

# Press release: Social housing regulator to charge fees from October 2017

The regulator of social housing has confirmed that it has listened to the sector and will delay the introduction of fees for social housing regulation to October 2017. Providers will pay 50% of the annual fee for 2017 to 2018.

The regulator was granted powers to charge fees under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It set out initial proposals in a discussion paper in 2014 and held a further statutory consultation at the end of 2016.

Following the outcome of the consultation, the regulator will introduce:

- a one-off flat-rate registration fee of £2,500 for successful registration with the regulator
- a fixed annual fee of £300 for providers with fewer than 1,000 social housing units
- an annual per unit fee of £4.72 for large providers with 1,000 or more social housing units – with the fee charged at group level rather than for each individual entity on the register.

Taking account of points raised in the consultation responses, the regulator has also committed to:

- waive fees for 2017 to 2018 for providers with fewer than 60 social housing units, where a complete de-registration application is made by 1 September 2017 and it has a reasonable chance of being completed by the financial year end
- a cap on the maximum increase to total income raised from fees to 1% per annum until the end of current Spending Review period in 2020 from a base of £12.5 million
- introduce a Fees and Resources Advisory Panel alongside existing stakeholder arrangements publish an annual fees statement in addition to the transparency information it already publishes.

Julian Ashby, Chair of the HCA Regulation Committee said:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation and our various discussions around fees. I'm pleased to see a high level of support for our proposals, which were described as fair, simple, transparent and practical. In our approach to implementing fee charging we have carefully considered the impact on existing budgets and business planning for 2017 to 2018 and noted the affordability challenges raised by some of the very small providers.

Introducing fee charging complements the HCA review conclusion to

establish the regulator as a separate legal entity. We're committed to keeping our costs low and therefore the fee level reasonable and proportionate, while maintaining effective regulation. We will establish a Fees and Resources Advisory Panel to ensure that there is accountability for fees charged.

A decision statement which outlines an analysis of the consultation responses, has been published on the [fees consultation page](#) of the Gov.uk website.

There were 169 responses to the statutory consultation which ran from 25 November 2016 to 9 January 2017. The regulator also consulted extensively with sector representative bodies.

The case for charging fees was supported by many respondents as the best way of maintaining the effectiveness and independence of the regulator. Many confirmed regulation to be essential to enable the sector to continue to access the investment it needs on attractive terms.

Funding for some aspects of the regulation function such as reactive regulation, including consumer regulation, will be continued through government grant in aid.

The Homes and Communities Agency is the single, national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England, and is the regulator of social housing providers. As regulator, its purpose is to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It will do this by undertaking robust economic regulation, as enshrined in legislation, focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer.

For more information, visit the [HCA website](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

Our [media enquiries page](#) has contact details for journalists.

For general queries to the HCA, please email [mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk](mailto:mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk) or call 0300 1234 500.

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## **[Press release: Step up to the challenge as the South West flood committee's new chair](#)**

The successful candidate will play a pivotal role in flood and coastal risk

management across Devon and Cornwall, heading up a committee that works closely with other public bodies and interest groups.

In addition to leadership skills, the chair must be able to provide strategic direction, stimulate discussion and be an effective networker and influencer. He or she will also be required to work with other flood committee chairs and develop a good understanding of government priorities for flood management.

Ben Johnstone, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This is a great role, working to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion in one of the most beautiful parts of our country. The challenges are varied and will become more significant as our climate changes. We have a huge exposed coastline, rapid responding catchments, river and surface water flooding, not just in urban areas, but spread all across hundreds of rural communities.

How we think about managing risks is changing. We need to design to work with and co-exist with nature. As the committee chair you will be instrumental in making this happen.

The South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is one of 12 committees across the country that make key decisions on local priorities for flood and coastal risk management.

The committee is made up of members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience and sets out to achieve the following goals:

- ensuring suitable plans are in place for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines
- encouraging the appropriate level of investment in flood and coastal risk management that provides value for money and benefits local communities.
- providing a link between the Environment Agency, LLFAs, other risk management authorities and relevant bodies to increase understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area

People from a wide range of backgrounds are invited to apply for this post, especially those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and women who are currently under-represented on regional flood and coastal committees.

Further information is available from the [Cabinet Office](#). The closing date for applications is 20 March 2017.

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# Press release: Government commits to helping survivors of domestic abuse

Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution, has published a range of proposals that will make the anonymous registration scheme in England and Wales more accessible to those escaping domestic abuse, and ensure that survivors can participate in our democracy.

The anonymous registration scheme protects people whose safety would be at risk if their name and address appeared in the electoral register. For example, this might include victims of harassment or stalking, as well as some witnesses in criminal court cases.

