation.

**Aim E2.2:** We build trust in our service through ethical practices and gaining external accreditations in key areas.

**Aim E2.3:** We develop our approach to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and increase our reporting.

#### Measures of success:

- our organisation is more effective and efficient, while continuing to meet the expectations of an arm's length body
- stakeholders can trust the quality of our work and the insights this provides (no KPIs)
- we are transparent about the impact of our organisation on the world (no KPIs)

### Systems

**Aim E3.1:** We seek digital, data, and technology developments which drive efficiency, support scalability, ensure compliance, and meet customer needs.

#### Measure of success:

- systems and technology are efficient to use and effectively capture information



# Key performance indicators and fees

## Key performance indicators

In setting our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we have taken a balanced scorecard approach allocating each of our strategic measures of success to 1 of the 4 quadrants of customer service, internal processes, learning and growth, or stakeholders. Each measure speaks to our vision and is supported by one or more indicators setting the desired level of performance by 2030. Our annual Business Plans will set out the target level of performance that will move us towards our strategic ambitions by 2030. Some of our

indicators will require defining, baselining, and analysing in year one or subsequent years. Further indicators will be added for STAIRs when this workstream goes live and for any other new areas of responsibility.

We have also identified some sector-wide indicators. We expect that these will show improvements over the lifetime of the strategy. The planned uplift to property condition standards may mean performance gets worse before it gets better.

Sector-wide indicators	Current level
Improvement to the tenant satisfaction measure TP04: proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied their home is well maintained	<b>70.8%</b> social rent (median points)
Improvement to the tenant satisfaction measure TP08: proportion of respondents who report they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect	<b>76.8%</b> social rent <b>59.1%</b> shared ownership (median points)
Improvement to the tenant satisfaction measure TP09: proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaint handling	<b>34.5%</b> social rent <b>19.2%</b> shared ownership (median points)
Reduction to tenant satisfaction measure RP01: proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	<b>0.5%</b>



## Key performance indicators



### Customer service (SO1, SO4)

#### Increased resident and landlord satisfaction with our service provision (aims 1.1, 1.2, 1.3):

- improved resident satisfaction scores at enquiry over the lifetime of this strategy (measured from 2025-26 baseline and target increase to be confirmed)
- 5% improvement to resident satisfaction scores following investigation over the lifetime of this strategy (measured from 2024-25 baseline)

#### Maintained casework quality (aim 1.1):

- maintained 95% quality scores for investigations (measured from 2024-25 baseline)

#### Reduced casework timescales\* (aim 1.2):

- 95% of high-risk cases determined within 3 months by the end of the strategy period
- 95% of cases determined within 6 months by the end of the strategy period
- 99% of cases determined within 12 months by the end of the strategy period

#### Maintained compliance with our orders (aim 1.3):

- 95% compliance by target date
- 99% compliance within 3 months of target date

#### An effective STAIRs service from the go-live date (aim 4.2):

- STAIRs targets to be confirmed following design and implementation work prior to go-live)

### Internal processes (SE1, SE2)

#### Colleagues support our values and behaviours, and engagement scores increase across all directorates (aim E1):

- increased colleague engagement survey scores over the lifetime of this strategy (measured from 2025-26 baseline and target increase to be confirmed)

#### Colleagues participate in valued learning and development (aim E1):

- 15% increase in the proportion of colleagues undertaking non-mandatory learning and development activities over the lifetime of this strategy (measured from 2024-25 baseline)
- 10% increase in colleague satisfaction with learning and development provision over the lifetime of this strategy (measured from 2024-25 baseline)



## Key performance indicators



### Learning and growth (SO2, SO3)

#### **Our individual investigations lead to fairer service delivery (aim 1.4, 1.5):**

- to be developed with residents and members in 2025-26

#### **Social landlords demonstrate positive complaint handling cultures (aim 2.1, 2.2, 2.3):**

- Member Responsible for Complaints report maintained or increased positive impact of our work on their landlord's complaint handling (independent survey, baselined in 2025-26 and target increase to be confirmed)
- 10% reduction in Complaint Handling Failure Notices (CHFNS) issued for non-submission of compliance monitoring returns (measured from 2024-25 baseline)

#### **Maintained or increased resident awareness of their right to complain (aim 2.4):**

- maintained resident awareness of their right to complain and the Ombudsman over the lifetime of the strategy (independent survey, baselined in 2025-26 and target increase to be confirmed)

#### **Our work drives fairer services and healthier homes (aim 3.1, 3.2):**

- increased proportion of landlords that agree their services are fairer and their homes are healthier as a result of our systemic interventions over the lifetime of the strategy (independent survey, baselined in 2025-26 and target increase to be confirmed)
- increased proportion of landlords that find our Centre for Learning tools are helpful in driving fairer services and healthier homes (independent survey, baselined in 2025-26 and target increase to be confirmed)

### Value for money (SE2, SE3)

#### **Our organisation is more effective and efficient while continuing to meet the expectations of an arm's length body (aim E2):**

- reduced cost per DR case over the lifetime of the strategy (measured from 2024-25 baseline and target increase to be confirmed)
- reduced cost per enquiry over the lifetime of the strategy (measured from 2024-25 baseline and target increase to be confirmed)

#### **Systems and technology are efficient to use and effectively capture information (aim E3):**

- overall positive return on investment for all system, data, and technology projects

\* Targets may need to be revisited following confirmation of the start dates and scope of Awaab's Law

We will update and republish our Corporate Strategy at relevant year-ends with new aims and defined KPI targets where these are subject to co-design, baselining in 2025-26, or dependent on government decisions.

# Fee

We acknowledge that our fee has risen sharply in recent years, driven by significant increases in demand. Our priority when looking at our operations is to maintain an acceptable level of service delivery for residents and landlords, rather than maintaining the fee at a certain level. We do, however, aim to achieve operational efficiencies over the lifetime of the strategy thus reducing the cost per case.

We are not raising our fees to landlords in 2025-26. If we need to raise our fees because of higher demand, ongoing improvements in operational efficiency will help keep any increase smaller than it otherwise would be. We will announce our proposed fee annually when we consult on our Business Plan.



# Housing

## Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484, Unit D,  
Preston, PR2 0ET  
0300 111 3000

Follow us on

 @housing-ombudsman



[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)