



Regulator of  
Social Housing

# Consumer standards consultation

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# Our vision for consumer regulation

Landlords maintain tenants' homes so that they are safe and of a decent standard and that landlords provide a quality service.

Where things go wrong, complaints are handled effectively, and things are put right.

The relationship between tenants and landlords is underpinned by shared expectations of fairness and respect and a shared understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities.

Landlords demonstrate that they understand the diverse needs of the communities that they serve, and their services reflect that.

Tenants understand, use, and have confidence in the recourse that they have to get problems resolved.

Stakeholders have confidence that landlords' commitment to their tenants is underpinned by effective consumer regulation, whether that landlord is a housing association, council, or for-profit provider.

# Developing the consumer standards – considerations

Must meet three tests for consumer regulation

Must make a meaningful difference to tenants

Must be deliverable by landlords

We must be able to regulate them effectively

And...

Primary relationship is between landlords and tenants

Retain outcome-based standards

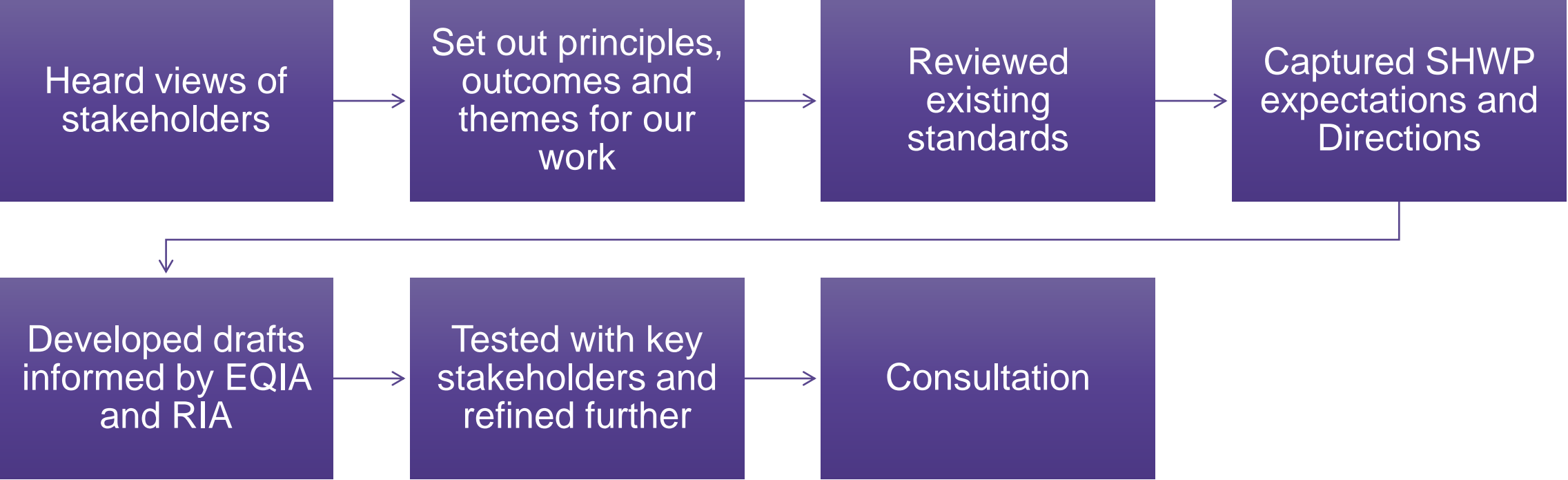
Existing standards cover much of the right territory

