

Regulator responds to Coronavirus impacts with changes to regulatory approach

The Regulator of Social Housing has written to all registered providers of social housing setting out the changes it is making to its regulatory approach in response to Coronavirus. It also sets out expectations about providers contacting the regulator about significant compliance challenges. This is intended both to support providers in focussing on front-line operations and to identify where there may be challenges that the sector or individual providers need regulatory support to meet.

Across the sector, the shared priority is to maintain tenant safety, including addressing emergency [and urgent] repairs and statutory compliance with health and safety requirements. The impact of the outbreak, and the measures to contain it, will mean that there will be some incidence of statutory non-compliance and repairs backlogs. RSH assures providers that it will apply a proportionate regulatory approach and take full account of the current circumstances but that it expects providers to inform it in a timely manner about material non-compliance with regulatory standards, focussing on the safety of tenants and financial viability.

RSH previously announced that it would pause In-Depth Assessments. It now extends that pause until further notice. In addition, it postpones the submission deadline for the Statistical Data Return and the Local Authority Data Return until 31 October 2020. The submission date for the Financial Forecast Return is deferred and updates will be provided in due course.

To address the risks arising to tenant safety and from the economic impact of Coronavirus, RSH will survey providers to collect information about how they are delivering emergency and urgent repairs, care and support services and compliance with health and safety requirements. It will also ask some providers who face higher financial risks to share more of their own financial information.

RSH will continue to keep its regulatory approach under review over the coming weeks and months.

Fiona MacGregor, RSH Chief Executive said:

Coronavirus leaves us all facing unprecedented challenges in our daily lives and an uncertain future economic climate. Amid very significant operational pressures housing providers are rightly prioritising their work and services to protect their tenants and communities whilst keeping their staff safe.

We are supporting this by pausing some of our usual regulation and

focusing our oversight on the things that matter most: that providers keep tenants safe and that the social housing sector remains financially viable.

The [letter to registered providers](#) is also published on the website.

Notes to editors

1. The original submission deadline for the Statistical Data Return was 31 May 2020. This has now been extended until 31 October 2020. The Local Authority Data Return deadline has also been extended to 31 October 2020.
2. The original submission deadline for the Financial Forecast Return was 30 June 2020. This deadline has been deferred.
3. Providers will still need to submit Q4 returns between 1 April 2020 and 23 April 2020 for the Quarterly Survey, but no longer need to provide the same level of year end information.
4. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants. For more information about RSH, visit: <https://gov.uk/rsh>.
5. For press office contact details, see the [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.