

The CE Forum

Housing chief executives - WhatsApp summary

August – September 2022

A note to readers

These notes summarise recent discussions on Campbell Tickell's WhatsApp group for Chief Executives of housing associations and ALMOs across all four UK jurisdictions and the Republic of Ireland. A full summary of discussions from the inception of the group is available on request.

This is a closed group, open only to CEOs in housing associations and ALMOs. It currently has around 220 members.

While discussions are confidential and unattributable, members of the group are keen for the content themes and issues to be shared widely to assist with broader understanding.

Please note:

The following digest highlights matters that have been discussed in the group. None of the content should be treated as representing the collective views of the group as such, or be attributed to any of its members. The group is an information-sharing forum and not a policy-making body.

Contact us

If you are a housing CEO who would like to join, please email james.tickell@campbelltickell.com or greg.campbell@campbelltickell.com.

For any media enquiries, please email sonia.black@campbelltickell.com.

Latest highlights, August-September

1. Members of the group shared their respects to the passing of the Queen and recognition of her achievements.

Cost of Living

2. Members of the group discussed the rapidly increasing cost of living and took time to share the steps they are taking for both colleagues and residents. This led to Campbell Tickell organising a Zoom session for members to come together and share the pains and learn what other organisations are doing.
3. One CEO asked if any members were signing up to a fixed term energy tariff before prices jumped. A few confirmed they had done so, given that prices were going up by the day.
4. Members also shared which energy brokers and suppliers they were using in securing their energy contracts. It was clear that the rising costs of energy prices are causing pressures for members and that they are concerned about the impact on colleagues and residents.
5. There was discussion around pay reviews and other benefits for colleagues that organisations were providing in the light of the increased cost of living. There was a mix of offers shared, including carrying out pay reviews, offering a non-consolidated bonus, shorter working weeks, additional days

leave for birthdays and access to perks around wellbeing. Campbell Tickell produced a summary of the information provided.

6. Additionally, some members shared their approaches of how their organisations were planning to reach Real Living Wage by May 2023.
7. A few members discussed how they currently, or are looking to, provide workshops to colleagues on money saving tips and 1-2-1 advice with an external organisation.
8. The conversations highlighted how providers of supported housing would be facing different challenges to that of general needs. This was in relation to what additional payments or perks they can offer their colleagues as well as finances to cover fuel or living wage.

Social Housing Rents Consultation

9. Members discussed the government's consultation on social housing rents and how they are building this into their business planning scenarios and up against rising costs of fuel. This varied from building assumptions on 0%, 2%, 5%, 7% and 13%.
10. Campbell Tickell confirmed that it would be responding to the consultation and would use the views of its clients and other organisations in which it converses with to inform its response.

Sharing of knowledge and good practice

11. Some members discussed the requirement to be compliant with the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 by 1 October 2022.
12. One CEO asked the group for examples of how they share their performance with stakeholders and particularly with tenants. Members responded by sharing their different Board packs and formats for their Customer Annual Review. This ranged from various publication formats and videos.
13. Some group members shared their asset management strategy. One member was keen to see how they could make theirs digestible and owned by all colleagues, whilst another wanted to see a unified document covering both asset management and development strategy.
14. One member asked about how different providers have set up their service charge teams and where they sit, i.e. with finance or neighbourhoods. The majority of those that responded have service charges in their finance directorates.
15. Members shared their approach to CEO remuneration and benefits as well as organisations' approach to Board member remuneration.
16. One CEO asked the group for their approaches to compassionate leave. Most respondents had a flexible approach based on the circumstances.
17. Members continue to use the group as a venue for sharing good practice across a wide range of topics - governance, performance measurements, HR matters and others.