The current system has come under criticism for lacking the flexibility and understanding of various scenarios which survivors of domestic abuse often find themselves in. This can include limiting police attestations to police officers at or above the rank of superintendent, and restricting social services attestations to directors of social services.

Among the measures announced today are plans to update the list of court and other orders that are acceptable as evidence of the risk to an applicant, and lowering the seniority required for an attestor from the police or social services.

The minister has been working with domestic abuse charities over the past 6 months, including Women's Aid, to explore what could be done to ease the process for one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Women's Aid estimate that the proposals in the policy statement could help thousands of survivors of domestic abuse.

Mehala Osborne, survivor and founder of the Right to Vote campaign, said:

I was denied a vote whilst living in a refuge, and I never realised how much having a vote meant until it was taken away from me. I had already been through enough, and to be disempowered even more was so difficult. I am so proud to have started the campaign that has led to these proposed changes. Survivors in the future will not be denied their voice and democratic right to vote.

Dawn Morville, survivor of domestic abuse who lived in a refuge, said:

When I was living in a refuge, I could never register to vote as I was worried my ex would be able to hunt me down – and if he had been able to find my address, there is no doubt he would have come after me. This would have put not only me but the other women in the refuge at risk. And for years after I left the refuge, I could still not vote, because I knew that he would find me if he could,

and seriously harm me and my children. So the proposed changes are great news. It will empower survivors, and give us back something that domestic abuse takes away: our right to have our say, and be heard, without being terrified that voting could mean our abuser comes after us.

Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said:

Domestic abuse must not deny women their right to take part in democracy. So, we welcome the changes proposed today on anonymous registration, and we thank the government – particularly the Minister Chris Skidmore, for decisive action on this. The proposed new measures send out a clear message to all survivors of domestic abuse: that their voices matter, and their participation in politics matters.

Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution, said:

This government is committed to removing any barriers that prevent voters from exercising their democratic right. Having met survivors of domestic abuse over the past 6 months, it is clear that the existing system has often let down those affected by domestic abuse.

That is why today we are setting out proposals to reform the anonymous registration scheme in England and Wales to make it more accessible for those escaping domestic abuse. Protecting the safety of survivors by making it easier for them to register to vote without their name and address appearing on the electoral register is a key part of that change.

We are clear that those who have been constrained by their abusers must have full freedom to express themselves in the democratic process – part of this government's determination to build a democracy that works for everyone.

The government is now welcoming feedback on proposals to expand the evidence to include new types of attester and new types of documentary evidence, along with other measures in the statement. To share your comments, please contact the Cabinet Office at [anonymous-registration@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:anonymous-registration@cabinetoffice.gov.uk).

Under provisions of the Scotland Act 2016, the Scottish Parliament will shortly gain legislative competence for electoral registration in relation to Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections in Scotland. The Minister for the Constitution will be working with his counterpart in the

Scottish government in order to together deliver reforms in respect of the UK Parliamentary electoral register and the local government electoral register in Scotland.

Under provisions of the Wales Act 2017, the National Assembly for Wales will in due course gain legislative competence for electoral registration in relation to elections to the National Assembly for Wales and Local Government elections in Wales. However, the changes proposed to anonymous registration will most likely come into force prior to commencement of these provisions.

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## **Press release: CMA alleges anti-competitive agreements for hydrocortisone tablets**

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) alleges that between January 2013 and June 2016, Concordia (formerly Amdipharm), and Actavis UK (formerly Auden Mckenzie), entered into agreements under which Actavis UK incentivised Concordia not to enter the market with its own competing version of hydrocortisone tablets.

In a statement of objections issued to the parties today, the CMA provisionally finds that both companies broke competition law by reaching these anti-competitive agreements, and it also alleges that Actavis UK abused its dominant position by inducing Concordia to delay its independent entry into the market.

Under the agreements, Actavis UK instead supplied Concordia with a fixed supply of its own 10mg tablets for a very low price for Concordia to resell the product to customers in the UK. Actavis UK remained the sole supplier of the tablets in the UK during most of this period, when the cost of the drug to the NHS rose from £49 to £88 per pack.

In December, a separate CMA investigation [accused Actavis UK of charging excessive prices to the NHS for the tablets following a 12,000% price rise over the course of several years.](#)

The CMA has provisionally found that the agreements enabled Actavis UK to prolong the high prices in the market, depriving the NHS of the significant price falls that would be expected to result from true competition.

Concordia was the first potential competitor to Actavis UK to obtain a marketing authorisation for 10mg hydrocortisone tablets, a necessary step to enter the market and compete with Actavis UK.

