



Annual Report 2020

Published 23 October 2020

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Chair's Report

Wendy Poole
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
NAFN Chair 2010-20



Dear Members

I want to thank you for your continued support as we enter our 23rd year of successful service delivery. I would also like to thank members of the Executive Board for their valuable input over the last 12 months during a period of significant change including our response to the COVID-19 national emergency

It is hard to believe that I have chaired the organisation for the past 10 years during which time I have overseen huge changes in the organisation of the Service Team and the range of systems available to support the business needs of NAFN members. When required, I have worked closely with the Executive Board to revise governance arrangements and update the NAFN Constitution to reflect the changing needs of the service and compliance with Government legislation. The need for such changes arises more frequently than you might expect.

Back in 2010 we had two regional teams (Brighton and Tameside). There were no housing association members and no online services available. At that time no one could foresee the proposal to introduce the Single Fraud Investigation Service that required restructuring of the service and the move to a single point of delivery. How things have changed.

Since March 2020, the service has needed to respond to the COVID-19 national emergency. Like most organisations, home-working arrangements were introduced immediately with minimal disruption and these remain in place. During the last six months we have established a close working relationship with the Cabinet Office, Home Office, BEIS and other national organisations collating and sharing data and intelligence provided by members on COVID-19 fraud to protect the public purse. This has enhanced NAFN's visibility and reputation in Government and across the country.

In the last year, local authority membership has fallen slightly as a consequence of the introduction of unitary and combined authorities and this trend is expected to continue as financial pressures on local government remain in place. On the other hand, housing associations and other public authority membership is healthy as new members are attracted to the service in response to concerns and increasing levels of fraud.

For the fourth year running, I am pleased to report that the annual IPCO inspection made no recommendations and the NAFN SPOC service continues to maintain a strong level of compliance in the acquisition of communications data on behalf of local authorities and a number of wider public authorities.

Finally, I was particularly pleased that the NAFN Service was formally recognised in the iNetwork Awards in November 2019. We came first in the category 'Effective Information and Security' for our work with National Hunter on the National Right-to-Buy Anti-Fraud Service. We were also a Finalist in the 'iStandUK Innovation Award' in recognition of our partnership with the LGA introducing the NR3 National Database for Taxi Licensing.

Wendy Poole

Treasurer's Report

Peter Farrow
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and
The City of Wolverhampton Council
NAFN Treasurer 2010-20



NAFN continues to remain mindful of the difficult financial circumstances you face and the need to keep costs down and service delivery up. Our fee model, we believe, helps towards this. Please be assured we remain committed to providing a value for money service to members.

Service Delivery

As you are aware NAFN services are centred in one office based at Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. The ability to provide services through local government accommodation, professional support services and further improvements in the use of technology enables NAFN to continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner. We also continue to be committed to demonstrating year on year improvement to our services. As in previous years the Executive Board has pushed forward with new services for the benefit of its members and further investment in NAFN continues to be made in order to enhance service delivery.

Annual Accounts

Both the Executive Board and Members are aware that NAFN must be self-financing, largely through subscriptions and wherever possible seeking additional funding through other routes such as government grants. However, we are aware that as cuts continue to be made across Central Government, we may not always be able to attract the level of funding that we have done in the past. Should this come into effect, then we are already looking at options that will be available to us in order to manage such an event. During the year our employee and project costs rose as we successfully recruited into a number of vacant posts, and a range of projects were completed including the Entrust Soft token upgrade, NAS Service, Website development including the DVLA/Public facing website and an online-eLearning CPD platform. However, we were able to offset these costs through the receipt of additional fee and grant income.

The approved reserve is held to mitigate the risks to the Host Authority for delivering the NAFN services and is agreed annually. The level of this reserve continues to be monitored and where appropriate funds are released to keep membership costs low. The use of the working reserve will be key to the next stage of the transformation agenda planned for NAFN.

The financial prospects for the future will no doubt continue to be difficult for the public sector. However, the commitment across the whole of the public sector to fighting fraud, preventing crime and protecting the public purse, as ever, remains high. NAFN will continue to help you meet your commitments. Councils face difficult budget decisions and we will continue to play our part by protecting service delivery and constraining fee increases.

