



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Housing
Ombudsman Service

Candidate Information Pack

The Housing Ombudsman

CLOSING DATE: Midnight 4th February 2019



Contents

**The Housing
Ombudsman**

The Role

**Person
Specification**

**Outline
T&Cs**

**Application
Process**

**Further
Information**

Contact Us

The Housing Ombudsman

The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is seeking to appoint a proven senior leader as Housing Ombudsman. MHCLG performs a critical role in delivering the Government's housing agenda, and this is an exciting opportunity for the post holder to be part of that agenda and make a pivotal impact on the social housing landscape.

The Housing Ombudsman delivers an essential service in providing redress for social housing residents, both tenants and leaseholders, and for private tenants where their landlords have chosen to join the scheme. The Housing Ombudsman has a critical role to play in delivering an independent, fair and impartial service, improving complaint handling throughout the process, and in supporting and advising tenants, landlords, and designated persons to achieve quicker and more effective dispute resolution locally.

This is a significant period for housing with the publication of the Social Housing Green Paper, [Dame Judith Hackitt's Review](#) on Building Regulations and the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Fire. Delivering effective redress has been identified as a key issue by social housing residents and is one of the main challenges the Government is taking forward through the Social Housing Green Paper. The Housing Ombudsman plays a key role in ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are able to have quick, appropriate and effective redress.

The Housing Ombudsman must be able to provide high quality senior leadership to the Housing Ombudsman Service. They must ensure that the Housing Ombudsman Service provides:

- An excellent quality of service;
- Lead the organisation in the formation and delivery of its strategy and business plan in line with the Housing Ombudsman Scheme;
- Ensure that robust and effective governance arrangements are in place.

About MHCLG

MHCLG is responsible for the delivery of Government policy relating to housing, planning and building, local growth, local government, integration and community cohesion. Our job is to create great places to live and work right across the country.

More information about the work of the department can be found in the [Annual Report](#), the [Single Departmental Plan](#) and on [our website](#).

“ Thank you for your interest in this role. This is an exciting opportunity to impart your knowledge and have pivotal impact on social housing.”

The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman (THO) is a prominent, senior figure in housing, often dealing with sensitive and challenging issues. As well as being skilled in complex decision making, the post requires an individual who is resilient, and can command public confidence and the respect of tenants, leaseholders and landlords.

This is a critical time for reviewing how wider consumer redress is delivered across all forms of housing, whether for social housing residents, for private renters, or for home owners. The Government has consulted on how to strengthen redress when things go wrong with people's housing across all tenures in our ['Strengthening consumer redress in the housing market'](#). This included exploring the option of whether access to redress across housing could be simplified. We are seeking a candidate keen to lead the organisation through this period and contribute to this exciting reform agenda. The post is offered on a three year basis to reflect that this is a senior, transitional leadership role.

MHCLG is at the heart of the Prime Minister's objective of making the UK a country that works for everyone. THO is one of the Department's 11 Arm's Length Bodies which deliver key areas of our agenda on the ground. THO has 54 staff (all based in London) and running costs of £5.2 million.

THO has responsibility for investigating complaints against social landlords in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. In 2015-16 there were 3.9 million households living in social housing. Housing is an important part of everyone's lives and issues relating to our homes can have a huge emotional impact. THO acts independently to ensure the fair resolution of disputes, aiming to resolve problems quickly and efficiently.

Rented housing plays a vital role in the nation's housing and we expect tenants to experience good standards of service regardless of whether their landlord is a local authority, housing association or private landlord. The Housing White Paper [Fixing Our Broken Housing Market](#) makes clear the Government's ambitions to make renting fairer for tenants and THO has a vital role to play in making this happen.

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the importance of providing redress to social housing has been underlined. The Social Housing Green Paper, [A New Deal for Social Housing](#), seeks to rebalance the relationships between landlord and tenant, address stigma and ensure social housing can be both a safety net for those who need help with their housing and a base for people to meet their aspirations on ownership. Ensuring that complaints can be made easily and resolved quickly when things go wrong and that people have access to effective redress will be key issues to address and in which THO has a key role. The consultation closed on 6 November and we are currently analysing responses. The Housing Ombudsman's responses to the consultation can be found on their website.

