

JARGON GUIDE

Affordable rent	A type of tenancy which social landlords can offer new tenants, in which rents will be set at a level higher than most equivalent social homes and closer to market rents.
Affordable Homes Programme	The government programme, administered by the Homes and Communities Agency, which subsidises the supply of new affordable homes by registered providers.
Allocations	The processes used to decide which applicants should be offered housing. (Also known as lettings or re-housing.)
Annual Lettings Plan	A plan drawn up by a social landlord that covers the various groups in need of housing that the landlord intends to let properties to over the year.
Arrears	Rent owed to the landlord by the tenant.
Assets	Things that belong to a housing landlord and that can be expressed in money terms. 'Fixed assets', such as properties, cannot be turned easily into cash. 'Current assets' include cash and bank balances, and things that can be turned fairly easily into cash, such as debts.
Assured tenancy	The form of tenancy (since 1989) for new housing association tenants. Although assured tenancies carry fewer statutory rights than the 'secure tenancies' of council tenants, housing associations are expected to incorporate most of these rights in tenancy agreements.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic (people and communities). The term used to describe minority groups recognised as falling under the Race Relations Act 1976.
Capital expenditure	The cost of providing new homes or carrying out major repairs to existing ones. The term refers to investment in permanent assets such as land, buildings, and roads. It contrasts with 'revenue expenditure', which is regular, year on year spending on ongoing services such as housing management and day to day repairs.
Choice-Based Lettings	An approach to letting social housing in which applicants can 'bid' for the properties they want and for which they are eligible.
Citizens Jury	A method of consultation which uses a small cross-section of the community to look in depth at an issue, and make recommendations for change.

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Co-regulation	Instead of the government-appointed housing regulator policing social housing in a top-down way, co-regulation means that the social landlord's governing body works with tenants to carry out much of the regulation, within broad standards set by the regulator.
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
Decent Homes Standard	The government set a target that by 2010 all social housing, and some categories of private sector housing, had to meet certain 'minimum standards of decency'.
Difficult to let	A term used to describe housing that is unpopular with housing applicants for a variety of reasons.
Dispersed housing / projects	Social housing or supported housing where the individual houses, flats or schemes are scattered across a wide area, mixed with other types of housing.
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions – government department responsible for employment, pensions, child welfare, disability and health & safety.
Fair Rents	Rents set by an independent valuer and regulated by an independent tribunal. A rent that has been registered with the Rent Officer.
Foyer	Accommodation for young homeless people, which also play a role in helping their residents to access training, education and employment, and to gain independent living skills.
Governance	The system by which organisations are directed and controlled. In Housing Associations, the Board of Management is at the centre of the organisation's governance.
Homes and Communities Agency	The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England – directs funding for new affordable homes and regulates all social housing
Housing Association	A non profit making body, managed by a voluntary board, formed to provide housing.
Housing Benefit	A means tested welfare benefit administered by local government that helps eligible tenants meet the cost of their rents.
Housing Ombudsman Service	Government-appointed body investigating complaints made about social landlords (local authorities <i>and</i> housing associations and other registered providers).
Housing Plus	Activities carried out by housing organisations to support communities and neighbourhoods that go beyond just the 'bricks and mortar – for example, developing social networks and the local economy.

