



Public Accounts Committee

Suzanne Muna
Secretary
Social Housing Action Campaign

By email: shac.action@gmail.com

20 June 2023

Housing Association Service Charges

Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for your email on 11 May outlining the issues your organisation has uncovered with service charges by housing associations. In your email, you asked for the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office to launch an investigation into the possible misuse of public money by housing associations.

As I outlined in my email dated 10 May 2023, the NAO does not have a remit to investigate individual housing associations or local authorities. The NAO is only able to look at the oversight, assurance and regulation by central government and its arm's length bodies. Housing Benefit is no longer under the local audit regime meaning that individual arrangements are made between local authorities and their independent auditors when examining Housing Benefit claims. The NAO would be able to look at this issue from the Department for Work & Pensions angle, examining the oversight, assurance and regulation regime, but not at individual providers or housing associations.

I have spoken to the head of the NAO, Gareth Davies, and he informs me he is not currently proposing to do any dedicated work in this area. His team are instead monitoring the outcome of the ongoing Levelling Up Housing and Communities select committee [inquiry into the finances and sustainability of the social housing sector](#), as well as the progress of the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, both of which could have an impact on this topic. The NAO will review whether there is value in carrying out a dedicated piece of work on the oversight, assurance and regulation regime of service charges by housing associations in due course.

Yours Sincerely

Dame Meg Hillier

Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts



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