

## Housing Ombudsman: FAQs

### About the role

#### 1. What essential experience and knowledge do I need for this role?

We are seeking an outstanding individual with executive-level experience and a proven track record in leadership and governance. The role requires someone who can command public confidence and lead a large organisation through significant change.

##### **Essential criteria include:**

###### Strategic Leadership & Decision-Making

- A proven ability to lead large-scale, complex organisations through strategic change, making impartial and high-stakes decisions independently, with sound judgement and resilience under pressure.

###### Communication Skills

- The ability to communicate complex and sensitive issues to diverse audiences including Ministers, Parliament, media, and stakeholders, using tailored communication methods to influence and drive cultural change.

###### Service Improvement & Innovation

- A track record of improving operational performance and service delivery in resource-constrained environments, using creative problem solving and digital innovation to deliver value for money.

###### Governance & Risk Management

- Experience in overseeing large scale organisational transformation including digital service delivery, with a track record in risk management and ensuring effective governance structures.

###### Consumer Focused Complaint Handling

- Experience in managing complex casework and complaints at a senior level, with an understanding of consumer protection principles and a commitment to fairness and independence.

#### 2. What skills are most important for this role?

- **For Ombudsman:** Impartiality, problem-solving, stakeholder engagement, and the ability to make fair and balanced decisions under pressure.
- As the Ombudsman is also the **Accounting Officer**, financial accuracy, compliance knowledge, risk management, and attention to detail are also important. Strong leadership and governance awareness are essential.

#### 3. How much experience is required?

Candidates typically need at least 5 years of senior leadership experience in complaints handling, mediation, or regulatory work. For Accounting Officer responsibilities, you should have significant experience in financial management and accountability, ideally within the public sector or a similar regulated setting.

#### 4. Do I need prior Ombudsman or public sector experience?

Not necessarily. Whilst prior experience in Ombudsman services or the public sector is advantageous, we welcome applicants from diverse professional backgrounds who can demonstrate strategic leadership, impartial decision-making, and excellent communication skills.

**5. Can I apply if I live outside the UK?**

You must have a right to work in the UK and there must be no employment restrictions, or limit on your permitted stay in the UK.

**6. Is the role office-based or remote?**

Housing Ombudsman Service allows colleagues to choose if they wish to work in the London office, from home or a hybrid of the two. Whilst much of the work can be completed remotely, attendance at hearings, governance meetings, and audits will require in-office presence. As a senior role the Housing Ombudsman will be expected to be visible to residents and the housing sector.

**7. What is the expected time commitment?**

This is a full-time role. Flexibility may be required for key meetings or deadlines.

**8. What is the remuneration for this role?**

£130,095.00 per-annum for a full time role. The fee is paid on a pro rata monthly basis and will be subject to tax and national insurance. Bonus arrangements will not apply to this appointment.

**9. How long can I expect to be appointed to this role?**

The term length for your initial appointment is 3-5 years. Subject to a satisfactory performance in office, the Secretary of State will consider reappointing you in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. There is a presumption that no individual should serve in a regulated office for more than two terms or ten years, unless in exceptional circumstances.

**10. What annual leave would I be entitled to?**

You are entitled to 30 days annual leave per annum.

**11. Will I be entitled to claim expenses for this role?**

Reasonable expenses necessarily incurred in the conduct of your duties may be claimed directly from the Housing Ombudsman Service in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Service's expenses policy.

**12. What checks will be carried out during recruitment?**

MHCLG will conduct:

- Due diligence checks including social media, financial probity and conflicts of interest.
- Right-to-work confirmation.

### **13. How can I make my application stand out?**

- Ensure your application clearly sets out how you meet the selection criteria.
- Highlight specific examples of senior leadership and governance experience.
- Demonstrate alignment with our values of fairness, integrity, and accountability.
- Provide clear, measurable outcomes from your previous roles to show impact.
- Ensure your application reflects strong decision-making and strategic thinking.

### **14. Who can I talk to about my application?**

MHCLG will provide a contact point for any queries about the role or application process.

