

# Code of Governance questionnaire

## Introduction

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If you wish to save your answers to continue later, click on the "save and continue later" button at the top of each page of the survey. This will prompt you for an email address so you can be sent a link to pick up where you left off.

If you have any questions please contact us on [codeofgovernance@housing.org.uk](mailto:codeofgovernance@housing.org.uk)

**Please submit your response by 13 March 2020.**

## About you

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Are you happy to provide us with contact details or would you prefer to submit an anonymous response? \*

- I am happy to provide contact details.
- I would prefer to submit an anonymous response

What is your name?

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation

Please name the organisation

What is your email address?

What is your job title?

How would you describe your role? (Please tick all that apply)

- Governance professional
- Housing professional with an interest in governance
- Housing association board member
- Housing association tenant / resident / leaseholder / service user
- Representative body
- Member of the public
- Other - Please specify

We will use the contact details you have provided to keep you informed of our work on the Code of Governance review. If you would prefer **not** to receive such information please tick this box.

- I do not wish to receive updates about the Code of Governance review

We will only use contact information submitted as part of this questionnaire to contact you in the eventuality that we require more detail or clarity on an answer you have given. Data will be held in accordance with our Privacy Notice (opens in new window).

## General questions 1

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1. Which, if any, of these codes of governance is your organisation signed up to?

NHF Code of Governance (2015)

FRC UK Corporate Code (2018)

UK Charity Governance Code

ecoDA

Other - Please specify

Don't know

Not applicable - I do not work for a housing provider

2. Do you feel the current NHF Code of Governance is fit for purpose?

Yes

Partly

No

Not applicable / don't know

What needs to be addressed in order to make sure the Code of Governance is fit for purpose?

3. How could we improve the guidance which accompanies the Code of Governance?

4. How do you think best practice in governance should be reflected in the new code?

5. Are you aware of any practical measures which housing association boards can take in order to ensure the board, and the organisation's senior team, reflect the diversity of the tenants, residents and communities they serve?

Yes

No

Please specify

6. What are the main issues that need to be addressed in a revised code in order to make it work well for group structures? Can you provide examples?

7. What are the main issues that need to be addressed in a revised code in order to make it work well for joint ventures? Can you provide examples?

8. Do you think there is an understanding of what governance is, and the purpose of good governance for housing associations, amongst tenants, residents and other interested parties?

9. How should the Code of Governance address the issue of overall accountability?

10. To which people and bodies should governing boards be accountable?

11. Are you aware of any good practice in governance that particularly focuses on accountability to residents?

- Yes
- No

Please specify

12. Organisations that sign up to the code are expected to report against it annually. To whom and in what way should this information be reported?

13. Should the Code of Governance require organisations to demonstrate how they have complied with it?

14. The 'comply or explain' approach has been widely adopted in UK corporate governance, and is the approach adopted by the current Code of Governance. It is an approach which recognises that there may be sound reasons for non-compliance with the Code of Governance. It obliges organisations to be transparent about their rationale in coming to that view. An alternative to following a provision may be justified, for example, if it is still judged to achieve good governance.

Do you think that the current 'comply or explain' approach used by the Code of Governance should continue to be used?

- Yes
- No

What approach do you believe should be used instead?

15. How do you think information on an organisation's governance can be made as accessible and understandable as possible to any people who wish to access such information?



In setting out the principles below, we have drawn from those in the 2015 Code of Governance and sought to strengthen and enhance them.

**Clarity of purpose:** The board is clear in its role and purpose in setting strategic direction and defining the culture of the organisation.

**Ethics:** The board operates to high ethical standards, explicit values and appropriate codes of governance and conduct.

**Accountability:** There is full accountability to, and involvement of, residents and other stakeholders. Particularly – and where appropriate – in making decisions that affect residents' homes and communities.

**Residents first:** The board acts in a way that empowers residents and facilitates a strong relationship between the organisation and its tenants, residents and service users.

**Transparency:** There is an active and open approach to communicating governance decisions and activities. Full and frequent disclosure of governance matters and other significant information is standard practice.

**Ambition:** Opportunities are actively identified and reviewed considering the need for sustained organisational success.

**Equality, diversity and inclusion:** There is a fairness of equality and opportunity and an active demonstration of diversity in all aspects of the organisation's governance – people, roles and approaches.

**Review:** There are formal processes for the periodic review of the board's own performance and decision-making, which actively encourage scrutiny by residents and service users.

**Clarity:** There is clarity of roles and responsibilities and an appropriate division of responsibilities between the organisation's board members and staff.

**Control:** There is an effective approach to audit, risk management, internal control and financial oversight.

**Structures:** There are effectively resourced staff and committee structures to support the organisation's ambition.

16. Do you think the principles laid out above are the right ones? Do they adequately reflect the changing environment, the challenges facing the sector, and current best practice?

17. Are these principles described in a way that is useful and clear?

- Yes
- No

Please suggest ways in which they could be improved

18. Are there any additional principles that should be included?

- Yes
- No

What are they?

### **Specifics of the Code of Governance 1**

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19. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, greater profile has been given to issues of health and safety within the sector. How should the Code of Governance reflect this?

20. What potential conflicts of interest should the Code of Governance anticipate, and help boards to resolve?

21. How should the code address housing association board and senior executive remuneration?

### **Specifics of the Code of Governance 2**

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22. Should the code give guidance on ensuring that the needs of different stakeholder groups are met?

- Yes
- No

How important do you think it is that the needs of each of the following groups of stakeholders are addressed specifically - as opposed to just being considered as general stakeholders?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
Residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workforce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investors / Funders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shareholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text" value="Enter another o"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text" value="Enter another o"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Specifics of the Code of Governance 3 - Final page

23. Should the code set a limit on the number of external board positions a board member can hold?

- Yes
- No

24. Should the code set a requirement for the chief executive and/or other individuals to be a board member?

- Yes
- No

25. Should the code set a requirement to appoint a Senior Independent Director (SID) to the board?

If you are unfamiliar with the role of a SID please refer to section 66 of the FRC Guidance on Board Effectiveness ([opens in new window](#))

Yes

No

26. What non-financial outcomes should the code require reporting on?

27. How should the code address environmental and sustainability issues?

28. Are there any technical aspects in relation to the code that you believe need addressing or updating?

29. Are there any reports or other resources that you feel may be useful to the development of the new code? These do not have to be written reports, books or articles but could also be other resources such as social media accounts, blog posts or YouTube channels.

30. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or observations on the Code of Governance?

**Thank You!**

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your response will help to shape our work on this important area.