The Housing Ombudsman Service is also currently consulted on their [draft 2019-2022 corporate plan](#) and supporting plan for the first year. The Ombudsman's plans have been developed based on the themes of increased accessibility, hearing the resident voice, fast and effective redress and greater transparency that emerged from the social housing green paper.

About the role

Key responsibilities of public sector Non-Executives

Information about the role of Non-Executives in Government departments is provided in [the Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice and guidance](#). NEDs are expected to contribute to the work of Departments in the following areas:

- **Independence:** provide an independent perspective and assurance, including advice to the Permanent Secretary, on the capability of the Department. Provide independent support, guidance and challenge on the progress and implementation of the business plan;
- **Strategy:** constructively challenge and contribute to the development of strategy and business planning, including the setting and development of key objectives and targets;
- **Performance:** scrutinise the performance of the organisation in meeting agreed goals and objectives, and monitor the reporting of performance, including financial targets;
- **People:** develop and encourage appropriate behaviours to maintain or improve the departmental people strategy, including ethical and directional issues such as diversity and senior jobholder moves;
- **Governance:** satisfy themselves that governance, internal control and risk management systems are effective and capable of delivering relevant, accurate and timely management and financial information to the Board;
- **Support:** the Board in developing skills and tools to help it engage with strategic issues in ways which have practical resonance;
- **Connect:** the Board to people and organisations who can provide different perspectives, opinions and expertise which will assist in furthering the business of the Department; and
- **Specialist Responsibility:** underpin, support and specialise in one or more areas of work, supplementing skills and experience already in place across Human Resources, Digital, Finance, Operations, Commercial, Risk and Policy.

About the role

The Housing Ombudsman Service and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme

The role of the Housing Ombudsman is to resolve disputes involving members of the Scheme, including making awards of compensation or other remedies when appropriate, and supporting effective landlord-tenant dispute resolution by others. The Housing Ombudsman provides an independent, fair and impartial service and aims to achieve improvement in complaint handling in the sector throughout the process, supporting and advising landlords, tenants and designated persons to achieve more effective dispute resolution within their local procedures.

The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is approved by the Secretary of State under Section 51 of and Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1996. Membership of the Scheme is compulsory for social landlords (primarily housing associations who are or have been registered with the social housing regulator) and local authority landlords. Additionally, a number private landlords are voluntary members. The Localism Act 2011 also gave 'designated persons' a role in dealing with disputes between members of the Scheme and their residents, and in referring complaints that have not been resolved through the landlord's procedures to the Housing Ombudsman.

The purpose of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme is to enable tenants and other individuals to have complaints about members investigated by the Housing Ombudsman. The Scheme came into effect on 1 April 2013 and replaced the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme that had been in operation since 1996.

The Housing Ombudsman Scheme is financed entirely on a membership subscription basis.

Further information on the work of the Housing Ombudsman can be found at: <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

The successful candidate will:

Demonstrate strong leadership skills, an ability to provide clear strategic direction at a senior level. Have sound economic and political awareness, a commitment to encouraging and championing local collaboration and a proven ability to generate practical, workable solutions in a constrained financial environment and in an area of work central to the Government's housing agenda.

About the role

The role of the Housing Ombudsman is complex and challenging. At the highest level, the Housing Ombudsman's role is to:

- Ensure high quality services to residents and landlords using the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, and that all enquiries and complaints are dealt with appropriate consideration, fairness and to agreed timelines;
- Ensure that the organisation provides an excellent quality of service;
- Lead the organisation in the formulation and delivery of its strategy and business plan and in line with the Housing Ombudsman Scheme; and
- Ensure that strong governance is in place that meets best practice and government requirements.
- Ensure effective relationships with Government Ministers and with Parliament in carrying out the independent role of Housing Ombudsman.
- Act as a high profile advocate for independent complaints handling.
- Ensuring overarching targets and milestones are progressed and achieved.

