



Department for  
**Social  
Development**  
[www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk)

# Involving tenants in the delivery of social housing



Social Housing   
**Reform Programme**  
Easy Read

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# Introduction



This **strategy** is about how we can get better at helping people to get more involved in the decisions made about the services they receive in social housing.



A **strategy** is a long term plan.



A **tenant** is someone who rents their home from a Landlord.



A **housing association** is an independent organisation that provides homes for people that they can afford.



The **Housing Executive** is Northern Ireland's largest **social landlord**.



A **social landlord** is a landlord that provides homes for people that they can afford - usually a housing association or the Housing Executive



# Why get involved?



It is good for people to get more involved with their landlord because:-

- They improve their skills and confidence and get more control over their lives



- Working together means it is easier to deal with difficult problems



But it only works if:-

- Landlords put their tenants first
- Landlords really want to listen to people

# What happens now



At the moment there are many different ways that tenants can have a say:-

- They can fill in questionnaires
- They can be part of a residents group
- They can work as an inspector
- They can be on the board of their housing association



There are 4 organisations helping people to have a say about their housing:-

## 1. Department for Social Development (DSD)



This is the government department which has responsibility for all housing matters in Northern Ireland.

## 2. Northern Ireland Housing Executive



Over the years they have developed good ways of involving tenants in all sorts of different parts of their work.



They consult their tenants on anything that affects their tenancies. They also make sure tenants get the advice and support they need and have the chance to give their views.



## 3. Supporting Communities NI

This is a community organisation that helps people to have a voice through training and support.



They have set up the **Housing Community Network (HCN)** to involve local residents in housing matters.

## 4. Housing associations



Housing associations must:-

- Consult their tenants on anything that affects their tenancies
- Have a complaints procedure
- Ask their tenants what they think - every year



Some housing associations have tenant committees and tenant forums.

# Why we need a long term plan



Although some tenants have a chance to get involved, many do not.







The Government has introduced rules to ensure that:

- All social landlords give tenants a chance to get involved
- Support is available to tenants
- Things are done properly
- Organisations are run properly
- Tenants have a role to play



We want all tenants in Northern Ireland to have a chance to get involved in helping to make housing services better for their tenants.

# 10 golden rules for involving tenants



1. Tenants, landlords and staff need to trust and respect each other



2. Everyone has to share information and ideas. They should work together to solve problems



3. Information must be clear and easy to understand

4. The way organisations make decisions should be:-



- **Open:** people can see who is making the decision and what reasons they have for making the decision



- **Accountable:** people are responsible for the decisions that they make



5. Tenants must have enough time to consider issues properly



6. Landlords must understand that tenants organisations are independent



7. The way we work should be flexible as we might want it to change over time



8. Tenant organisations need training, support and help with organising themselves



9. The way that tenants get involved in country areas may be different from the way they get involved in the towns



10. It must follow the law and be fair to everyone



# Three things social landlords should do



**Social landlords** should write a plan which explains how they are going to involve tenants.

The plan should take into account the 10 Golden Rules, and also:



1. Tenants should be able to choose what they get involved in



2. Tenants should be able to have a say in the future plans of the landlord



3. Landlords should make a special effort to involve people from groups who often do not get a chance to have a say

# Tenant empowerment



By getting involved in their local housing, we hope that tenants start to have the confidence to take more control over their lives.



In the future it may be possible for tenants to have more control.



For example by being responsible for managing some of the services that are currently being provided by the housing associations.

# Keeping it fair



In Northern Ireland we have to make sure that any new strategy takes account of the needs of all the different communities.



By doing this, we can make sure everyone is treated fairly.



We hope this strategy addresses these issues and continues to make things better for the future.