### **15. What is the process?**

The recruitment process will include:

- Application submission via the specified portals.
- Pre-sift dependent on volume of applications received.
- Shortlisting based on experience and selection criteria.
- **Shortlisted candidates only:** Staff engagement group with Housing Ombudsman Service staff – this will not be scored.
- **Shortlisted candidates only:** Residents panel session – this will not be scored.
- Interview stage, which will assess candidates against the selection criteria.
- Pre-appointment scrutiny hearing with the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee.
- Final appointment decision.

Further information on the staff engagement group and residents panel will be provided to candidates who are shortlisted for interview.

This appointment may be of interest to the Prime Minister. No.10 will be kept informed of progress during the campaign.

### **16. How will conflicts of interest be managed?**

Holders of public office are expected to adhere to and uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. A potential conflict will not preclude a candidate from being shortlisted/appointed provided that appropriate arrangements are made. Before you apply you should consider carefully and declare:

- Any outside interest that you may have, such as shares you may hold in a company providing services to government.
- Any possible reputational issues arising from your past actions or public statements that you have made.
- Any political activity in line with section 9.5 of the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

All potential conflicts of interest and how they might be managed will be discussed at interview.

### **17. I am a landlord; can I apply for this role?**

- Any private interest in housing activities will likely be deemed a conflict of interest and may need to be relinquished in order to take on the role of Housing Ombudsman.
- A candidate cannot hold, or have any ongoing interest in, a private or social rented tenancy. This explicitly includes any involvement as a landlord or property agent.
- These restrictions apply regardless of whether the Housing Ombudsman Service assumes responsibility for delivering the private landlord Ombudsman service, as HOS currently has voluntary private landlord and property agent members.
- If you currently have an ongoing private housing interest, you can still apply, but you must declare it and be willing to give it up if appointed. If you are unsure whether your interest could be a barrier, please contact the hiring manager before applying.

### **18. What is a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing?**

The Housing Ombudsman is a Significant Public Appointment subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by select committees to ensure compliance with the Governance Code. This process may involve the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee reviewing departmental information and holding a pre-appointment hearing. Hearings take place after ministers have selected their preferred candidate for appointment but before the final appointment. MHCLG will provide preparatory support to the candidate ahead of the hearing.

### **19. What does it mean that the Housing Ombudsman is on the Prime Minister's interest list?**

Some public appointments are made by the Prime Minister, or the Crown on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Other appointments like the Housing Ombudsman are made by Secretaries of State or other ministers and are of interest to the Prime Minister. No.10 will be kept informed of progress during the campaign.

### **About the Housing Ombudsman Service**

### **20. What does it mean that HOS is a “corporation sole”?**

HOS is currently structured as a “corporation sole” which means that the corporation is constituted in the person of the Housing Ombudsman and his or her successors in office. The Housing Ombudsman is not an employee of the corporation sole. The corporation sole is a distinct legal entity with legal capacity.

For HOS to potentially be able to deliver additional services in the future, it must first undergo a corporate transformation to become a body corporate (a company limited by guarantee).

**21. Will the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) be designated as the new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman (PRSLO) that will be introduced through the Renters Rights Act 2025?**

A final decision on a provider for the PRSLO has not yet been made, however the Government's preferred approach at this time is for the HOS to run a streamlined cross-tenure redress service for social and private tenants.

**22. When will a decision be made on who will be designated to run the PRSLO?**

A final decision on the scheme administrator of the PRSLO will be made in due course.

**23. If the PRSLO is delivered through HOS, what will this mean for the role of the Housing Ombudsman?**

Although no final decision has been made, if HOS delivers the PRSLO we would expect that there should be one person appointed to the Housing Ombudsman role as both the private and social rented sectors as the roles will require the exercising of similar functions.

**24. If a decision is made to have a single Ombudsman for the social and private rented sectors, would the successful candidate be required to reapply for the Housing Ombudsman role, or would they be required to apply for the role of Ombudsman for the private rented sector separately?**

Subject to ministerial agreement, if HOS does take on the PRSLO function we would expect the eventual Housing Ombudsman to also be appointed as the PRSLO Ombudsman without having to go through a further competition.

**25. If HOS delivers the PRSLO and a single Ombudsman is appointed for the social and private rented sectors, will you review the remuneration for this position to reflect the increased responsibilities?**

We will review the Housing Ombudsman's remuneration if HOS takes on the PRSLO and a single Ombudsman role is created.