Overview

By successfully maintaining our membership levels, accessing government department and other grants wherever possible, and retaining the ability to use our working reserve as and when required, we continue to be able to improve and widen service delivery and help subsidise membership fees. We remain in a sound position financially as things currently stand but remain mindful that funding is volatile.

Peter Farrow

NAFN – Statement of Accounts 2019-20

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2020

	2019-20	2018-19
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Employee Related Costs	503,722	436,587
Premises Related Costs	13,000	13,275
Transport Related Costs	12,768	14,255
Supplies and Services	222,417	221,637
Project Related Costs	110,952	23,970
Specialist Services	189,732	174,561
Total	<u>1,052,591</u>	<u>884,284</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Specialist Services – Income	208,982	214,932
Annual Fees	802,466	540,541
Home Office and NTSB	215,256	188,445
Interest	8,915	6,407
Total	<u>1,235,619</u>	<u>950,325</u>
 Surplus/(Shortfall)	 <u>183,028</u>	 <u>66,041</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2020

Liabilities -	Working Reserve	635,730	452,702
	Approved Reserve	500,000	500,000
	Sundry Creditors	84,684	50,703
		<u>1,220,414</u>	<u>1,003,405</u>
Assets -	Sundry Debtors	89,830	83,996
	Bank	1,130,584	919,409
		<u>1,220,414</u>	<u>1,003,405</u>

Head of Service

Mark Astley

NAFN Data and Intelligence Services



The world of fraud is constantly changing and fraudsters operate across all public services and organisational boundaries. Fraud investigators need to be as agile and responsive as the fraudsters themselves and this is where the NAFN service can deliver.

The Government's decision to provide business grants in response to the COVID-19 national emergency is a perfect example. Fraudsters moved quickly to secure illegal payments and for most of 2020 we have been working very closely with Central and Local Government to identify and prevent such fraud.

The COVID-19 national emergency has brought additional challenges including the need to adopt home-working whilst sustaining the service. Members will be aware of how disruptive this can be and I needed to work closely with the Leadership Team to ensure that the team were adequately equipped and fully briefed on their roles and responsibilities. The team continues to work successfully and effectively under the new arrangements.

Following the implementation of the Investigatory Powers Act legislation in June 2019 there has been a noticeable increase in communication data requests. This is expected to continue and in response the Service Team has been strengthened with the recruitment and appointment of two additional Intelligence Officers (SPOCs).

Maintaining and improving the service remains a constant challenge. During the past 12 months a range of new services were introduced including online bank account verification for sole traders with TransUnion and Equifax, enhancements to data sharing with National Hunter and the introduction of the Entrust Soft Token replacing the website grid card log-in security. Later this year we will be launching a new public-facing NAFN website.

The Leadership Team has addressed the training needs and the continuing professional development of members. An annual programme of webinar training was developed during 2019 and launched January 2020. An e-learning solution has been specified and procured to support on-line training and this will also be available to members later this year.

Much of my time is spent representing the best interests of members in a series of national working groups that are reviewing legislative change, collaboration and data sharing initiatives, fraud prevention and professional standards for fraud investigators. This provides an opportunity for me to articulate the specific needs of NAFN members ensuring that their views are considered and that future decisions are made in their best interests.

I continue to work closely with members of the NAFN Executive Board to review and develop the overall service strategy and identify business opportunities to improve services for members. Over the last 12 months we have identified and begun to explore a range of options to significantly enhance and transform the service offer. This includes upgrading the current ICT platform, redesigning the web interface, accessing new data and working with existing and new partners to automate the enquiry service enabling a single request to generate a multiple response from a wide range of data sources. Members will be consulted before a preferred business solution is identified.

Mark Astley

Membership and Communications Manager

Lavinia Ferguson
NAFN Data and Intelligence Services



Having joined NAFN just over 12 months ago, my introduction to members took place at the Annual Conference and AGM where I confirmed our commitment to anticipate and respond to the needs of all members. It was my first large scale event for the organisation and it was a pleasure to engage with almost 200 members and the speakers who so generously shared the benefit of their experience and expertise.

In the last 12 months the membership retention rate has been excellent in spite of technical losses due to merged local authorities. These mergers have been more than offset by new wider public authority, housing association and local authority members. Now, with almost 90% local authority membership nationwide, our goal of 100% is within reach and both wider public authorities and housing associations increasingly see the benefit and excellent value for money from our service offer.