Actavis UK was the sole supplier of hydrocortisone tablets from 2008 until

2015, after it bought the previously branded version of the drug from another company. That purchase meant the drug became de-branded and no longer subject to NHS price regulation, as other companies were then allowed to produce competing 'generic' versions.

Hydrocortisone tablets are used as the primary replacement therapy for people whose adrenal glands do not produce sufficient amounts of natural steroid hormones (adrenal insufficiency), as for example with Addison's disease.

Andrew Groves, CMA Senior Responsible Officer, said:

Anti-competitive agreements can cost the NHS, and ultimately the taxpayer, by stopping competition bringing down the cost of lifesaving drugs like hydrocortisone tablets.

We allege these agreements were intended to keep Actavis UK as the sole supplier of a drug relied on by thousands of patients – and in a position which could allow it to dictate and prolong high prices.

As always at this stage in an investigation, these findings are provisional and no conclusion should be drawn at this stage that there has in fact been any breach of competition law. We will carefully consider any representations of the companies under investigation before determining whether the law has been infringed.

The CMA opened this investigation in April last year. For more information see the [case page](#).

In December 2016 [the CMA fined the pharmaceutical suppliers Pfizer and Flynn Pharma a total of nearly £90 million for charging excessive prices for the anti-epilepsy drug phenytoin sodium](#), after that drug was also de-branded. In February 2016 the [CMA fined a number of pharmaceutical companies a total of £45 million](#) for anti-competitive 'pay for delay' agreements and conduct in relation to the supply of the anti-depressant drug paroxetine. The CMA has 2 other ongoing investigations into the pharmaceutical sector.

## Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and certain consumer law.
2. The Chapter I prohibition in the Competition Act 1998 covers anti-competitive agreements and concerted practices between businesses which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the UK. The Chapter II prohibition in the Competition Act 1998 prohibits the abuse of a dominant position by one or more companies which may affect trade within the UK or a part of it. Similarly, Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) prohibit respectively anti-competitive agreements

and the abuse of a dominant position which may affect trade between EU member states.

3. The CMA may impose a financial penalty on any business found to have infringed each of these prohibitions up to 10% of its annual worldwide group turnover. In calculating financial penalties, the CMA takes into account a number of factors including seriousness of the infringement(s), turnover in the relevant market and any mitigating and/or aggravating factors.
4. A statement of objections gives parties notice of a proposed infringement decision under the competition law prohibitions in the Competition Act 1998 and the TFEU. It is a provisional decision only and does not necessarily lead to an infringement decision. Parties have the opportunity to make written and oral representations on the matters set out in the statement of objections. Any such representations will be considered by the CMA before any final decision is made. The final decision will be taken by a case decision group, which is separate from the case investigation team and was not involved in the decision to issue the statement of objections.
5. The statement(s) of objections will not be published. However, any person who wishes to comment on the CMA's provisional findings, and who is in a position materially to assist the CMA in testing its factual, legal or economic arguments, may request a non-confidential version of the statement of objections by contacting the CMA.
6. The CMA proposes to find that the undertaking referred to in this press notice as 'Concordia' consists of the following legal entities:
  - From 1 January 2013 until 20 October 2015:
    - Amdipharm Limited
    - Concordia International Rx (UK) Limited (Concordia Rx) (formerly known as Amdipharm Mercury Company Limited)
    - Concordia International (Jersey) Limited (formerly known as Amdipharm Mercury Limited)
    - private equity company Cinven, consisting for the purpose of this case, of Cinven (Luxco 1) S.A., Cinven Capital Management (V) General Partner Limited and Cinven Partners LLP
  - From 21 October 2015 until 24 June 2016:
    - Amdipharm Limited
    - Concordia Rx
    - Concordia International (Jersey) Limited (formerly known as Amdipharm Mercury Limited)
    - Concordia International Corporation
7. Out of these entities, the statement of objections is addressed for the full period under investigation to Amdipharm Limited and Concordia Rx because they were directly involved in the alleged infringements and to Concordia International (Jersey) Limited because it was the direct parent company of the group of subsidiaries to which Amdipharm Limited and Concordia Rx belong. The statement of objections is additionally addressed to Cinven as the ultimate parent company of Concordia International (Jersey) Limited from 1 January 2013 until 20 October 2015, and Concordia International Corporation from 21 October 2015 until 24 June 2016.
8. The CMA proposes to find that the undertaking referred to in this press



notice as 'Actavis UK' consists of the following legal entities:

- From 1 January 2013 until 28 May 2015:
  - Auden Mckenzie (Pharma Division) Limited; and
  - Auden Mckenzie Holdings Limited;
- From 29 May 2015 until 24 June 2016:
  - Auden Mckenzie (Pharma Division) Limited;
  - Auden Mckenzie Holdings Limited;
  - Actavis UK Limited; and
  - Allergan plc.

