



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending  
watchdog

Switchboard +44 (0)207 798 7000  
Direct Line +44 (0)207 798 7264  
Email [FOI@nao.org.uk](mailto:FOI@nao.org.uk)

Reference FOI-1634  
Date 14 July 2023

## SOVEREIGN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Thank you for your request of 10 July 2023 for information about the amount of money spent on a legal case by Sovereign Housing Association (Sovereign). We have considered your request in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Your specific request is reproduced at **Annex A**.

It may help if I first explain the role of the NAO, which is independent of government, has three main functions. The first is to certify the accounts of central government departments and a wide range of other public sector bodies, and to express an opinion on those accounts. The second is to carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which government departments and other public sector bodies have used their resources. The third is to maintain a Code of Audit Practice and issue guidance to external auditors of local public bodies including local authorities.

The NAO has no remit to investigate individual housing associations such as Sovereign. For this reason, we have not carried out an audit of Sovereign and do not hold the information you requested about the money it has spent.

You would need to contact Sovereign directly about this matter. If you have already done so and are unhappy with the response you received, you can make a complaint. Information about Sovereign's complaint process is here [Making a complaint | Sovereign Housing](#). If you remain dissatisfied after exhausting this process, you can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman, who may be able to investigate.

If you are not already aware, the Housing Ombudsman can be contacted here:

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7W

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Web: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>



I hope this response is helpful in explaining the NAO's role and remit. **Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

**NAO FOI Team**

## **Annex A**

### **Request for information about Sovereign Housing Association:**

"I am writing to enquire about an information request into the amount tax payers money abused and wasted by Sovereign Housing Association since 2021. They have spent a minimum of £50,000 on a baseless legal case which they then dropped in May 2023 with no outcome. Their case was riddled with hundreds of false allegations for which they had no evidence what so ever. Their Barrister charges £3,500 for 30 minute hearings in court which is charged to the tax payer.

They are now currently acting as a proxy for one of their tenants using tax payers money, interfering in court proceedings and writing pages of inappropriate and fabricated statements regarding their case that they dropped when they had the chance to take it to trial and have an outcome. Their solicitors are making thousands of pounds from the tax payer and enjoy delaying the legal process, playing games to complicate and stretch out what should be an very quick resolution. They used tax payers money to bring a baseless case to court which they dropped in an attempt to silence and prevent justice. They did this because they have the tax payers money on tap at their disposal.

The CEO of Sovereign Housing Association is aware of the waste of tax payers money but sits quiet. Their ASB officer who is leading this outrageous behavior and cost to the tax payer is paid by the tax payer also.

As a 40% tax payer I would like to know how much of the tax payers money Sovereign Housing Association has wasted on the legal case which their dropped and had no outcome, i would like to know how much money they have further wasted since May 2023 on unnecessary legal costs and salaries of the resources for their unnecessary involvement in the legal case and hearing on 5 June 2023.

I firmly believe that this is also now in the interest of the public."

## **Annex B**

### **Statement of Policy**

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at [FOI@nao.org.uk](mailto:FOI@nao.org.uk) or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.