Over the last 23 years, NAFN has achieved a great deal through innovation and collaboration; supporting its members to protect the public and save millions in public funds. In 2019 we were recognised for some of these achievements by iNetwork winning an Innovation Award for Effective Information Sharing and Security for the National Right-to-Buy Anti-Fraud Service. We were also a finalist for the 'iStandUK' award recognising our work on the National Register of Taxi License Revocations and Refusals. We were honoured and delighted to receive this recognition and hope this award is the first of many.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for the NAFN service but we were able to maintain business as the Service Team seamlessly adjusted to home-working. The benefit of our annual webinar timetable (on-line training), regular electronic communications (monthly newsletters) and dissemination of alerts/bulletins continued to provide much needed training and development alongside key information to keep members connected whilst working remotely.

At the height of the pandemic, local authority administration of COVID-19 Business Grants created a new threat. Upholding our commitment to respond to emerging business needs, we prioritised resources to ensure NAFN Intelligence Alerts were distributed promptly. Also, new services were quickly rolled out to members to support prevention, investigations and recovery. We continued to collate and share the intelligence gathered for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Cabinet Office to show how effective local authority prevention, investigation and due diligence has been in spite of attempted fraud and reported losses.

As we end the year, I am really pleased to report the launch of our external website refresh and the new platform for NAFN Professional Training and Development (E-Learning and CPD). Both provide added value to NAFN membership. The former creating a modern and fully interactive public facing website; the latter delivering e-learning courses which are relevant, accessible and a great way to assess and benchmark skills and competencies.

Lavinia Ferguson

Service Team Manager

Sarah Cooper
NAFN Data and Intelligence Services



The national COVID-19 emergency brought some big changes in 2020. Home-working measures were introduced in March and these remain in place for the entire NAFN Service Team. My team has remained fully operational throughout the crisis and continues to successfully deliver an effective service and offer significant support to our members.

Part of the national response to the COVID-19 crisis was the introduction of local authority administered business grants which were quickly identified as a fraud risk. In response to the emerging threat we worked closely with existing providers to identify services which would support our members in both prevention and investigation of business grant fraud.

New services (Equifax Equip and TransUnion Call Validate) were introduced to support local authorities at the grant verification stage. In April, we entered into an agreement with our partners at National Hunter to extend their support, on a pilot basis, to trace accounts identified as being used to fraudulently obtain grants.

Additional COVID-19 demands led to a change in the priorities of our members and whilst this initially had an impact on the level of support some departments required from NAFN, the changes had little impact on the need for members to acquire communications data. We continued to see an increase in the number of CD applications submitted to us by local and wider public authorities and have, in response, furnished those organisations with timely and relevant data and intelligence to enhance their investigations.

We continue to promote and encouraged wider public authorities to make greater use of the NAFN Investigatory Powers Act SPOC Service. We work closely with these organisations who have recently been incorporated into the legislation.

Our annual inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office took place in December 2019 and for the fourth year running I am pleased to report that the outcome of the inspection was extremely positive with no recommendations received. This reflects well on the guardian and gatekeeper role played by all members of the NAFN Service Team who continually strive to provide a professional, competent and legally compliant service to members.

Sarah Cooper

NAFN Executive Board Membership

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Iain O'Brien (Co-Opted)

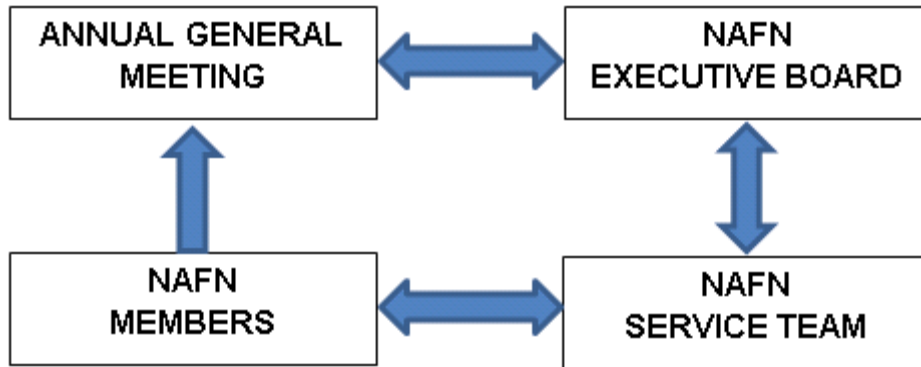
Policy Advisor Spectrum Enforcement
OFCOM
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London, SE1 9HA

