

# Consultation to enhance legal support for those facing eviction or repossession

News story

People at risk of losing their home are set to benefit from enhanced legal support following a consultation launched by the government today (25 November 2021).



- the consultation sets out a new approach to the delivery of legal aid for housing possession proceedings
- the proposed changes will improve access to legal aid for anyone at risk of losing their home and provide holistic advice to individuals most in need
- consultation set to run for 8 weeks and follows stakeholder engagement on how to improve current scheme

The Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) offers free ‘on-the-day’ legal advice to anyone in danger of being evicted from their home or having their property repossessed, regardless of their financial circumstances. Given the vital role the HPCDS plays in ensuring access to justice and the timely resolution of legal problems, the continuation of the service is of paramount importance.

For some time, the Ministry of Justice has worked to develop a package of measures to improve the sustainability of this vital scheme, improving access to legal advice and representation for anyone facing possession proceedings in court.

The consultation proposes several key changes.

- Remodel the delivery of the HPCDS to become a new Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service (HLPAS), incorporating both the existing service of advice and representation at court but also early legal advice before court.

- Expanding the scope of legal aid so that HLPAS providers can offer early legal advice on social welfare law matters to individuals facing possession proceedings.
- Contracts for individual courts rather than larger geographical areas.
- Allowing providers to claim for the court duty fee in addition to a Legal Help fee for follow on work.
- Introducing a set attendance fee for all schemes, replacing the existing nil session payment.

Some of these proposals are similar to those consulted on prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and were well-received by legal aid providers and other stakeholders. The [previous consultation](#) was discontinued as the way possession proceedings were being heard underwent significant changes during the pandemic and we needed to further consider the best approach.

Have your say: [Housing Legal Aid: the way forward](#)

## Notes

- The consultation will be open for 8 weeks, closing on 20 January 2022.
- A paper summarising responses will be published within 3 months of the closing date of the consultation.

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# [Fan-Led Review of Football Governance – final report and recommendations](#)

Football clubs are at the heart of our local communities. They have a unique social value and many possess great history and legacy. Fans are at the centre of our national game, which is why the government committed to a fan led review of football governance in our manifesto.

In April this year, the government launched that Review, led by the Chair, the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford.

As the [Terms of Reference](#) set out to this House, the Review was a comprehensive examination of the English football system with the aim to explore ways of improving the governance, ownership and financial sustainability of clubs in the football pyramid, building on the strengths and benefits of the game.

Today the government has published [the final Report setting out the recommendations of the Review](#). This Report is founded on the basis of over 100 hours of engagement with Supporters' Trusts, fan groups, women's football representatives, football authorities, club owners, players representatives,

and underrepresented interest groups, alongside over 20,000 fans responding to an online survey. The report is extensive, so we will now be considering the detailed recommendations ahead of a full government response.

All football stakeholders have had the chance to contribute to the Review and I am very grateful to all those who have given evidence. Most importantly, fan voices were at the heart of the Review and will remain at the heart of the government's thinking in responding to the recommendations.

I would like to place on record my thanks and appreciation to the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford for her tireless work and for delivering her recommendations so swiftly. She has done a superb job in bringing together such a range of views from across football with such credibility and consideration.

The final report is a thorough and detailed examination of the challenges faced by English football. It is a demonstration of the financial problems being caused by incentives within the game and reckless decision making by some clubs and owners, both of which are unsustainable and threaten the future of the game. It is clear that current oversight of the game is not up to the challenge of solving the structural challenges and action must be taken.

To address this systemic challenge, the Review presents the following ten Strategic Recommendations, which are accompanied in the Report by detailed sub-recommendations:

- to ensure the long-term sustainability of football, the government should create a new Independent Regulator for English Football
- to ensure financial sustainability of the professional game, the Independent Regulator for English Football should oversee financial regulation in football
- new owners' and directors' tests for clubs should be established by the Independent Regulator for English football replacing the three existing tests and ensuring that only good custodians and qualified directors can run these vital assets
- football needs a new approach to corporate governance to support a long-term sustainable future of the game
- football needs to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in clubs with committed Equality, Diversity and inclusion Action Plans regularly assessed by the Independent Regulator for English Football
- as a uniquely important stakeholder, supporters should be properly consulted by their clubs in taking key decisions by means of a shadow board
- football clubs are a vital part of their local communities. In recognition of this there should be additional protection for key items of club heritage
- fair distributions are vital to the long term health of football. The Premier League should guarantee its support to the pyramid and make additional, proportionate contributions to further support football
- women's football should be treated with parity and given its own dedicated review

- as an urgent matter, the welfare of players exiting the game needs to be better protected – particularly at a young age

The government welcomes the work of the Review and will now consider the detailed recommendations ahead of providing a full government response in Spring 2022.

