

Housing chief executives - WhatsApp summary

July – August 2025

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 260 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.

Latest highlights, July – August 2025

Governance

1. Complaints: One member shared their experience of non-compliance with the HOS code due to unmet timescales set out in an internal policy. They questioned their non-compliance due to their good intentions to meet their own timescales, welcoming others' perspectives. There were mixed responses amongst other members: some reason for improvement, agreed not non-compliance, disagreement – technically non-compliance, one member shared they measure an annual average with 'peaks and troughs' throughout.
2. Chair recruitment: One member asked the group about their own (CEO) involvement in the Chair recruitment process. This engaged a lot of discussion with the group with most individuals having an informal yet engaged approach. There was a sense that the CEOs opinions and feedback is important throughout the process but that the final decision should lie with others.
3. Neurodiversity: There was a comment in the group about neurodiversity and the increasing recognition of these individuals within an organisation, discussing their value and challenges associated. Another member echoed this comment and shared their actions in response. They had increased access for neurodivergent colleagues taking on apprenticeships and also created of a support group for colleagues, residents and family members.

4. Modern Slavery: One member asked if other organisations have a Modern Slavery policy in addition to a statement. One member responded that they have just a statement.
5. Organisational values: There was discussion about the usefulness of organisational values with mixed opinions shared within the group. Some members felt they were a key part of their organisations, bringing alignment in how they operate. It was highlighted that values should link to key behaviours in order to bring about positive action.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

6. One member asked the group about their methodology for collecting TSMs: Phone, Digital, Face to Face, Mixed. They shared information from a report suggesting increasing popularity for phone respondents, but found their own scores were reduced when a switch was made. Members responded with similar experiences but suggested an incoming permanent move to digital devices. Post and phone were still used by some members.

Tenancy caseworker load

7. One member asked the group about the number of cases each 'Tenancy sustainability' or 'Tenancy support' officers manage at any time. The responses ranged from 20 – 70 cases with discussion around the variance and differing complexity of cases. There was also variance based on the extent of reliance and additional support by external agencies, such as social services.

Long service awards and employee benefits

8. One member asked the group about their policy around long-service awards. There was discussion by members on the varying gifts and benefit packages associated at different organisations. Flower bouquets, fruit baskets, shopping vouchers, additional annual leave, and increased pension contributions were all mentioned.
9. Some members discussed a move away from these types of awards, preferring to reward good performance in the moment.
10. There was another discussion about rewarding good sickness records. There was mixed to negative feedback on this topic, with some organisations previously trying this. Some members felt this was ineffective and could lead to risks of discrimination in the workplace.

Artificial Intelligence

11. One member highlighted AI generated voice-notes which impersonate senior leaders within an organisation. It was raised as a new risk to organisations and their leaders to be aware of.

Flags

12. There was some discussion about flags and whether providers should respond. Some comments reflected a hesitancy to respond. One comment suggested the need to consult residents to develop guidelines which balance freedom of expression alongside sensitivities and emotional harm. One comment shared that they had received complaints around flags and considered it not a tenancy breach unless negative intention was proven.

Sharing of Information: Members use this forum to share examples of their work, relevant knowledge and information

- Cover sheets for Board papers and packs
- The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 are due to come into force on April 1st 2026.
- Governance framework
- Webinar: 'Navigating the storm: effective crisis management'
- ipaper article on failed IT project worth £117m (Quango) – discussion around Homes England and CQC budgets
- BBC Breakfast covering window safety
- Framework for a Board member skills audit

Recommendations: Members use this forum to seek trusted software, contractors, facilitators and more to help their organisation's work

- Facilitators for Business Continuity Plan/Disaster Recovery sessions to include crisis management, hostile media scenarios and role play
 - This led to a discussion around testing critical incident/emergency strategies and responses, the importance of a decision log and effective communication.
- Staff survey options – appropriate for small organisation
- Consultant requests:
 - Benchmarking of employee terms and conditions, beyond just salaries
 - Overhaul our job evaluation system and pay structure
 - Oversea retrofit programme – familiarity with Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Warm Homes funding
- Approaches to rent arrears – with an aim to reduce through a cultural shift
 - One member was happy to provide support – stating they have a structured approach with welfare support
 - Another member highlighted their own approach as: quick to challenge, highlight responsibilities and expectations, and invest in support
- Guidelines for maintaining play areas/equipment
- Insurance for small providers
- Guest speaker – issues faced by HA's/Charities/Providers who support disabled people