Tel: 0207 783 4446

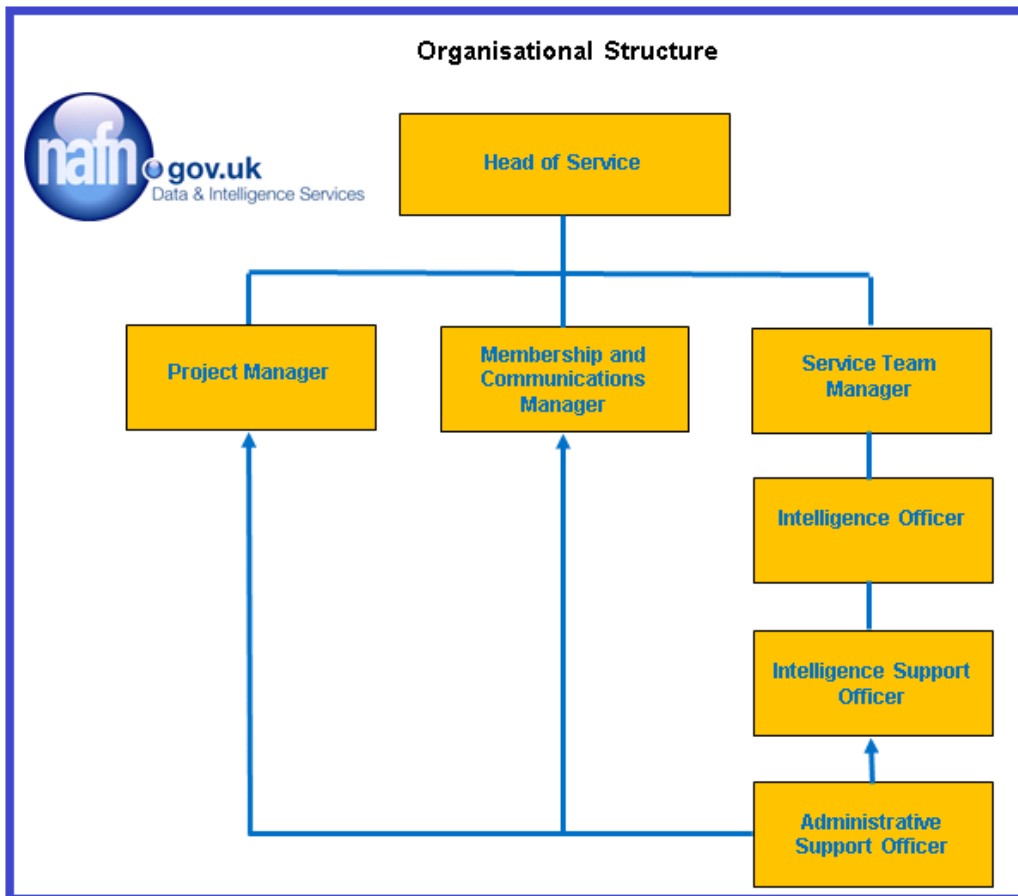
Email: iain.obrien@ofcom.org.uk

Governance and Organisational Structure

Over the past 23 years the organisational structure has remained consistent as shown in the diagram below. The Executive Board and the NAFN Service Team work with external partners and other stakeholders to maintain and enhance the services for members. The Service Team works closely with members and a range of data and business solution providers to support operations and day to day business.



