



Housing Ombudsman

Information Pack for Candidates

Closing Date: 09:00am on Friday 20 February 2026





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Foreword



**Matthew
Pennycook, MP**
Minister for Housing
and Planning,
MHCLG

Thank you for your interest in this pivotal role. I am seeking to appoint an outstanding individual as the next Housing Ombudsman. Social housing plays a vital role in meeting the housing needs of people across the country, providing safe, affordable and secure homes for those who need them. When things go wrong for social residents, it is vital to ensure that they can have their issues put right. The Housing Ombudsman is at the forefront of providing swift and effective redress for the c.4m social tenants who can access its service, and as head of the organisation you would play an important and visible role in advocating for tenants and improving standards in the social rented sector.

You would be joining the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) at a crucial time, and the next Housing Ombudsman will play a critically important and challenging role. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of complaints received by the Housing Ombudsman due to the increased recognition of unacceptable housing conditions and the Government's 'Make Things Right' awareness campaign for social tenants, with a concomitant increase in waiting times for customers using the service. At the same time the Housing Ombudsman Service is gearing up to implement wide ranging changes to its structures and governance, including transitioning from a corporation sole to a body corporate, the establishment of a new non-executive board, and the potential expansion into new areas of activity - including the possibility of delivering mandatory private tenant-landlord redress for the c.4.7m households in the private rented sector. This is a unique opportunity to steer a large and important organisation through a generational change in its structure, size and remit. It will be vital therefore that the new Ombudsman has both complaint handling experience at a senior level and a strong track record of organisational transformation and scale up: skills which will be important even if the Housing Ombudsman Service does not take on the redress for the private rented sector.

The Housing Ombudsman Service



The Housing Ombudsman Service's mission is to improve landlord services and residents' lives through housing complaints. It provides a free, independent and impartial service to investigate and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords who are mandatory members of its redress scheme, as well as some other private landlords, property managers and agents who have joined its scheme voluntarily.

HOS also works to strengthen social landlord's internal complaints procedures, and to encourage its members to learn from complaints to prevent service failures being repeated.

HOS is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. [The Framework Document](#) sets out the respective responsibilities and accountability of the Housing Ombudsman, the Secretary of State for the Ministry, and officials within the Department.

Further information about HOS:

[Housing Ombudsman Scheme](#)

[HOS 2024-25 Annual Report and Accounts](#)

[Complaint Handling Code](#)

[Systemic Framework](#)

About the Role

The Housing Ombudsman Service performs a critical role in supporting the Government's housing agenda and is at the forefront of providing swift and effective redress for the c.4m social tenants who can access its service.

This appointment is an exciting and unique opportunity to make a pivotal impact on the social housing landscape and play an important and visible role in advocating for tenants and improving standards in the social rented sector. As a senior, strategic leader, the Housing Ombudsman will guide the organisation through a significant period of organisational transformation and scale up, and continuous improvement in customer experience and case output. The Housing Ombudsman will be a resilient and visible leader with experience in consumer rights or consumer protection, who can inspire public confidence whilst acting as a skilled arbitrator, balancing the needs of tenants, leaseholders and landlords. The successful incumbent will work collaboratively with other stakeholders in the sector, including the Regulator of Social Housing and other redress providers, whilst delivering a trusted and impartial service.

Candidates should note that although a final decision on a provider for the Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman has not yet been made, the Government's preferred approach at this time is for the Housing Ombudsman Service to run a streamlined cross-tenure redress service for social and private tenants.

Role Description and Key Responsibilities

The Housing Ombudsman is a prominent senior figure, often dealing with challenging and sensitive issues. As well as being a skilled arbitrator, the post holder must be resilient and command public confidence and the respect of tenants, leaseholders and landlords. The post holder will also be expected to be a strong organisational leader who can effectively head up a complex consumer-facing organisation. They should be skilled in leading organisational and strategic change both within the organisation and across the sector through engagement with stakeholders including landlords. They will also be committed to driving organisational change and efficiencies that will deliver value for money, as well as to digital transformation to support modernisation of the Housing Ombudsman Service. As Accounting Officer, the post holder will demonstrate financial accuracy, knowledge of compliance and risk management, and governance awareness.

The successful candidate will have experience of senior leadership, a clear understanding of the role of an ombudsman and a commitment to the highest level of conduct, integrity, objectivity and independence, combined with both mature and balanced judgement and strong intellectual ability. They will be required to meet with and present on issues to Ministers, and to Parliament through the relevant Select Committee. They will be committed to equality of opportunity and the purpose and values of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The successful candidate will be a person who is comfortable in a changing and challenging environment, is adaptable and flexible, and who understands and recognises reputational risk. The post holder will also be comfortable in an ambassadorial role; acting as both a high-profile advocate for independent complaints handling and a voice for the experience of tenants who use the service.

