

News Update – February 2019

This update includes the following topics:

- Government plans for overhaul of housing complaints system
- Future CWAG Meetings – Diary Dates
- Addison Act Commemorations
- Recent Publications / New in the Library

Government sets out plans for overhaul of housing complaints system

At the end of January the Government published its response to the earlier consultation ‘Strengthening consumer redress in the housing market’ which closed in April 2018.

The Government’s view is that the current system is confusing for complainants and a number of important changes are planned to improve the way housing complaints are handled.

- A **Housing Complaints Resolution Service** will be established to provide a single point of access for all housing complaints regardless of the sector they relate to (including tenants and leaseholders of private and social housing, as well as purchasers of new homes and residential property agents. Although the consultation included a proposal for a single Housing Ombudsman, this has not been pursued as private landlords, social landlords and house builders all operate to different standards requiring separate redress arrangements. Instead the new service will create a single entry point from which complainants can be directed to the appropriate specialist redress scheme.
- A **New Homes Ombudsman** will be set up to protect the interests of purchasers of new homes and hold developers to account (already announced in October 2018).
- **Private landlords will be required to join a redress scheme** with a fine of up to £5000 if they fail to do so. Local authorities will be responsible for enforcement of this measure.
- **Measures to improve ‘in house’ complaints handling**, possibly underpinned in statute by legislation or regulation. Specific guidance on effective complaints handling will be developed for each part of the housing sector in order to deliver a better and more consistent standard of dispute resolution in all sectors.
- **Redress arrangements for social housing residents** is being dealt with as part of the Government’s response to the Social Housing Green Paper (details expected spring 2019)

[Strengthening Consumer Redress in the Housing Market - summary of responses to the consultation and the Government’s response](#)

Future CWAG Meetings – Diary Dates

Scheduled meeting dates and venues have now been confirmed as follows:

- **Wednesday 20th February 2019 – New Build Network Meeting – Woburn House, London, WC1H 9HQ**
- **Friday 17th May 2019 - General Meeting - Carriageworks Theatre, Leeds, LS2 3AD**
- **Friday 27th September 2019 – Laycock Development Centre, Islington, N1 1TH**

For further details visit <https://www.councilswithalmos.co.uk/?page=events>

Addison Act Commemorations – Celebrating 100 Years of Council Housing

A reminder that we are keen to receive information about any plans you have to mark the 100 year anniversary of the passing of the Addison Act in July 1919. This is a key date in the history of council housing, when for the first time, the government introduced subsidies to help finance the construction of new housing for working people.

The council sector is keen to use the opportunities provided by various commemoration events to celebrate the achievements of social housing and make the case for further investment. It is also an opportunity to promote positive messages about social housing.

On 28th February 2018, we are meeting with MHCLG along with ARCH and the NFA to discuss the various planned events and how to maximise the positive publicity.

Please continue letting us know about commemorative events, or other initiatives linked to the 100 year anniversary of the Addison Act, in your area.

Recent Publications

- **Report - Engaging and Empowering Tenants in Council Housing – TPAS /LGA**
In this report TPAS has partnered with the LGA to investigate good practice in tenant engagement delivered by councils. The Social Housing Green Paper highlighted tenant engagement as an issue the sector needs to address and this report sets out what is required for an effective approach as well as highlighting examples of good practice.
[Report Engaging and Empowering Tenants in Council Housing– January 2019 Annexes including good practice examples](#)
- **Guidance on Managing the Housing Revenue Account**
Trowers and Hamlins has produced an Unofficial HRA Manual which is intended as a practical guide on day to day issues that arise for those involved in managing the HRA. The Unofficial Guide is not intended to replace the existing guide or provide detailed technical advice.
[The Unofficial Housing Revenue Account Manual – Trowers and Hamlins – January 2019](#)

- **Inside Housing investigation into ALMO closures and how they impact on housing services:-**
Using a combination of Freedom of Information Act requests, council annual accounts and government data, Inside Housing has examined the housing management data of the 28 local authorities that have brought their ALMOs in house over the past decade.
[ALMO closures: how are they affecting services?](#)
[Closing ALMOs produces mixed results for housing services, research reveals](#)

New in the Library

- **CWAG consultation and networking meetings**
[Updated meetings schedule – February 2019](#)

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