

The future of housing regulation

Andrew Dench

Deputy Director

The Social Housing Regulator



Overview

- Reforming social housing regulation
- Setting standards
- Service quality and localism
- Backstop regulation of consumer standards



Background – review of social housing regulation

- Regulation will continue
- Our economic and consumer regulation functions will be transferred to the HCA
- Principles of co-regulation continue



Our approach to regulation

- The role of the regulator in consumer regulation will focus on setting clear standards for housing services provided by social landlords
- Regulation of social housing exists to protect the interests of taxpayers and current and future tenants
- Councillors of stock owning landlords are responsible for working with the local communities and tenants that they serve to meet their housing needs
- Where co-regulation is effective, tenants and their landlords will be the best champions of tenants' interests

The Localism Bill – the changes to regulation

- Government is changing social housing regulation through the Localism Bill
- The Government's plan is to have clear arrangements so service problems can be dealt with locally – not directly by the regulator
- Economic regulation of Housing Associations will continue to be a high priority for the regulator



The Localism Bill – the changes to regulation (cont.)

- The regulator will be responsible for setting tenant-facing regulatory standards that all providers, including Councils, must meet
- The Bill (in its current form) proposes a new threshold for intervention, which means that the Regulator could take action where evidence leads it to conclude there is serious detriment to tenants



Resourcing regulation – value for money

- Our organisational structure is changing to prepare for the transfer into the HCA
- We have made a significant reduction in our overall level of expenditure of 24% year on year
- We have restructured our regulatory operations - one engagement team for all standards



Co-regulation – working with the sector

- Operate within the existing legislation framework until April 2012
- Revising standards and how we will identify and tackle cases where there is serious concern
- New arrangements place more responsibility on others to ensure that tenants receive good services
- Landlords should be accountable to their tenants for the services they provide.



Co-regulation – working with the sector (cont.)

- More emphasis on models that involve tenants and others, such as local councillors and MPs, in monitoring and improving services at a local level
- Need for strong accountability arrangements at the local level, including agreeing and monitoring local offers
- It will be the responsibility of providers and their partners, working with their tenants, to identify and share good practice
- They will need to support their tenants by equipping them with the skills, tools and information to enable them to keep their landlords up to the mark

Conclusions

- Regulation continues but is reformed
- The role of the regulator is to set standards
- Through the Localism Bill the Government hopes to have clear arrangements for service problems to be dealt with at a local level including formal roles for Councillors, MPs and new tenant panels
- Only where those mechanisms identify serious detriment to tenants will the regulator intervene