9. Out of those entities, the statement of objections is addressed to Actavis UK Limited, because the CMA provisionally considers it was the economic successor of Auden Mckenzie and should therefore be held liable for Auden Mckenzie's direct involvement in the alleged infringements since 2013. Actavis UK Limited was also directly involved in the alleged infringements since 2015. The statement of objections is additionally addressed to Allergan plc which the CMA provisionally considers is jointly and severally liable as the ultimate parent company of Actavis UK Limited for its suspected conduct in the market from 29 May 2015 to 24 June 2016, and formed part of the Actavis UK undertaking during that period.
10. For more information on the CMA see our [homepage](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on Competition Act 1998 and civil cartels cases.
11. Enquiries should be directed to Rory Taylor ([rory.taylor@cma.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rory.taylor@cma.gsi.gov.uk), 020 3738 6798).

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## **[Press release: £2 billion boost set to transform charity and voluntary sector funding](#)**

The huge sum has the potential to further transform the charity sector, helping to improve communities and change lives. It was identified by the independent Dormant Assets Commission, which found untapped assets in products such as unclaimed insurance policies and pensions. They include:

- £715 million from investments and wealth management;
- £550 million from the pensions and insurance sectors;
- £150 million from securities;
- £140 million from banks and building societies.

It's expected these estimates could increase once the scheme is operational.

The Independent Dormant Assets Commission was set up in December 2015 to look at whether the current dormant asset scheme, which includes funds in banks

and building societies, could be extended to other financial services. These include insurance products, stocks and shares, and pensions that have been classed as dormant.

The current scheme has already distributed £360 million from accounts to go towards supporting good causes. Extending it could deliver lasting change to the way voluntary and charity sectors are funded.

Ministers will now consider the report's findings in detail.

Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, said:

This money could help change millions of lives across the country by helping good causes rather than gathering dust in dormant accounts.

The reason I set up the commission was to unearth new resources that would allow our charities and voluntary groups to become more sustainable and independent. But crucially also to deliver really important local services over the long term.

This is an example of an active government stepping in where it can make things better to the benefit of local communities and all concerned.

I'd like to thank the Commission, which has worked tirelessly with the financial services sector on this report, and will study its findings closely.

Chair of the Commission Nick O'Donohoe, said:

Our report has found hundreds of millions of pounds lying dormant across a number of financial sectors which could be put to far better use. I am delighted we now have the potential to help good causes even more. I hope the financial sector now supports our ambition by contributing dormant assets benefit to an expanded scheme.

Good causes that have benefitted from the current dormant accounts scheme include Age UK's Reconnections programme in Worcestershire, which works to reduce loneliness and isolation in the area, and London's "Think Forward," which provides disadvantaged young people with opportunities in education, training and employment.

Other good causes include Harrogate Skills 4 Living Centre in Yorkshire, a residential care home for 90 adults with learning disabilities that offers

adult education courses, 3SC Capitalise programme in Wales, a social impact bond that supports young people with dyslexia, and Harry Specters in Cambridgeshire, a chocolate maker social enterprise that creates employment for young people with autism.

Some of the other main recommendations of the report are:

- that customers should continue to be able to reclaim lost assets at any time;
- participation by firms in an expanded scheme should continue to be voluntary. However, If participation levels are low, the government should consider the reasons behind this and whether moving to mandatory participation in the scheme in the future would be appropriate; and
- the expanded scheme should retain the core principles of the current scheme but the way the scheme is managed should be revised to allow it to cope with the wider range of assets envisaged.

## **Notes to Editors**

1. The definition of a dormant bank or building society account is in the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act. An account is 'dormant' if it has been open throughout a 15 year period but during that period no transactions have been carried out in relation to the account by or on the instructions of the holder.
2. Customers in the current scheme are able to reclaim any lost assets at any time. The Commission recommend this is retained in any expanded scheme.
3. Following the introduction of the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act in 2008, Reclaim Fund Ltd (RFL) was established by the Co-operative Banking Group Limited to administer the process of the dormant assets scheme.
4. Since the Dormant Accounts Scheme started in 2008, almost £1 billion of dormant accounts money has been identified. Of this, more than £360 million has been directed towards good causes across the UK.
5. Membership of the Commission on Dormant Assets: Nick O'Donohoe, Chair  
Richard Collier-Keywood Kirsty Cooper Gurpreet Dehal Sean Donovan-Smith  
Rachel Hanger Jackie Hunt Mark Makepeace Susan Sternglass Noble Martin Turner

For further information contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210