Other responsibilities of the Ombudsman include:

- Leading the senior team in the execution of Housing Ombudsman Services' corporate objectives, taking advice from the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and the Panel of Advisors.
- Developing the annual budget and subscription rate in partnership with MHCLG.
- Being the ambassador for Housing Ombudsman Services, influencing and networking with key decision makers and stakeholders.
- Working collaboratively with landlords, MHCLG, tenant and leaseholder representative organisations and other stakeholders.
- Holding the senior team to account for the effective use of public funds and driving value for money.
- Ensuring that Housing Ombudsman Services' affairs are conducted with probity, and that high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times.
- Ensuring that the Service operates within the limits of its statutory authority and in accordance with the authority delegated from its sponsoring Department (MHCLG) and with guidance issued by it (embodied in the Framework Agreement, Accounting Officer delegation letter, and annual budget delegation letter).
- Fulfilling Accounting Officer responsibilities by ensuring public funds and assets are utilised effectively and that high standards of financial administration are adhered to in line with Managing Public Money and the Cabinet Office spending controls guidance and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Acting in accordance with the seven principles of public life.

Person Specification

To be successful in this role you will use your experience of:

- Leading an organisation strategically
- Strong stakeholder engagement
- Strong knowledge of decision-making process in Government

Essential criteria and experience for this role

- Evidence of strong strategic leadership skills with the ability to lead an organisation of a similar size and complexity of Housing Ombudsman Services.
- The ability to deliver organisational change and a proven ability to deliver and work with a number of stakeholders.
- Evidence of delivering a quality service and the ability to work with senior partners in the housing sector as well as across Government.
- An understanding of the decision-making process in Government.
- A proven understanding of the housing sector.
- Ability to think creatively and solve problems in a high level, challenging environment.
- Excellent communication skills, including being able to present issues clearly and confidently to Ministers and Parliament, and to deal effectively with the media.

Desirable criteria and experience for this role

- A track record of ensuring effective governance in the management of organisations.
- Experience of working within the housing sector or other related service.
- Experience of complex casework and / or complaint handling.

This is a full-time post and as this is a statutory office appointment you will not be an employee of the Crown or the Housing Ombudsman Service. The preferred candidate, selected by the Secretary of State, will be required to appear before a Parliamentary Select Committee as part of the appointment process.

If you wish to discuss this role in more detail please contact Moloney Search via housing@moloneysearch.com

Outline Terms and Conditions

Remuneration:

For this full time role, the remuneration is up to £120,000 per annum.

Expenses and Subsistence:

You will be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence costs at the same rate as members of Corporation staff.

Period of appointment:

Appointments will be made by Ministers, for a fixed initial period of up to 3 years. Appointments may be extended, subject to Ministerial approval.

Location:

The post is located in London, with travel around England as appropriate.

Eligibility: These posts are 'non-reserved' and are open to UK Nationals, British Nationals (Overseas), British Protected Persons, Commonwealth Citizens, EEA Nationals of other member states and certain non-EEA family members and Swiss nationals under the Swiss EU agreement. There must be no employment restriction or time limit on your permitted stay in the UK. You should normally have been resident in the United Kingdom for five years preceding your application.

Diversity: MHCLG is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and that all our systems and processes are fair, open and objective. We endeavour to promote this approach in those with whom we come into contact. We are responsible for ensuring that the highest principles of equal opportunities policy are put into effect.

As an equal opportunities employer we make no distinction between people on grounds of their race, ethnic or national origin, age, religion or belief, sex, marital status, disability, part-time status or sexual orientation.

We would particularly welcome applications from diverse individuals / individuals from different backgrounds.

Conflicts of interest: Candidates must note the requirement to declare any interests they may have that might cause questions to be raised about their approach to the business of the Department or the Housing Ombudsman Service. These include any relevant business interests, share holdings, positions of authority, retainers, consultancy arrangements or other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies, both for themselves and for their spouses/partners.