Housing Ombudsman Selection Criteria 1/2

All candidates must demonstrate, in their CV and supporting letter, how they meet the selection criteria for the roles, through their knowledge, skills and experience.

Essential Criteria:

Strategic Leadership & Decision-Making

- A proven ability to lead large-scale, complex organisations through strategic change, making impartial and high-stakes decisions independently, with sound judgement and resilience under pressure.

Communication Skills

- The ability to communicate complex and sensitive issues to diverse audiences including Ministers, Parliament, media, and stakeholders, using tailored communication methods to influence and drive cultural change.

Service Improvement & Innovation

- A track record of improving operational performance and service delivery in resource-constrained environments, using creative problem solving and digital innovation to deliver value for money.

Governance & Risk Management

- Experience in overseeing large scale organisational transformation including digital service delivery, with a track record in risk management and ensuring effective governance structures.

Housing Ombudsman Selection Criteria 2/2

Essential Criteria (continued):

Consumer Focused Complaint Handling

- Experience in managing complex casework and complaints at a senior level, with an understanding of consumer protection principles and a commitment to fairness and independence.

Desirable Criteria:

Sector Knowledge

- Genuine interest in housing policy and tenant rights, including landlord-tenant issues and a strong motivation to promote fairness through independent complaints resolution.

Understanding of Public Accountability

- Knowledge of the Ombudsman's role and its importance in upholding public trust, with an understanding of how Parliament and Government operate in relation to oversight, scrutiny and service delivery.

Outline Terms and Conditions

Remuneration: Minimum £130,095 p.a., negotiable based on experience. This remuneration is treated as employment income and will be subject to tax and National Insurance contributions, both of which will be deducted at source under PAYE before you are paid.

Time Commitment: This will be a full-time role.

Term: Appointments are made by Ministers for a minimum period of 3 years, up to 5 years.

Location: London with hybrid working available.

Pension: This post is pensionable in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Expenses and Subsistence:

Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred on HOS business will be reimbursed in accordance with HOS policies.

Conduct:

The Chair/Members will be expected to act in accordance with:

- The principles set out in the Cabinet Office's [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#). The Code sets out, clearly and openly, the standards expected from those who serve on the boards of UK public bodies and will form part of individual members' terms and conditions of appointment;
- The [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)
- Relevant policies of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Nationality:

You must have a right to work in the UK, there must be no employment restrictions, or limit on your permitted stay in the UK.

Annual Performance Review and Reappointment:

Annual performance reviews are expected to be undertaken. Reappointments are not automatic and will only be considered subject to satisfactory performance reviews.

I am a landlord; can I apply for this role?

- Any private interest in housing activities will likely be deemed a conflict of interest and may need to be relinquished in order to take on the role of Housing Ombudsman.
- The Housing Ombudsman cannot hold, or have any ongoing interest in, a private or social rented tenancy. This explicitly includes any involvement as a landlord or property agent.
- These restrictions apply regardless of whether the Housing Ombudsman Service assumes responsibility for delivering the private landlord Ombudsman service, as HOS currently has voluntary private landlord and property agent members.
- If you currently have an ongoing private housing interest, you can still apply, but you must declare it and be prepared to divest if appointed. If you are unsure whether your interest could be a barrier, please contact PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

How to Apply

The new Public Appointment website is open for this vacancy and candidates will need to apply for this role via [GatenbySanderson's jobsite](#) **and** the [Public Appointments website](#). To apply on the Public Appointments Website, you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#). Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

1. **Curriculum Vitae** (*maximum 2 pages*). Include your education, professional qualifications and full employment history.
2. **Supporting Statement** (*maximum 2 pages*). Please tailor setting out your suitability for the role and how you meet the selection criteria. We suggest you use specific examples to demonstrate how you meet the criteria. If you can offer the experience in more than one of the areas referenced above, please clearly reference and example those criteria in a single supporting statement. Please note that the Public Appointments website will ask for 200 words as part of the application, but this is not a substitute for a supporting statement which still needs to be included in your application to GatenbySanderson.
3. **Equality Information** The information you provide will not be used as part of the selection process and will not be seen by the interview panel.
4. **Information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues** You should declare any potential issues including conflicts of interest (perceived, potential or actual). This includes your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to the Housing Ombudsman Service, MHCLG or HM Government, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised. The assessment panel will explore your declarations during the interview process. Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment either not being made or being terminated.

Candidates should note that if you are called to interview, due diligence checks will be carried out as part of the assessment process and will be shared with the assessment panel and Ministers. This will include searches on social media, blogs and/or other publicly available information. Diversity data will be treated in confidence and is used for data gathering information only and will not affect your application. We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will have the opportunity to request a reasonable adjustment or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

We are unable to accept late or incomplete applications.