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Income and Expenditure Account	The account used by housing associations to manage their revenue income (mainly rents) and spending.
Introductory Tenancies	Tenancies for new tenants that last 1 year and then change to secure or assured tenancies if the tenant has not broken the terms of the agreement.
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	A measure of a specific element of service (e.g. average time taken to re-let properties), used to report on and evaluate a service.
Landlord	The organisation which owns the property, issues the tenancy or licence agreement, and usually provides the housing management and maintenance service.
Leaseholder	A person who does not own the land their home is built on and so pays a ground rent for a fixed number of years. Tenants who live in flats and buy them from their landlord are called leaseholders.
Letting	The processes involved in renting a property to an applicant who has been allocated a tenancy.
LSVT	Large Scale Voluntary Transfer. The term used to describe the transfer of the whole (or most) or a local authority's stock to another social landlord.
Major Repairs	Big and costly items of maintenance, such as replacement of outworn components (e.g. windows) or structural elements.
Mystery Shopping	A way of monitoring service delivery. Individuals are trained to pose as customers (in person, by phone, letter, email) to assess how staff interact with them.
Neighbourhood Warden	Staff employed (sometimes by social landlords) to patrol estates in an attempt to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. They work closely with the police but do not have the power to arrest offenders.
Nomination Right	The right of a local authority to put forward people for prospective tenancies with a housing association.
Performance Monitoring	The processes used by a social landlord to measure its performance over a range of tasks and compare it with targets or standards that have been set (by itself or outside agencies).
PFI	Private Finance Initiative. A method of getting capital works carried out, in which the capital costs of the project are entirely funded by the contractor, and who may undertake to manage it on completion, in return for an agreed long-term income.
Planned Maintenance	Repairs that are pre-planned in order to improve the housing stock in an economic and effective way. (Contrasts with 'responsive' or 'emergency' repairs, which happen just when things go wrong.)

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Preserved Right to Buy	Secure tenants of a local authority have the right to buy the property in which they live. Assured tenants (i.e. most tenants of housing associations) do not normally have the right to buy. However, Right to Buy is 'preserved' in the case of most tenants whose homes are transferred from a local authority to another social landlord.
Private Finance	Money raised by housing associations by borrowing from financial organisations such as banks and building societies. Housing Associations use these loans to pay for that part of the cost of developing properties which is not met by grants.
Procurement	The process of seeking and appointing contractor(s) to carry out a project, such as buying land and building on it or doing major repairs and improvements.
Registered Provider (RP) of social housing	The term refers mainly to housing associations, but it also applies to local housing companies, community housing mutuals, trusts and housing co-operatives. It has largely replaced the term 'registered social landlord' which was previously used.
Revenue expenditure	Spending on regular, ongoing activities like housing management and repairs (as opposed to one-off activities like new building or major improvements).
Right to Buy	Some social housing tenants have the legal right to buy their homes at a price lower than the market value if they have been living there for more than 2 years.
Right to Manage	A statutory right for local authority tenants to form Tenant Management Organisations and take over collective management of their housing, in return for a Management and Maintenance Allowance from their council.
Right to Repair	A statutory right for tenants to claim compensation if certain small urgent repairs are not carried out by landlords within prescribed time limits.
Risk-Based Regulation	Rather than regulating all social landlords in the same way, the HCA aims to match the extent to which it intervenes with the level of 'risk' of each association.
Security of Tenure	A tenant's right to remain in their home indefinitely provided they have kept to the conditions of their tenancy agreement.
Service Charge	The money tenants and leaseholders pay for services such as wardens, common rooms and cleaning, lighting and maintenance of common parts.

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Shared Ownership	An arrangement whereby tenants can part-buy / part-rent a property. The tenant may, over time, increase their mortgage payments and decrease their rent until they own the whole property.
Sheltered Housing	Housing specially provided for elderly people, providing someone near at hand to help them in an emergency.
Social Rented Housing	The general term for rented housing owned by local authorities and housing associations.
Stock Condition Survey	Surveys of the housing stock used by social landlords to assess the need for planned maintenance or major repairs and improvements.
Stock Transfer	Transferring the ownership and management of local authority housing to a registered social landlord such as a housing association.
Supported Housing	Accommodation for people with specific care needs, such as elderly people and people with disabilities. Residents are supported by paid care staff.
Tenant Participation Compacts	Agreements between social landlords and their tenants which set out how tenants can be involved, the issues they can be involved in, and the resources available to support tenant participation.
TMO	Tenant Management Organisation – set up to take over responsibility for managing aspects of the housing locally on behalf of the social landlord.
TPAS	Tenant Participation and Advisory Service
Void	A term used to describe a property that is not let. For example, a block of 10 flats that has 2 empty might be described as having '20% voids'.
Voluntary Board Member	The unpaid board members, directors or trustees who comprise the controlling bodies of housing associations.