The Review demonstrates that there are fundamental issues with our national sport, and that this merits radical reform. Fans across the country want and deserve that reform. We have seen in the past how football has been unable to reform itself and to deliver changes that stop the likes of Bury FC or Macclesfield Town FC going out of business, or which stop clubs breaking away to set up the closed shop of a European Super League.

We are at a turning point for football in this country. The Review is a detailed and worthy piece of work that will require a substantive response and plan of action from across government. But the primary recommendation of the review is clear, and one the government chooses to endorse in principle today: that football requires a strong, independent regulator to secure the future of our national game. The government will now work at pace to determine the most effective way to deliver an independent regulator, and any powers that might be needed.

This is an important Review that we hope will lead to change for good in football. The government will now work at pace on how to make that happen.

I have today deposited a copy of the Report in the Libraries of both Houses.

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## **[RSH quarterly survey results published for Q2 June to September 2021](#)**

The Regulator of Social Housing has today (25 November 2021) published the results of its latest quarterly survey of registered providers' financial health.

The report covers the period from 1 July to 30 September 2021. The social housing sector continues to recover from the pandemic with strong liquidity and robust interest cover and income collection indicators.

The sector's total agreed borrowing facilities increased by £1.8 billion, to reach £115.3 billion at the end of September. New finance of £2.9 billion was agreed in the quarter with 71% of this from capital markets. There was further refinancing activity in the quarter due to the expiry of the Covid Corporate Financing Facilities.

Providers continue to invest capital in new and existing homes, although

current uncertainties make accurate forecasting difficult. £2.9 billion was invested in the acquisition and development of new homes between July and September 2021; 7% less than in the previous quarter, and 32% below the forecast for this quarter. Capitalised major repairs spend increased to £479 million, but again less than previously forecasts for the quarter. The difference from forecasts was due to the impact of supply chain issues over the quarter.

As a result of seeking to make up these shortfalls, forecast capital expenditure for the twelve months ahead is at a record high with both development spend (at £18.3 billion) and capitalised major repairs spend (at £3.1 billion) predicted to be over 50% higher than in the previous twelve months. However, given the current challenges being experienced with delays relating to labour and material shortages, we expect some variation from forecasts: this is an area RSH will continue to monitor.

The number of unsold properties reduced in the quarter. At £531 million, Affordable Home Ownership first tranche sales are the highest value ever recorded and the unit sales are higher than pre-pandemic levels, with a fall of 11% in the number of units unsold in 6 months. There was also a 24% fall in the number of market sale units unsold for more than six months.

Will Perry, Director of Strategy at RSH, said:

While the social housing sector continues to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, current economic conditions continue to provide challenges for providers in the form of labour and material shortages. Providers will need to closely monitor these and wider pressures to ensure they are able to manage the range of risks their organisation is facing.

The quarterly surveys are available on the [RSH website](#).

The quarterly survey provides a regular source of information regarding the financial health of private registered providers, in particular with regard to their liquidity position.

The quarterly survey returns summarised in the report cover the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 and the latest report is based on regulatory returns from 209 PRPs and PRP groups who own or manage more than 1,000 homes. The survey Data about income collection, including rent collection, was first collected in 2013.

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general queries, please email [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.

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.

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## [Lendal Arch reopens following flood defence works](#)

Work to install improved flood gates under the arch of Lendal Bridge, which started five months ago, is now complete, reducing the risk of flooding to 39 homes and businesses between Scarborough Bridge and Ouse Bridge.

Wellington Row (part of the Trans Pennine Trail and National Cycle Network) reopened to pedestrians and cyclists on Friday 19 November.

The £2.5 million works are part of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme, where £45 million is being invested in the city to better protect 2,000 homes from flooding.