The current organisational structure is set out below:



NAFN Service Team

HEAD OF SERVICE

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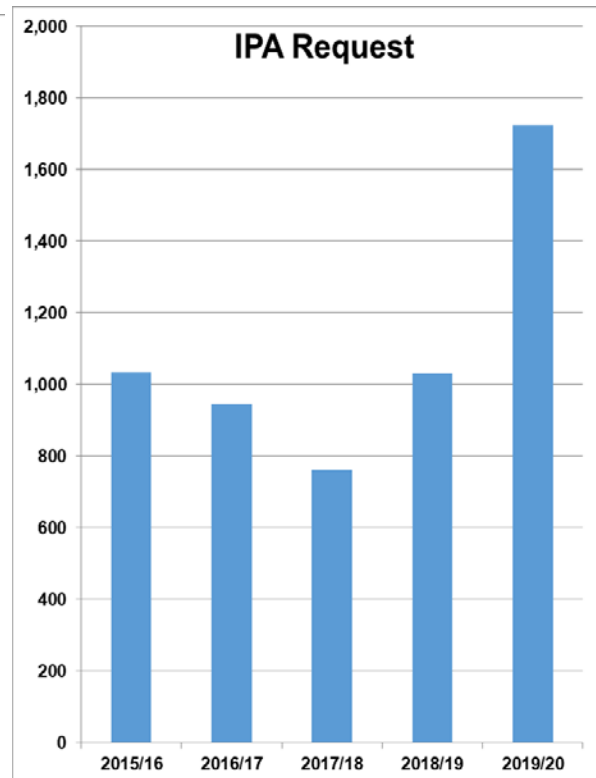
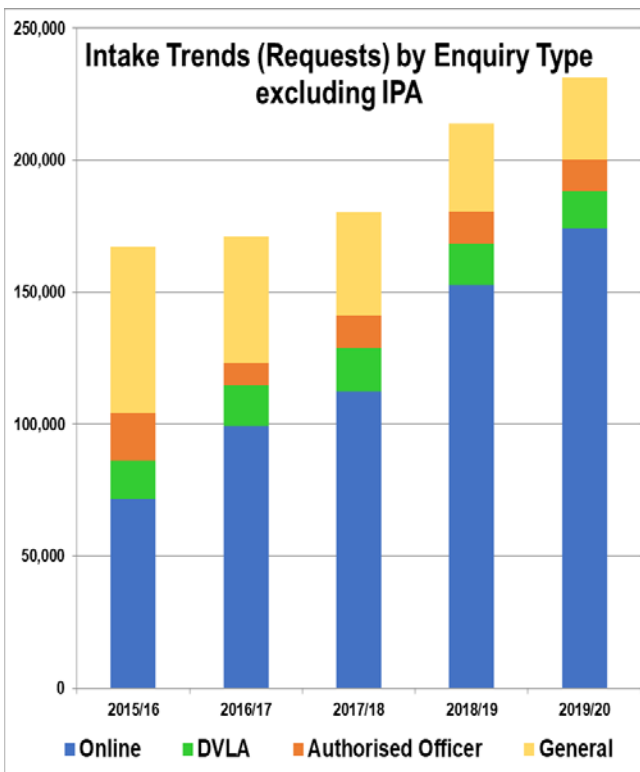
Tameside

