

Charter for Change 2024

Mission statement

The RFA has taken steps to ensure that the policies adhered to by professional freeholders support a high standard of living for residents in apartment buildings. The RFA now intends to ensure that these policies are adopted by all freeholders and other entities which have responsibilities in respect of apartment blocks. A regulated leasehold system can deliver the highest standards of management, ensuring that all stakeholders are properly held to account. The RFA will work with Government and other industry bodies to support proposals to achieve these aims, as follows:

Improve standards of management in **apartment living**

- Support the introduction of regulation of managing agents in accordance with Lord Best's ROPA recommendations, to ensure residents across all tenures (commonhold and leasehold) benefit from improved standards in the management of their buildings and broader communities.
- Help to deliver greater transparency of information across all tenures (commonhold and leasehold) for residents at the point of market listing, and throughout their period of ownership, to increase awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Drive up standards across the **leasehold sector**

- Develop a Code of Practice for professional freeholders to support the regulation of the industry.
- Work with the Government to ensure any secondary legislation for the Leasehold & Freehold Reform Act 2024 is workable and sustainable rather than one characterised by freeholder insolvencies with unintended knock-on effects for leaseholders, residents, lenders, building safety and the wider economy.
- Support the introduction of legislation which ensures that no freeholder can profit from forfeiture – and that any surplus realised from forfeiture is returned to the leaseholder, the leaseholder's representatives/estate or to charity.
- Support the implementation of the Law Commission's proposals to make the enfranchisement process easier for residents.
- Work with lenders to ensure they understand leases and take a pragmatic approach to lending against them so that leaseholders are not forced to negotiate unnecessary changes to their lease terms when applying for mortgage finance.

Assist with fixing **unsafe buildings**

- Press for Government funding to be made available immediately so that remediation projects can be progressed without delay.
- Encourage Government to force the manufacturers of dangerous building products to contribute to funding remediation projects.
- Call on Government to oversee the work of developers to ensure they meet their commitments under the Developer remediation contract, identify and undertake repairs where there are safety issues and ensure there are no unnecessary delays to remediation works.
- Work with Government to fix the flaws in the Grant Funding Agreement so that remediation work can be delivered as quickly as possible.
- Encourage industry to respond to current and emerging building safety legislation, codes and regulations, in the interests of achieving the best possible outcomes for residents.

Promote **green apartment living** and happier communities

- Embed sustainable practices and policies within routine day-to-day operations and interactions with all stakeholders.
- Work with Government to raise awareness of energy initiatives so that building owners, leaseholders and residents are made aware of any government initiatives intended to help decarbonise residential buildings and help meet the Government's Net Zero ambitions.
- Develop new policies and procedures together that promote sustainable practice and embed high standards from the partners we work with.

Leaseholder **costs**

- Ensure leaseholders are aware of their rights to obtain information about service charges so that they know how service charge funds are being used and can raise questions and concerns.
- Ensure managing agents deal promptly and fully with queries from leaseholders regarding service charge funds.
- Work with industry to promote the regulation of rapidly escalating ground rent to ensure leaseholders do not have to pay any more in real terms than they agreed to when the lease was initially granted.