As part of the works, the Environment Agency has:

The final stage of the scheme has involved installing taller and stronger flood gates under Lendal Bridge. The team has flood tested the new flood gate, using 3,500 litres of water.

During the works under Lendal Bridge, Environment Agency contractors used solar panels and a solar powered generator as part of efforts to lower carbon emissions during construction. The use of the solar powered generator aimed to reduce generator emissions by 85 per cent, compared to using a regular generator.

Mark Fuller, project lead at the Environment Agency, said:

“This important work under one of York’s main bridges has been complex but essential to ensure we upgrade the flood gates to better protect homes and businesses, making them more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

“Installing a gate in this location has been challenging and has taken us longer than expected but the new gate is taller so it can protect against a higher flood level as well as achieving a greatly reduced leakage rate.

“We’re pleased we can reopen this route for pedestrians, cyclists and local businesses and we want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding during construction.”

Cllr Paula Widdowson, Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change said:

“The Environment Agency’s work in York will protect more than 2,000 homes and businesses, particularly in local communities which unfortunately have had to regularly endure worsening flooding events. City of York Council is working in partnership with the Environment Agency to help them deliver this ambitious and necessary work to ensure that residents and businesses in York are better protected in the future.

“Today marks another milestone, now that the work on Lendal Arch is completed. As well as protecting properties, this reopening also provides easier access to the riverside cycle route and Scarborough Bridge for local residents and businesses.”

Rupert Douglas, Sustrans Network Development Manager for Yorkshire said:

“I’m really pleased to see this very popular section of National Cycle Network back open for walking and cycling. It’s been a great opportunity to work with the Environment Agency and other local partners to reduce inconvenience for people walking and cycling during the closure. Active travel is increasingly important in York and other cities and towns. We look forward to continuing with this sort of cooperation on other flood defence works in the future.”

The works at Lendal Bridge took longer than anticipated because during construction, contractors found a large concrete slab directly over the top of two high voltage power cables which then needed to be safely removed by National Power Grid.

The reopening comes ahead of the Environment Agency’s Flood Action Week, where people are being encouraged to find out more information on how to make their homes, businesses and communities more resilient to flooding, and sign up for flood warnings.

The Flood Warning Service gives people vital time to prepare in advance of a flood, such as securing important documents, switching off gas and electricity and moving valuables to safety.

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**Continued commitment to the democratic process of Iraq**



Mr President and many thanks to the Special Representative and to Ms Kabashi for their excellent briefings. The UK offers full support to the continued work of UNAMI and of the SRSG. I'd like to make four quick points supporting what others have said. First, I would like to reiterate the UK's condemnation of the 7 November assassination attempt against Prime Minister al-Kadhimi. The UK deplores the use of violence to settle election-related grievances. I echo what the SRSG has said on this. We also condemn the repeated and coordinated efforts to discredit both the election results and the efforts of UNAMI, as well as threats of violence against the Mission and the SRSG. Such threats are unacceptable. We stand with the Iraqi government, security forces and people in their rejection of political violence and strongly support the Prime Minister's call for calm and restraint.

Second, we remain strongly committed to the democratic process of Iraq. The UK welcomes the positive assessment of the international UNAMI election monitors and congratulates the Government of Iraq and IHEC for the notable improvements in transparency, electoral process and procedure. Early, credible elections were a key demand of the protest movement in 2019 and we welcome that the Government of Iraq has been able to deliver a technically well managed election. We also welcome and strongly support the focus of the SRSG and Ms Kabashi and of the Iraqi Women's Network on progressing women's participation in the political process.

Third, we welcome the continued work to ensure that electoral appeals are fairly heard. We urge respect for the legally defined processes and the rule of law after the Federal Supreme Court has ratified the electoral results. The Security Council will continue to monitor any attempts to undermine the



election process and we call on all political parties, candidates and others to exercise patience and understanding in the post-electoral environment.

Finally, we would like to thank the SRSB for her update on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. We welcome the commitment of Iraq and Kuwait to making progress on this important file.

The UK stands alongside the people of Iraq and looks forward to the peaceful formation of a government that will deliver meaningful reforms to address the needs and concerns of all Iraqis.

Thank you.

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1. 24 November 2021

Added translation

2. 23 November 2021

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