OL6 0GA

APPENDIX A

Intake

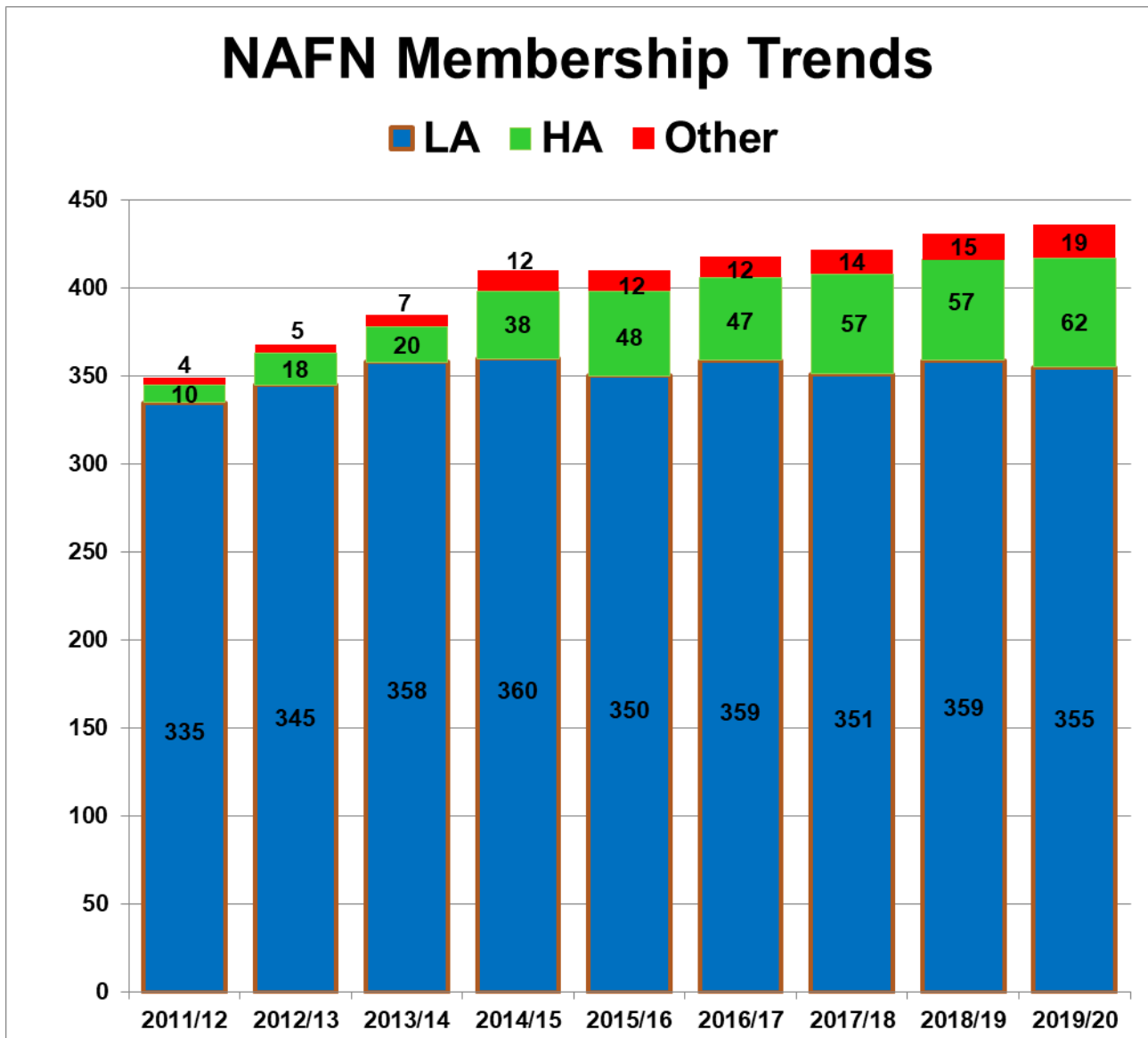
Enquiry Type	2019/20 April – March	2018/19 April - March
Authorised Officer Service	11,638	12,108
General Service	31,294	33,530
DVLA	14,044	15,584
Type 'B' Data	174,474	152,762
RIPA	1,725	1,032
Total Enquiries	233,175	215,016



APPENDIX B

Membership

Organisation Type	March 2020	March 2019
Local Authority	355	359
Housing Associations	62	57
Other Organisations	19	15
Total	436	431