If you have any interests which might be relevant to the work of the or the Housing Ombudsman Service, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your supporting letter and the standard form at Annex C.

If appointed, you will be expected to act in accordance with the Cabinet Office [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#).

Application Process



To apply for this post please supply the materials below by **Midnight on 4th February 2019**

Curriculum Vitae – including education and professional qualifications and full employment history (max. 3 pages)

1. **Covering letter** – explaining how you meet both the essential and desirable criteria for the role (max. 3 pages). Please use specific examples from your experience to demonstrate how you meet each essential criteria.
2. **Diversity (Equal Opportunities) Monitoring Questionnaire** – Annex A
3. **Guaranteed interview scheme form** – Annex B (if applicable)
4. **Conflict of Interest form** – Annex C
5. **Other Relevant Information Declaration Form** – Annex D
6. **List of referees** – Annex E (the referees will be approached only if you are shortlisted for interview)
7. **Publicity survey** – Annex F (please indicate how you heard about this post)

These annexes can be found on the same page as this Candidate Information Pack on the Centre for Public Appointments website.

Please note that the above information and completed forms are required for each application. We cannot accept information and forms submitted with previous applications because your circumstances may have changed in the meantime and some of this information will be specific to the post being applied for - see the "Further Information" section below for further details. Please also note that the initial assessment of your suitability against the role criteria will be made only from the evidence you set out in your covering letter and CV.

Your completed application should be returned to Moloney Search, preferably in Microsoft Word, by email to Moloney Search via housing@moloneysearch.com by **Midnight on 4th February 2019**. Please include the reference "**THO Campaign**" in the title of your email.



Application Process

Application

- Your application will be acknowledged by Moloney Search.
- An assessment panel will assess your application to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided. The Panel will consist of:
 - MHCLG Panel Chair
 - Organisation Panel Representative
 - Senior Independent Panel Member

Shortlist

Assessment

MHCLG will also be working alongside Moloney Search, an Executive Search Agency as part of the recruitment process up to the sift stage. This is to help ensure we reach a wide ranging audience and find candidates with the suitability and skill set needed to uptake the role of Housing Ombudsman.

Post-interview



Application Process



- On the application covering letter candidates should indicate whether they will be available on week commencing 15th & 22nd April 2019 which are the suggested dates for the interviews. We aim to accommodate all interviewees but if they are unavailable on that date or alternatives that are offered we may have to disregard their application. A letter confirming the arrangements of date, time and venue will be sent to all short listed candidates. Copies of passports will be taken at interview to check candidates' identities and their right to work in the UK.
- Candidates who the Assessment Panel considers meet the criteria for the post and merit appointment will be recommended to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for consideration. The Minister may choose to meet with appointable candidates before making a decision. If the Minister does, they will meet all appointable candidates in the presence of the Panel Chair or their nominated representative. The time taken between interview and a final appointment decision being made can sometimes take a number of weeks. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.
- Interviews will usually be held at 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. Reasonable expenses will be payable for travel to and from the interview, in accordance with MHCLG guidelines. Please contact the Public Appointments Team via publicappointments@communities.gov.uk in advance if you intend to claim travel expenses so full detail on permissible expenses can be provided (receipts/proof of purchase will be requested).



Application Process

Application

Shortlist

Interview

Post-interview

- Following Ministerial decision on appointment and agreement from the Prime Minister, letters will be sent to all interviewees with the result. The successful candidate will be sent a letter of appointment to sign and return. They will also be asked to provide a biography which will accompany the Press Notice which will announce their appointment to the Board. Once the appointment commences, training or an induction may be offered as required.

Pre-Appointment Scrutiny

- In addition the preferred candidate will be required to attend a pre-appointment hearing in Parliament with the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee. The hearing will take place before a candidate is appointed.
- The process will involve the Secretary of State's preferred candidate being interviewed by the Select Committee and the transcripts from the interview sent to the preferred candidate (and the Department under embargo) before a report is published. Further guidance on pre-appointments hearings is set out at [Appendix I](#).
- Links to previous pre-appointment hearings by the Select Committee can be found at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-archive/clg/clg-reports-and-publications/>



Indicative Timeline

Please note that these dates are only indicative at this stage and could be subject to change. If you are unable to meet these timeframes, please let us know in your application letter.