Universally applicable

White Paper expectations

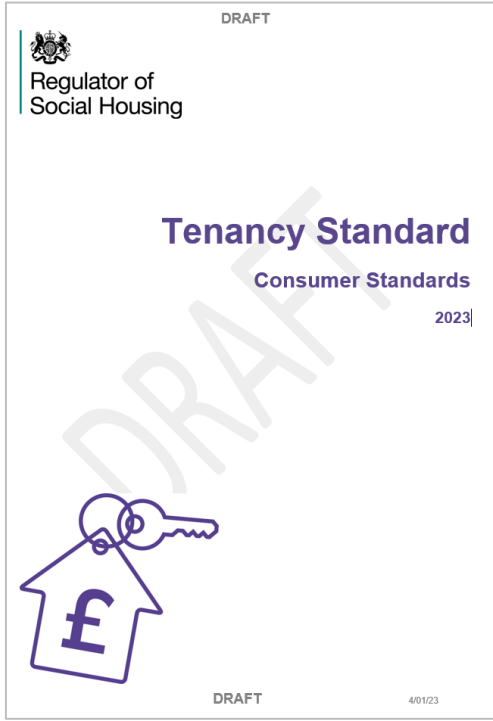
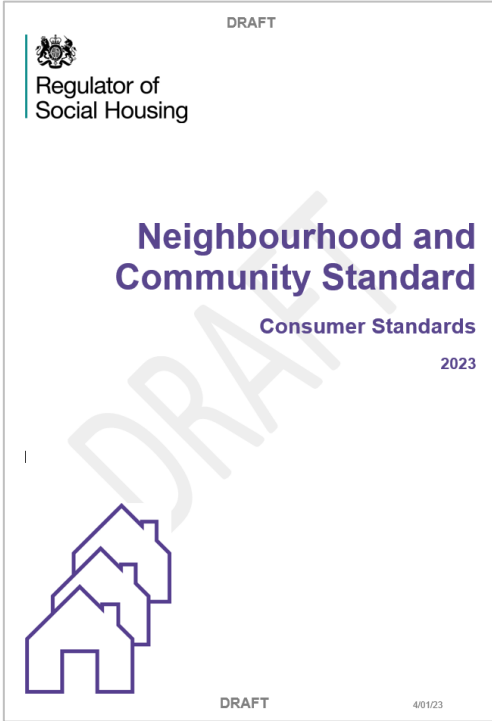
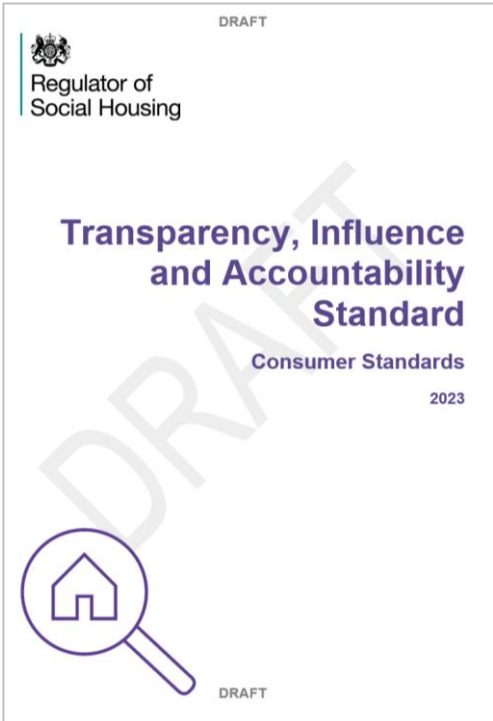
Standard setting power

# Development of draft standards and draft Code of Practice



# Proposed consumer standards

Themes: Safety - Quality - Transparency - Influence - Accountability - Neighbourhood - Tenancy



# Safety and Quality Standard

## Stock quality

- New requirements for RPs to have an accurate and up to date record of stock condition of individual homes and to use this understanding to ensure they provide good quality, well maintained and safe homes

## Decency

- 2012 Directions on Quality of Accommodation remain in place

## Health & Safety

- Explicit that all legal assessments are completed and arising actions carried out within timescales
- We expect landlords to consider the safety of tenants in all aspects of landlord service delivery

## Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements

- Requirements aim to be more tenant-centric with emphasis on easy reporting and good communication
- Moved away from right first time to setting timescales that achieve effective, efficient and timely repairs

## Adaptations

- Greater prominence – landlords must assist tenants to access adaptations service
- Recognition that not all landlords provide an adaptations service

# Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard

## Fairness and respect

- Required outcome and cross cutting in the delivery of all requirements
- Underpins the aims of the SHWP

## Diverse needs

- RPs are expected to use data, taking action to improve access and equitable outcomes
- Greater focus on accessibility of communications, information & services

## Engagement with tenants

- 2023 Tenant Involvement Direction: give tenants opportunities to influence and scrutinise their strategies, policies and services
- Landlords must continually improve their approach service delivery including tenant engagement

## Information about landlord services

- RPs must provide essential information that all tenants need in order to be able to interact with their landlord

## Performance information

- Includes current TSM requirements alongside additional requirements to broaden the performance information landlords must provide to tenants

## Complaints

- Policy continuity

## Self-referral

- SHWP expectation with a new power in the Act
- Extends the expectation for PRPs to LA registered providers

# Neighbourhood and Community Standard

## Maintenance of shared spaces

- Shared spaces are those used by tenants that are not the responsibility of the landlord
- Despite not having direct responsibility, landlords have a role to play in co-operating with others so those spaces are safe and well-maintained for tenants

## Local cooperation

- Very similar to our existing requirements - when considering their role, landlords must consider their strategic objectives and tenants' views as well as their presence in an area

## Safer neighbourhoods

- New requirements seek to better reflect the realities of an RP's role in deterring and tackling ASB
- We propose introducing requirements for landlords to have a specific approach for dealing with hate incidents

## Domestic abuse

- SHWP expectation with a new standard setting power in the SHR Act
- Requirements recognise that landlords have a role to play in tackling domestic abuse