APPENDIX C

Membership March 2019-20

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Aberdeenshire Council	Chelmsford City Council	Fife Council
Adur Worthing District Council	Cheltenham BC	Flintshire County Council
Amber Valley BC	Cherwell District Council	Folkestone and Hythe DC
Anglesey Council	Cheshire East Council	Forest of Dean District Council
Angus Council	Cheshire West & Chester Council	Fylde BC
Arun District Council	Chesterfield BC	Gateshead Council
Ashford BC	Chichester District Council	Gedling BC
Aylesbury Vale DC	Chiltern District Council	Glasgow City Council
Babergh District Council	Chorley MBC	Gloucester City Council
Barnsley MBC	City of London Corporation	Gloucestershire County Council
Barrow-in-Furness BC	City of Wolverhampton Council	Gosport BC
Basildon District Council	Conwy CBC	Gravesham BC
Basingstoke & Deane BC	Corby BC	Guilford BC
Bassetlaw District Council	Cornwall Council	Halton BC
Bath & North East Somerset	Cotswold District Council	Hambleton District Council
Bedford BC	County Durham Council	Hampshire County Council
Belfast City Council	Coventry City Council	Harborough District Council
Birmingham City Council	Crawley BC	Harlow Council
Blaby District Council	Cumbria County Council	Harrogate BC
Blackburn BC	Cyngor Gwynedd Council	Hartlepool BC
Blackpool BC	Darlington BC	Havant BC
Blaenau Gwent CBC	Dartford BC	Herefordshire County Council
Bolsover District Council	Daventry District Council	Hertfordshire County Council
Bolton MBC	Denbighshire County Council	Hertsmere BC
Boston Borough Council	Derby City Council	High Peak BC
BPC Council	Derbyshire County Council	Hinckley and Bosworth BC
Bracknell-Forest BC	Devon County Council	Huntingdonshire DC
Bradford City Council	Doncaster Metropolitan Council	Hyndburn BC
Braintree District Council	Dorset Council	Inverclyde Council
Breckland District Council	Dover District Council	Ipswich BC
Brentwood BC	Dudley MBC	Kent County Council
Bridgend CBC	Dundee City Council	Kettering BC
Brighton & Hove Council	East Ayrshire Council	King's Lynn and West Norfolk BC
Bristol City Council	East Cambridgeshire DC	Kingston upon Hull City
Broadland District Council	East Devon District Council	Kirklees MBC
Bromsgrove District Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Knowsley MBC
Broxbourne BC	East Hertfordshire DC	Lancashire County Council
Broxtowe BC	East Lindsey District Council	Lancaster City Council
Buckinghamshire County Council	East Northamptonshire Council	LB Barking and Dagenham
Burnley BC	East Renfrewshire Council	LB Barnet
Bury MBC	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	LB Bexley
Caerphilly CBC	East Suffolk Council	LB Brent
Calderdale MBC	East Sussex County Council	LB Bromley
Cambridge City Council	Eastbourne BC	LB Camden
Cambridgeshire County Council	Eastleigh Borough Council	LB Croydon
Cannock Chase Council	Edinburgh City Council	LB Ealing
Canterbury City Council	Elmbridge BC	LB Enfield
Cardiff Council	Epping Forest District Council	LB Hackney
Carmarthenshire CBC	Epsom & Ewell BC	LB Hammersmith & Fulham
Castle Point BC	Erewash BC	LB Haringey Council
Causeway Coast and Glens DC	Essex County Council	LB Harrow Council
Central Bedfordshire Council	Falkirk Council	LB Havering
Ceredigion County Council	Fareham BC	LB Hillingdon
Charnwood BC	Fenland District Council	LB Hounslow

LB Islington
LB Lambeth
LB Lewisham
LB Merton
LB Newham
LB Redbridge
LB Richmond upon Thames
LB Southwark Council
LB Sutton
LB Tower Hamlets
LB Waltham Forest
LB Wandsworth BC
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
Leicestershire County Council
Lewes D C
Lichfield District Council
Lincolnshire County Council
Liverpool City Council
Luton BC
Maidstone BC
Malvern Hills District Council
Manchester City Council
Mansfield District Council
Medway Council
Mendip District Council
Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Mid Devon District Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Mid Sussex District Council
Middlesbrough BC
Midlothian Council
Milton Keynes Council
Mole Valley District Council
Monmouthshire CBC
Neath Port Talbot County BC
Newark and Sherwood DC
Newcastle Upon Tyne Council
Newport City Council
Norfolk County Council
North Ayrshire Council
North East Derbyshire DC
North East Lincolnshire Council
North Hertfordshire DC
North Kesteven DC
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Norfolk District Council
North Somerset Council
North Tyneside Council
North West Leicestershire DC
North Yorkshire County Council
Northampton BC
Northamptonshire County Council
Northumberland County Council
Norwich City Council
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Oadby & Wigston BC
Oldham MBC
Orkney Islands Council
Oxford City Council