**Interviews will take
place in London**



Further Information

Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is committed to providing equal opportunities for all and welcomes applications from candidates irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, transgender or working patterns. Please complete this form and return it with your application. Please note that the form will not be treated as part of your application. The data will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will be used for monitoring and statistical purposes only.

Political Activity Questionnaire

This questionnaire enables the monitoring of political activity of candidates for a public appointment insofar as the information is already in the public domain.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

MHCLG uses the guaranteed interview scheme to help widen employment opportunities for disabled people. Applicants with disabilities who meet the criteria stated in the person specification and submit a completed 'Guaranteed Interview Scheme' form will be guaranteed an interview.

Conflicts of Interest

Please give details of any business or other interest or personal connections which, if you are appointed, could be misconstrued or cause embarrassment to either MHCLG or the Housing Ombudsman Service - see the "Outline Terms and Conditions" section for further information.

Other Relevant Information Declaration Form

Any appointee to a Public Body could find that matters or incidents which previously attracted no attention could become matters of public interest once the person concerned holds a public appointment. Therefore, if you have answered 'yes' to any of the questions on the form, you must provide a statement explaining the circumstances.

Complaints

If at any time during the appointments procedure you have reason to question your treatment, you should first address your concerns to the administration team by email: publicappointments@communities.gov.uk or by post: Public Appointments Team, ALB Governance & Appointments, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 1st Floor NE, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF.

If after investigation by the Department, you remain dissatisfied, you may take your complaint to the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Details on how to make a complaint can be found on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/what-we-do/complaints-and-investigations> Complaints should be lodged within 12 months of the appointment being made.

Further information

Seven principles of public life and ensuring public confidence

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to MHCLG or The Housing Ombudsman Service, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the Assessment Panel and provide details of the issue/s in your supporting letter. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media. The Assessment Panel will explore potential conflicts of interest during the interview process.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Any statements you make will be treated confidentially and we will contact you to discuss any potential conflicts that might arise ahead of the sift process to explain what might be required if you are successful and check that you still wish your application to be considered.

Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment either not being made or being terminated. Should you wish to speak to someone concerning a potential conflict of interest, please contact publicappointments@communities.gov.uk



Further information

Commissioner for Public Appointments

In accordance with the Public Appointments Order in Council 2017 2(2), we will process your application in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018. Your data will be held securely and access will be restricted to those dealing with your application or involved in the recruitment process. The Commissioner for Public Appointments, may also request access as part of a complaint investigation or review of the recruitment process. Your data will be stored for up to two years and processed for the purpose of the recruitment process, diversity monitoring and, if successful, your personal record. If appointed, your data will be stored for the duration of your tenure and may be shared with the organisation that you are appointed too, unless specifically requested otherwise. Should you wish your data to be removed from our records, please contact publicappointments@communities.gov.uk

Compliance with GDPR

In accordance with the Public Appointments Order in Council 2017 2(2), we will process your application in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018. Your data will be held securely and access will be restricted to those dealing with your application or involved in the recruitment process. The Commissioner for Public Appointments, may also request access as part of a complaint investigation or review of the recruitment process. Your data will be stored for up to two years and processed for the purpose of the recruitment process, diversity monitoring and, if successful, your personal record. If appointed, your data will be stored for the duration of your tenure and may be shared with the organisation that you are appointed too, unless specifically requested otherwise. Should you wish your data to be removed from our records, please contact publicappointments@communities.gov.uk

Contact Details for Queries

All applications will be acknowledged Moloney Search within 5 working days of receipt. If you have not received an acknowledgement within 7 working days of submitting your application, please contact the Moloney Search housing@moloneysearch.com to ensure we have received your application. You can also contact us using these details if you would like further information on the role, the application process or the progress of your application.