# Tenancy Standard

## Allocations and lettings

- Requirements aim to be more tenant-focused, recognising landlords need to balance competing demands to ensure stock is used appropriately
- We have given great emphasis to allocating adapted housing appropriately, to make the best use of homes

## Tenancy sustainment and evictions

- Greater prominence to expectation that providers support tenants to maintain their tenancy, and where that is no longer appropriate, providers should provide timely advice to those tenants

## Tenure

- 2012 Directions remain in place.
- Future changes will be subject to a new Direction

## Mutual exchange

- New mutual exchange direction provides continuity; RPs providing support to tenants seeking to mutually exchange
- New expectation that landlords will offer tenants information on implications of a mutual exchange

# Aims of the draft Code of Practice

- Elaborates on some requirements, by giving examples where we think they are useful
- Amplify some of the requirements
- Does not seek to define every term
- Not to prescribe how providers comply with the standards
- Helps providers to understand what we are looking for when seeking assurance that they meet the standards
- Delivers key messages to the sector
- Providers should have regard to the Code – we can take the Code into account when considering compliance, but cannot enforce against it



# Consultation documentation

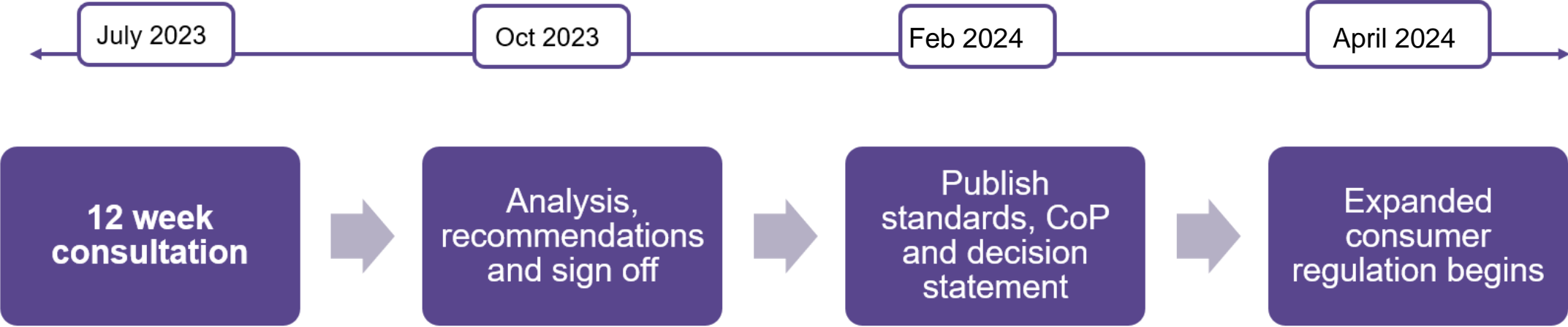
- Draft consumer standards
- Draft Code of Practice
- Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment
- Draft Equality Impact Assessment
- Plain English summary
- 'Easy Read' summary with response booklet

We want to hear from landlords, tenants and anyone with an interest in social housing.



**Make sure you have your say!**

# Next steps on the consumer standards and Code of Practice



# Consultation on proposed changes to our fee regime

- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 gives new fee charging powers to the regulator to ensure it can deliver its new, proactive consumer role
- The government announced that, from July 2024, social landlords will need to pay for the full costs of their regulation, in line with many other regulated sectors
- We are proposing to:
  - continue to charge a flat annual fee to smaller housing associations (those with fewer than 1,000 homes) and charge larger social landlords for each social home they provide
  - start charging fees to councils owning over 1,000 homes
  - charge organisations when they apply to become registered social landlords instead of the current approach where landlords pay fees after they have successfully registered
- The consultation on our revised fees principles is running for eight weeks, finishing on Tuesday 31 October 2023

# Proposed future arrangements

Funding source	Fee amount (2023/24)	How used
Registration application fee	£3,000 (£500 for prelim & £2,500 for 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage)	Contribute to the cost of assessing all registration applications
Small PRP	£500 flat fee per entity	Contribute to cost of regulation of small PRPs and maintaining the register
Large PRP	£9-10 per unit	Covers the proportion of overall costs attributable to PRPs, minus any income from small PRP annual fees and initial registration application fees
Large LARP annual fee	£7-8 per unit	Covers the proportion of overall costs attributable to LARPs
Small LARP annual fee	£0 flat fee per entity	N/A

## Proposed fee principles

1. A fixed fee applies to all **successful** applications for initial registration
2. The annual fee payable by a registered provider is set by reference to the number of social housing units owned by that provider
3. A fixed fee should apply to all providers owning fewer than 1,000 units
4. For groups owning 1,000 social housing units or more where the parent is a **private** registered **provider**, the annual fee should be set at group level rather than for each individual entity on the register
5. Providers must pay the full cost of the annual fee for the year that they are on the register when they register or de-register
- 6. The regulator will publish information annually on its costs and fees.**

**Questions please**