

To:  
Sally Randall  
Deputy Director, Private Rented Housing and Empty  
Homes  
Department of Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London

From:  
David Gibbens  
Policy Lead  
Empty Homes Network  
PO Box 703  
**Exeter  
EX1 9PX**

Tel: 0844 736 5 736

5<sup>th</sup> February 2012  
By email only

e-mail: [david@ehnetwork.org.uk](mailto:david@ehnetwork.org.uk)

Dear Sally

### **Re Empty homes bids - unit grant rates in Houses in Multiple Occupation**

I am writing on behalf of the Empty Homes Network about value-for-money assessments of bids under the Empty Homes Community Grants Fund.

It has become clear from the briefings being run by self-help-housing.org and HACT that many of the organisations interesting in bidding envisage projects where young people receive training and support to refurbish homes that they then live in. In cases we are aware of the proposal is to produce a House in Multiple Occupation for four young people, with some shared facilities but with each young person living as a separate household, occupying a room with a locked door and the usual facilities required by environmental health legislation. In addition to the support over the duration of the refurbishment project, each young person would continue to receive low-level support from the voluntary organisation, either under an existing Supporting People contract or from other sources of funding such as Social Services.

We think such schemes are fully in line with what the Community Grants Fund is expected to deliver but the question arises of how the value-for-money is assessed and how the outputs are to be quantified. Taking a four-person, four-bedroom HMO as an example, if treated as a single unit it would have to compete in value-for-money terms with a four-person two-bedroom flat which would have radically different costs associated with it.

In traditional HCA reporting, a 4-bedroom HMO as described above would be counted as four units of housing (normally supported housing). We think it should be treated in the same way within the Community Grants Fund both in terms of value-for-money and quantifying the outputs of the programme, given that four homes are created for four independent households.

If you agree, we hope that you will make this clear by enhancing the guidance as soon as possible as it will have a bearing on the bids received. We look forward to hearing your response in due course.

Yours sincerely



David Gibbens  
Empty Homes Network, Policy Lead

cc. (by email only)

Jamie Saddler, Political Advisor to Andrew Stunell MP

David Ireland, Chief Executive, Empty Homes

Pacian Andrews, Delivery Partnership Manager, HCA

Jennie Bryce, Programme Manager, Tribal Group

Jon Fitzmaurice, Director, self-help-housing.org

