

Interim corporate plan: A summary

December 2008-March 2010

TSA

**TENANT
SERVICES
AUTHORITY**

The Tenant Services Authority is the new regulator for affordable housing. We launched on 1 December 2008, having taken over the regulatory powers of the Housing Corporation. We believe housing matters, and that access to good quality housing improves lives. Our aim, quite simply, is to raise the standard of services for tenants.

Our goals

We are a champion for tenants

- We will stand up for their interests, putting their needs first
- There are some ten million people in England living in one form of social housing or another – and a further five million who can't afford to buy a home but who aren't considered needy enough to be allocated a home to rent. We're here to work for them all
- We want landlords to work more closely with tenants and to give tenants a say in the way their homes are managed

We are challenging providers

- This starts with challenging providers that own or manage social housing to be financially sound and well run
- The gap between the good and the not-so-good housing services today isn't acceptable – so we're working with tenants and landlords to help providers raise their game

We want to create more choice

- This involves helping to create greater choice in the way social housing is managed
- It also means increasing the choices offered to tenants
- We're working to create more choice in the kinds of tenure available
- We want tenants to have more choice over their landlord
- We will work to increase the choice for providers over how they raise money

We're also going to make much better use of the data we collect from landlords and make that data readily accessible to providers, their boards and their tenants. We believe that if they can get hold of information more easily, this will help them to improve constantly.

The legislative framework

The TSA has been created by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, which sets the framework for what TSA is and what it does. By late 2009, we will operate fully in accordance with the Act.

We've already put some of the ideas contained in the Act into place. These include:

- the TSA's corporate structure
- involving tenants in our work, and reporting on how we deal with tenant complaints
- co-operating with the Homes and Communities Agency, the Government's housing and regeneration agency
- consulting on how our new regulatory powers might work

When the Act is fully implemented, we will have a clear, well-focused set of powers to regulate social housing providers. These will be more extensive than the regulatory powers we inherited from the Housing Corporation. They reflect our role to protect tenants and regulate more housing providers than were covered by the Corporation, which regulated just housing associations.

We will be consulting on our new powers during 2009, and will move to the new framework as soon as possible.

The standards framework

We will regulate housing providers based on the standards framework we'll be developing in the coming months.

It is crucial that we listen to tenants, and find out which issues matter most to them. So, from January to March 2009, we're going out to meet tenants face to face across England to find out what services they need and standards they expect.

Only then can we begin to develop a standards framework that puts tenants' priorities first.

This means that in spring 2009, based on what we've heard, we'll go back to talk to tenants and landlords again to shape a system that will do just that. Then in the summer, we'll publish a formal paper on the detail of our standards framework, and begin implementing the new framework in the autumn.

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Our style of regulation

As a regulator we believe in proportionate regulation.

That means where providers are financially strong and well governed, and tenants are satisfied, there should be very little for us to do. Where standards are slipping, management is weak, finances fragile or tenants are unhappy, we will step in.

We will focus on issues of concern and make a step-by-step response, so that the boards of housing associations have every opportunity to put things right without us needing to act formally.

While we develop our new ways of working we'll continue to regulate using the older powers of the Housing Corporation, but we'll focus on financial viability during these difficult economic times. Once we have completed the consultation on the new standards framework, we will turn on the extra powers in the Act that set us up. Those powers will help us to get things sorted for the benefit of tenants.

Who we regulate

The Act also set out the Government's intention to extend our remit beyond just housing associations. Assuming we get the go ahead from Parliament, we'll also take over the regulation of council housing, including arm's-length management organisations (ALMOs), in spring 2010.

We're working to get the same deal for all social housing tenants, regardless of who their landlord is.

In the coming months, we will be involved in discussions with various partners, covering issues such as:

- standards – they shouldn't be set out in a way that puts extra reporting or data burdens on councils, over and above those specified in the framework
- information requirements – they will need to extend beyond those that can be met from indicators provided by councils
- enforcement powers – whether these powers in the Act should be changed

- including ALMOs within our remit – we believe that if we can't regulate ALMOs directly, we may not be able to make sure that ALMO landlords meet regulatory requirements

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