**2015-18 AHP FAQs**

**CME bidding**

**Q. I am an existing HCA development partner with an existing 15-18 AHP allocation; do I need to submit a new offer to bid for CME funding?**

A. Providers with existing allocations can add new offer lines to existing offers and won’t be required to submit new offers separately. Guidance on submission of offers and offer lines in IMS is available on the [IMS Help Page](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/sites/default/files/our-work/submitting_affordable_housing_1518_offers_in_ims_-_ims_guidance_v1.1_0.pdf).

**Q. I haven’t previously received an allocation for funding for the 15-18 programme, am I able to bid for CME or is it just for existing 15-18 providers?**

A. There is no requirement to have already received a 156-18 allocation to bid for CME. Providers who have not bid into the 15-18 programme will need to set up a 15-18 partnership and offer on IMS. IMS guidance on 15-18 bidding is available on the [IMS Help Page](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/sites/default/files/our-work/submitting_affordable_housing_1518_offers_in_ims_-_ims_guidance_v1.1_0.pdf).

**Q. Can new providers bid or do you have to be an existing HCA investment partner in order to bid for CME?**

A. CME is open to new partners as well as existing HCA investment partners. Organisations do not need to qualify as Investment Partners with the Homes and Communities Agency or become Registered Providers in order to apply for IMS access to submit their bids.

Bidders not already qualified as Investment Partners with the Homes and Communities Agency will need to submit an application for qualification (unless they are joining an existing, qualified investment partnership).

As outlined in the prospectus, bidders who intend to be the landlord of homes delivered under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme must be, or intend to become, Registered Providers by the time the properties are complete. Please see paragraphs 166-167 of the prospectus, where you will find a link to the HCA’s registration pages on our website.

Organisations requiring access to IMS should, in the first instance, contact our IT service desk on 01908 353604 or servicedesk@hca.gsi.gov.uk to request an application pack.

Unregistered bidders should note that:

* Registered Providers can benefit from payments of 50% funding at start on site and 50% at practical completion;
* Unregistered bodies who intend to retain the properties cannot benefit from payment of a start on site tranche until registration have been achieved;
* If an unregistered body is prepared to enter into a long lease (i.e. over 60 years) with an RP and existing HCA Investment Partner, the scheme will be eligible for a start on site payment.
* Unregistered bodies intending to retain the properties who have not registered by practical completion will not receive funding until they have achieved registration or made alternative arrangements for transfer of the properties to a registered body; and
* Unregistered bodies who intend to transfer their properties to a Registered Provider receive 100% of funding upon practical completion.
* If intending to register, bidders should talk to the Registration team at the earliest opportunity about the process of becoming registered. Please refer to our Registration webpages for further details <https://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/how-register-us>

**Q. I am a new partner to the HCA and don’t have investment partner status. I want to bid in my own right rather than through an existing development partner consortium is this possible and is there support available?**

A. There is no requirement to join an existing HCA Investment Partner development consortium, but small organisations are encouraged to consider joining existing development partner consortia, where there is existing development and project management expertise and procurement efficiencies that can be accessed. However, partners that have the technical ability and the financial capacity, may apply for qualification as HCA Investment Partners in their own right to deliver their own programmes. Note that qualification as an HCA Investment Partner it is not a pre-requisite in order to bid, but it is a requirement in order for the HCA to be able to pay any grant.

**Q. We are a community led group that has just formed; we want to bid for grant in our own right. What is the process for bidding and must we submit a bid on your IMS system?**

A. As a community led group, you should first contact the HCA’s community champions to discuss your proposals. A list of the local community leads and their contact details can be found on our website [here](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/community-led-development), they will be able to provide advice on eligibility and the bid submission process before making a bid.

**Q. As a newly formed community group we haven’t decided on whether or not we want to become a Registered Provider of Social Housing, how do we find out more about the process of registration?**

It is required that all bidders who intend to be the landlord of homes delivered under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme must be, or intend to become, Registered Providers by the time the properties are complete. Please see paragraphs 155-156 and 166-167 of the prospectus, where you will find a link to the HCA’s registration pages on our website.

