



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

Redrawing the map: Views from housing professionals on local government reorganisation

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Summary

The government has embarked on an extensive programme of local government reorganisation (LGR), with the abolition of county councils and merging of smaller districts across large parts of England to form larger local government units representing populations of up to 600,000.

This will be a phased approach across the country, with the aim of completing the reorganisation of all English councils by the end of this parliament.

CIH has been talking to members across the country about the implications of the delivery of new housing and the management of existing homes. It has carried out an online survey of housing professionals to help understand the main concerns in areas undergoing reorganisation, in local authorities and in the wider housing sector. The survey received a total of 54 responses.

The survey results highlight several concerns facing housing professionals working in areas where reorganisation is taking place. A wide range of housing issues were raised, with particular worries about the continuity of allocations, temporary accommodation and homelessness services.

There is a clear need for more guidance for local authorities and housing associations operating in LGR-affected locations on these and other issues. We will continue to work with government and partners across the sector to ensure housing professionals have the resources they need to ensure transitions to new councils are completed as smoothly as possible.



Key findings

- 53% of local authority respondents rated concern about housing service continuity during reorganisation at 8 out of 10 or above
- The housing register and allocations policies were considered most at risk of disruption, cited by 66% of local authority respondents. Housing strategy, regulatory and compliance issues, temporary accommodation and homelessness also featured highly
- Many respondents are concerned about workforce uncertainty, citing potential job losses in local authorities going through reorganisation and loss of institutional knowledge
- There are clear concerns that housing is not being prioritised in reorganisation, as local authority resources are taken up by policy areas such as social care.



Concerns

Local authority respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were about the continuity of housing services in the transition to new councils, on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest).

Twenty responses (53% of total local authority respondents) rated their level of concern as eight or higher, with 14 (37%) rating between five and seven. Four respondents gave a rating of four or below.

The survey also asked local authority respondents to name the services they considered most at risk of disruption, with several options provided. The table below illustrates the responses received.

Function (respondents could tick more than one box)	Mentions	%
Housing register and allocations	25	66%
Housing strategy	22	58%
Regulatory and compliance	19	50%
Temporary accommodation	19	50%
Homelessness services	18	47%
New build	17	45%
Landlord services	16	42%
Planning	14	37%
Supported housing	12	32%
Improvements to existing homes	12	32%
Safety	11	29%

The survey findings suggest that, while local government reorganisation (LGR) has not yet resulted in widespread delays to council housebuilding, there are emerging concerns about its longer-term impact on housing delivery and strategic priorities.

Among local authority respondents, most reported that their council had not delayed decisions because of reorganisation, with 21 answering no compared with nine who said yes.

Similarly, the majority did not believe that reorganisation had delayed, or would delay, the development of new council homes, with 25 responding no and four responding yes.

These findings indicate that, at the time of the survey, most councils had not experienced significant disruption to housing delivery as a direct result of LGR.

However, discussions with CIH members suggest that the survey results may not capture the full picture. In some areas, members reported that reorganisation is already affecting housing delivery, with concerns that uncertainty and competing priorities are slowing progress.

This perception was echoed by respondents working for housing associations. The majority of these respondents anticipated changes in how they work with local authorities. Twelve respondents expected to experience changes, compared with just two who did not.

Some respondents suggested that the focus of councils on reorganisation could reduce commitment to delivering new affordable and social housing in the short term. It was also anticipated by some respondents that decisions on longer-term housing strategies may be deferred until new governance arrangements are established.

A cross-cutting concern expressed in responses to the survey was that housing would not be a priority throughout the reorganisation process and in newly created councils due to other policy areas taking precedent, such as social care.

Political changes at the local authority level were considered by many to add further complications to the local government reorganisation process. Several respondents emphasised the need for new local authorities to ensure the voices of residents remain heard in larger unitary councils.

Local authority professionals

For those working in affected councils, the impact on staff at a personal level, with uncertainty about future roles and structures impacting on motivation and morale, was highlighted.

Some expressed concern about moving into larger councils where relationships with communities may be more distant and that experienced staff may take the opportunity to leave local authority housing altogether.

There is also a concern about delays to procurement while new or merged corporate strategies are being developed, the challenges that present themselves in merging systems such as IT and tenant data, and the potential impact they may have on residents.

Other housing professionals

For others, predominantly in housing associations, concerns were expressed about larger unitary authorities resulting in more distance between councils and other housing providers.

For those in housing partnership arrangements with local authorities, they were also worried about potential shifts in strategy.

Particular challenges within rural communities were cited by representatives of rural housing providers. New unitary authorities were considered by some to potentially prioritise urban areas and have less expertise in the specific housing needs of rural areas.

Recommendations

The responses to this survey have enabled us to better understand the concerns of housing professionals that have developed as a result of local government reorganisation.

Together with partners across the housing sector, we will be working to ensure housing is properly represented throughout the local government reorganisation process.

In particular, we will ask the government to:

- Publish a clear, housing-specific timeline for reorganisation, setting out which services and policies should be in place by vesting day, and suggested timescales for those where transition to new systems may take several months
- Issue a day one safe and legal checklist detailing all statutory services that should be in place on vesting day
- Ensure that local authorities have adequate staffing and resources to support reorganisation
- Provide specific technical guidance on the merging of Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) and creation of new allocations registers, learning from previous experiences of unitarisation.



CIH resources

We recognise the role CIH, working with other organisations across the sector, can play in supporting housing professionals in areas where reorganisation is taking place.

As part of this commitment, we have a number of resources that are or will be available to the CIH community:

- CIH members can access our recent member-only briefing on devolution and local government reorganisation [here](#), which includes information on the national policy objectives underlying reorganisation
- The results of this survey will inform development of a CIH local government reorganisation housing toolkit, which we expect to launch in the autumn. This will include a variety of resources to assist housing professionals
- We will also soon be launching a new section of our knowledge hub on the CIH website focusing on devolution and LGR
- We are facilitating a range of member forums and roundtables focused on LGR, to share learning from areas that have previously been through reorganisation, including a session at the [Housing Community Summit](#) in September
- Listen to our recent podcast on devolution, LGR and housing [here](#).

About the survey

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) ran a survey asking housing professionals about the impact of local government reorganisation (LGR) between 11 May and 19 June 2026.

The survey aimed to improve understanding of the main concerns facing housing professionals in areas undergoing reorganisation, in local authorities and in the wider housing sector.

The survey was open to all, including those who are not CIH members, and was distributed via CIH mailing lists, social media and wider networks.

The survey received 54 responses. Of these, 38 (70%) work for a local authority, nine (17%) work for a housing association and the remaining seven work elsewhere in the housing sector (e.g. ALMO, consultancy, developer). 35 of the 38 responses from local authority employees were from those working in councils designated for reorganisation.

Twenty respondents (37%) are at executive director/director/assistant director level in their organisation. Fifteen (28%) are managers or senior officers. Eleven (20%) are head of service or department. The remaining eight respondents to this question described their role as officer/advisor/other.

The survey received a spread of responses primarily from areas affected by local government reorganisation. Fifteen (28%) of responses were from the East Midlands, 10 from the South East, 10 from the East and nine from the South West. The remaining 10 responses were from the West Midlands, North West and London.

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