Oxfordshire County Council
Pembrokeshire County Council
Perth & Kinross Council
Peterborough City Council
Plymouth City Council
Poole BC
Portsmouth City Council
Powys County Council
Preston City Council
RB Greenwich Council
RB Kensington & Chelsea
RB Kingston Upon Thames
RB Windsor & Maidenhead
Reading BC
Redcar & Cleveland BC
Redditch BC
Reigate & Banstead BC
Renfrewshire Council
Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC
Ribble Valley BC
Richmondshire DC
Rochdale MBC
Rossendale BC
Rother District Council
Rotherham MBC
Runnymede BC
Rushcliffe BC
Rushmoor BC
Ryedale District Council
Salford MBC
Sandwell MBC
Scottish Borders
Sedgemoor District Council
Sefton Council
Selby District Council
Sevenoaks District Council
Sheffield City Council
Shropshire Council
Slough BC
Solihull MBC
Somerset West and Taunton
South Ayrshire Council
South Bucks DC
South Cambridgeshire DC
South Derbyshire DC
South Gloucestershire Council
South Hams District Council
South Holland D C
South Kesteven DC
South Lakeland DC
South Lanarkshire Council
South Norfolk DC
South Northamptonshire DC
South Oxford DC
South Ribble BC
South Somerset DC
South Staffordshire DC
South Tyneside MBC
Southampton City Council
Southend BC
Spelthorne BC
St. Helens MBC

Stafford BC
Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire Moorlands DC
Stevenage BC
Stirling Council
Stockport MBC
Stockton-On-Tees BC
Stoke City Council
Stratford on Avon DC
Stroud District Council
Suffolk County Council
Sunderland City Council
Surrey County Council
Surrey Heath B. C.
Swale BC
Swansea City Council
Swindon BC
Tameside MBC
Tamworth BC
Tandridge DC
Telford & Wrekin Council
Tendring District Council
Test Valley BC
Tewkesbury BC
The Highland Council
The Moray Council
Three Rivers District Council
Thurrock BC
Tonbridge & Malling BC
Torbay BC
Torfaen CBC
Torrington District Council
Trafford BC
Tunbridge Wells BC
Uttlesford District Council
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Vale of White Horse DC
Wakefield District Council
Walsall MBC
Warrington BC
Warwick District Council
Warwickshire County Council
Watford BC
Waverley BC
Wealden District Council
Wellingborough BC
Welwyn Hatfield Council
West Berks District Council
West Devon BC
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lancashire DC
West Lothian Council
West Oxfordshire DC
West Suffolk Council
West Sussex County Council
Westminster City Council
Wigan MBC
Wiltshire Council
Wirral MBC
Wokingham BC
Worcester City Council
Worcestershire County Council

Worthing BC
Wrexham CBC
Wychavon District Council

Wycombe District Council
Wyre BC
Wyre Forest District Council

York City Council

Associate Members March 2019-20

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

A2 Dominion
Accent Housing
Aldwyck Group
Arawak Walton
Arhag Housing Association
Aspire Housing
B3 Living
Bolton at Home
Bromford Housing Group
Bromsgrove Housing Trust
Cadwyn Housing Association
Clarion Housing
Connexus Group
Eastend Homes
Eleanor Palmer Trust
First Ark
First Choice Homes Oldham
Fortis Housing
Gentoo Group
Greensquare Housing
Guinness Partnership

Haig Housing
Hyde Housing
Irwell Valley
L & Q Group
Merlin Housing Association
Moat Housing
Network Homes
Notting Hill Genesis
Nottingham City Homes
Octavia Housing
One Housing
Onwards Homes
Optivo Housing
Orbit Group LTD
PA Housing
Peabody Housing
Radian Housing
Riverside Group
Rooftop Housing Group
Salix Homes
Sanctuary Housing

Settle Housing Group
Shepherds Bush
Soha Housing
Soho Housing
South Liverpool Homes
South Yorkshire HA
Southern Housing
Southway Housing Trust
Sovereign Housing Association
St. Leger Homes Of Doncaster
Stockport Homes
Thrive Homes
Torus 62 Ltd
Two Rivers
Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust
Vivid Homes
Wandle Housing Association
Watford Community Housing
Weaver Vale Housing
Wyre Forest Community Housing

OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Department of Health
DWP
DWP NISSA
FACT
Food Standards Agency E & W
Food Standards Scotland
HM Land Registry

Information Commissioners Office
Intellectual Property Office
Mersey Internal Audit Agency
NHS Audit Yorkshire
NHS Imperial
NHS Newcastle
NHS Scotland

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
OFCOM
Office of Product Safety and Standards
Police Investigation Review Commissioner
The Pension Regulator