**Q. Do we need to submit a Financial Forecast Return if we are bidding via CME?**

A. Under CME, a full Financial Forecast Return is not required for all bids, however providers should be aware that one may be required and should be prepared to submit one if requested by the Regulator.

**Q. Will bidding be on line via IMS?**

A. Yes all bidding is to be submitted on line via the Agency’s Investment Management System (IMS). If you are a new bidder then you can apply for IMS access by contacting the HCA Service Desk on 01908-353604 or emailing servicedesk@hca.gsi.gov.uk.

Community groups that do not have access to IMS but who want to bid can do so via an excel template. Community groups should also take note of paragraphs 153 to 157 in the prospectus. Community groups that intend to bid using the template can obtain a copy from the HCA’s area teams.

**Q. Do the 15-18 AHP prospectus, Design and Quality addendum and Level 1 Space standard apply to bids under CME?**

A. Yes the existing documentation continues to apply to all bids for the 15-18 AHP programme, including those submitted under CME. Further details on housing standards can be found in supplementary information concerning Housing Standards published alongside this information. **[DN: insert link to HSR supplementary information here]**

**Q. The prospectus states that you do not expect to receive bids for schemes on Green Belt land. Does this exclusion also include bids for the development of additional new traveller pitches on an existing site already situated within the Green Belt?**

A. Yes, further to the [written Ministerial statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/green-belt) by Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis published on 17th January 2014, we do not expect to receive any bids for developing new traveller provision on Green Belt land, or other land with special environmental protections, this includes additions to existing sites already established in those areas.

Please refer to DCLG’s Planning Policy for traveller sites for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites>.

**Q. We are a local authority considering making a bid for the new programme. Can Right to Buy receipts be combined with new grant under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme?**

A. Aside from the exceptional circumstance where a non-stock holding authority has Right to Buy receipts, receipts from the Right to Buy cannot be combined with 2015-18 Affordable Homes grant to fund the same home. Each funding stream could be used separately to fund distinct homes on the same scheme. (So, for example, if a local authority is proposing to deliver a 15 unit scheme of affordable homes, and fund 10 of those with Right to Buy receipts, it could apply for 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme funding for the remaining 5 homes).

**Q. If a scheme has started on site before April 2015 is the scheme eligible for funding under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme?**

A. There is nothing to preclude this in the prospectus. Provided a scheme meets all the programme criteria, is not displacing delivery under our existing Affordable Homes Programme and the timescale since start on site is reasonable, it will be assessed in the normal way through the assessment process.

**Q. Do we need to register as a provider of social housing if we are providing traveller pitches?**

A. For standard traveller pitches, that is a pitch consisting of a concrete hardstanding to accommodate a mobile home, and an amenity block with washing and kitchen facilities, this is not considered to be social housing and therefore there is no requirement for landlords to register with the Social Housing Regulator.

Where pitches include built sleeping accommodation it will be necessary for providers who intend to be the landlord, to become a Registered Provider of Social Housing

**Q. Is there any guidance available on format, content, length of the supporting information and how do we submit this?**

A. Supporting information will be submitted by providers via IMS. Statements will take the form of structured feedback in response to questions posed in IMS. Bidders should note that this applies to a statement for Procurement and Efficiency and Construction Innovation and Employment and Skills.

**Q. Are we able to charge an Affordable Rent of less than 80% of market rent in areas where this exceeds the relevant Local Housing Allowance?**

A. RPs are generally expected to set rents at 80% of market rent in order to maximise the financial capacity that can be generated. As set out in paragraph 196 of the prospectus there may be limited exceptions, in specific circumstances where RPs can demonstrate that it is appropriate to set rents at less than 80% of gross local market rents whilst still meeting local needs, an example of this could be where 80% of market rent exceeds or is close to the relevant Local Housing Allowance.

We will seek to test with RPs their reasons for intending to charge less than 80% of gross local market rents during the assessment and clarification.

**Q. At what stage must a developer be able to name the recipient Registered Provider landlord, if not intending to register and act as landlord themselves?**

A. A developer must be able to name the recipient RP landlord at bid stage for the bid to be considered as firm.