

# Informal consultation on the social housing regulator's Innovation Plan

## Background

- 1 In July 2015 HM Treasury published *Fixing the foundations: creating a more prosperous nation*. This set out plans to boost the UK's productivity growth centred around two key pillars: encouraging long-term investment and promoting a dynamic economy. This included a requirement for regulators to publish Innovation Plans by spring 2016.
- 2 The purpose of the Innovation Plans requirement is to help ensure that the UK regulatory framework is working effectively to support technological innovation and disruptive business models. The latter are innovative business models which disrupt existing markets such as the Uber taxi service.
- 3 The Innovation Plans requirement is also aimed at getting assurance that regulators are using technological innovation to deliver their own work more effectively and to reduce burdens on business.
- 4 The Chancellor has asked that Innovation Plans should cover the following three issues:
  - a) How legislation and enforcement frameworks could adapt to new technologies and disruptive business models to encourage growth
  - b) An assessment of how new technology is likely to shape the sectors being regulated
  - c) Actions for how regulators could better utilise new technologies to generate efficiency savings and reduce burdens on business.

## Purpose of this consultation

- 5 The social housing regulator is undertaking an informal consultation during December 2015 and January 2016 with a wide range of relevant stakeholders. The purpose of this consultation is to inform the development of the regulator's Innovation Plan for publication in spring 2016.

## Consultation questions

- 6 Stakeholders are invited to comment on the following questions, and are encouraged to provide explanation of their answers. Please respond to this consultation by Friday 29th January to: [consultation@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@hca.gsi.gov.uk)

- How can social housing regulation allow for the use of new technologies and disruptive business models?
- How are new technologies shaping the social housing sector? Are there any implications for social housing regulation?
- In what way could the regulator make more use of new technologies in carrying out its role?

*How can social housing regulation allow for the use of new technologies and disruptive business models?*

- 7 The regulatory standards for social housing are outcomes based. This should allow registered providers to innovate and adopt new technologies and disruptive business models without hindrance from the regulator. However, the regulator is open to any way in which our regulation could develop to be more open and supportive to such innovation where this is possible bearing in mind our statutory objectives and core aim to protect social housing assets.

*How are new technologies shaping the social housing sector? Are there any implications for social housing regulation?*

- 8 New technologies, particularly in relation to communications, are clearly changing the sector. Social media, for instance, provides new opportunities to interact with and engage with tenants. We are also aware that some providers are experimenting with drones to aid in cutting down costs in checking the condition of properties. The regulator is keen to hear from stakeholders about how new technologies are shaping the sector to aid our understanding and thinking.

*In what way could the regulator make more use of new technologies in carrying out its role?*

- 9 In developing this Innovation Plan the regulator is working to understand good practice and any opportunities for improving our regulatory technologies to improve efficiency and reduce burdens for registered providers. Any plans for change must take place within the bounds of resource and practical constraints. Regulatory information is generally collected through the online portal NROSH+ which we have found to be an effective tool. However, we are interested to hear from stakeholders about any ideas for use of new technologies in any aspect of our regulatory work.

Freedom of Information Act 2000/Environmental Information Regulations 2004	The HCA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). Therefore, information provided in response to this consultation may be made available in accordance with either statute. When responding to requests for information, we will consult with third parties where applicable and appropriate. Please advise us of information which is sensitive when responding to this consultation. Confidentiality agreements are not binding under FOIA or EIR.
Data protection Act 1998	The HCA will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection Principles.
Equalities	The HCA has statutory equality duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and has a published equalities strategy. The regulator has not identified any equalities implications for this consultation, although we reserve the right to revisit this matter if new information comes to light through the consultation process.