Assessment Process: Overview

Public appointments are made on the basis of merit, in accordance with the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments. The decision on who to appoint is made by Ministers, who receive advice from the Advisory Assessment Panel on the suitability of candidates against the published selection criteria.

The timeline provided on the next slide is indicative and could be subject to change. If you are unable to meet these timeframes, please let us know by contacting PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

The Advisory Assessment Panel will be:

- Panel Chair: Emma Payne, Director of Social Housing, MHCLG
- Senior Independent Panel Member: Moawia Bin-Sufyan MBE
- External Panel Member: Mark Henderson, Homes England Board Member

This appointment may be [of interest to the Prime Minister](#). No.10 will be kept informed of progress during the campaign. This post is subject to a Select Committee Pre-Appointment Hearing.

Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we will only provide feedback to candidates who reach the interview stage, and it will only be provided once the campaign has concluded.

Assessment Process: Indicative Timeline

The timeline provided is indicative and could be subject to change, potentially at short notice. If you are unable to meet these timeframes, please let us know by contacting PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

20 February: Closing date

w/c 9 March: Shortlisting

w/c 27 April (TBC): Staff engagement and residents panel sessions

w/c 4 May (TBC): Interviews

Ministerial fireside chats (TBC)

Mid-June: Announcement of preferred candidate for appointment

14 July (TBC): Pre-appointment scrutiny hearing

1 August (TBC): Appointment and provisional start date

Please note: Interviews may be conducted remotely. Should they take place in-person, please let us know if you have any accessibility issues.

Copies of passports will need to be provided prior to interview for identity checks.

The time taken between interview and a final appointment decision being made can sometimes take a number of weeks. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.

Diversity and Equal Opportunities

MHCLG is committed to the principle of Public Appointments on merit with independent assessment, openness and fairness of the process and providing equal opportunities. Applications are welcome from all, we particularly encourage applications from women, people from an ethnic minority background, people with disabilities and other under-represented groups.

We are very interested in receiving applications from those based anywhere in the UK. HOS's office is based in London and meetings may take place in other locations around the UK or via video conferencing. Attendance at hearings, governance meetings, and audits will require in-office presence. As a senior role, the Housing Ombudsman will be expected to be visible to residents and the housing sector. The Housing Ombudsman is also required to undertake some travel across the UK and to work unsociable hours on occasion (including some weekend and overnight stays).

If you believe you have the experience and qualities we are seeking, we look forward to receiving your application.

Disability Confident

As a Disability Confident employer, we will ensure that a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for this position will be offered an interview. By 'minimum criteria,' we mean that you must provide evidence in your application, which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence required under each of the essential criteria. If you wish to apply under this scheme, please complete the declaration in the on-line application form. It is not necessary to state your disability.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you would like a confidential discussion regarding any reasonable adjustments during the process, please indicate this in the email covering your application or contact PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk. You do not need to apply under the Disability Confident Scheme to ask for a reasonable adjustment.

Further Information

Contact: For further information about the role or the application process please contact hoj@gatenbysanderson.com or PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk. Please put ‘**Housing Ombudsman**’ as the subject line of your email.

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy. If you have any complaints about the way your application has been handled, please contact PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

Complaints: If you feel this competition has not been conducted fairly and you wish to make a complaint, you should initially contact the Appointments Team at PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

If after investigation by the Department you remain dissatisfied, you may take your complaint to the Commissioner for Public Appointments at publicappointments@csc.gov.uk details on how to make a complaint can be found on the Commissioner’s website at: <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/investigating-complaints/>

GDPR

We will process your application in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018. Your data will be held securely and processed for the purpose of the recruitment process. Access will be restricted to those dealing with your application or involved in the recruitment process, this will include Ministers and Special Advisers.

Data may also be shared with Cabinet Office, in order to comply with the Public Appointments Governance Code, article 3.1 of the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019. Data may also be shared with Cabinet Office and The Commissioner for Public Appointments in order to meet the public equality duty as set out in the Equality Act, s149. The Commissioner may also request access as part of a complaint investigation or review of the recruitment process.

Your data will be stored for 2 years, if appointed your data will be stored for the duration of your tenure and may be shared with the organisation that you are appointed too, unless specifically requested otherwise. Should you wish your data to be removed from our records, please contact PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk.

Complaints:

If you consider that your personal data has been misused or mishandled, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF
0303 123 1113
email: casework@ico.org.uk.

The data controller for Public Appointments is joint between MHCLG, OCPA and the Cabinet Office.

Seven Principles of Public Life

In 1995 the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles which should underpin all who serve the public. It is important that members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. Consistent with the Governance Code, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in these principles that will be tested during the selection process. Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment either not being made or being terminated. Should you wish to speak to someone concerning a potential conflict of interest or other issues please contact a member of the Public Appointments team at PublicAppointments@communities.gov.uk in the first instance.

Selflessness Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.