



Council and Housing Association tenants

# Tenants leading change

How to get involved in making your neighbourhood a better place to live.

July 2014

 @tenantpower

 Search on GOV.UK for 'Tenants leading change'



Tenant panels that  
give you a say

Do it yourself and  
get cashback



Manage  
where you live



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# More power to tenants

## Can you think of ways to make your neighbourhood a nicer place to live?

A lick of paint, less litter, a place you are proud to live in.

**Would you like to live in a community** where you get to know your neighbours by working together (for example, through tenant panels)?

**Can you think of things your council or housing association could do better?** Don't keep it to yourself!

**Does your landlord give you the chance** to be a mystery shopper, a tenant inspector, or to be part of estate inspections?

## Could you run things better?

With **Cashback** you could take over small services such as gardening and cleaning.

You can even set up a **Tenant Management Organisation** to take over the management of your neighbourhood.

The government wants to help people get involved and take control of their neighbourhoods. It's called **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment**.



In this leaflet:

**Tenant panels** page 3

**Cashback** page 4

**Manage where you live** page 5

**An example: Winchester** page 6

**Choose to take part** page 7

**Useful contacts** page 8

# Tenant panels

Get organised. Get things done.

## What is a tenant panel?

It is a group of residents from your neighbourhood who work with their landlord. They now have more powers to influence and shape services, and check how complaints are dealt with.

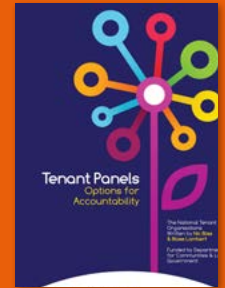
## What do tenant panels do?

- **Plan and decide.** They work closely with the landlord to decide what needs doing, and how. This means having a bigger say in what happens where you live.
- **Check what's being done.** They use ideas like mystery shopping and inspections to check on how well things are run. Then they suggest improvements.
- **Help resolve complaints and disputes.** They offer unbiased guidance, and suggest practical actions.

## What you can do

- **Find out from your landlord** if there is a tenant panel and how you can get involved. If there isn't one, talk to them about setting one up or check out the websites listed on the right.
- There are some **free training programmes** to give you the support and skills you need. Contact the [Tenant Participation Advisory Service](#) or [Trafford Hall](#).

Explore these websites for resources, ideas and training.



[www.nationaltenants.org](http://www.nationaltenants.org)



[www.tenantcentral.org.uk](http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk)



[www.traffordhall.com](http://www.traffordhall.com)



## Links

If you are reading this on a computer or tablet, you can click on the links to go to other websites. They are coloured blue and underlined [like this](#).

And you can download this leaflet from [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK)

## The best tenant panels:

- ✓ are partnerships that work together with the landlord
- ✓ are accountable to their fellow residents
- ✓ can influence decisions and services
- ✓ focus on everyday practical things that matter to you
- ✓ let everyone have their say
- ✓ have influence and a clear role

There are some good examples in the [tenant panels booklet](#) available from [www.nationaltenants.org](http://www.nationaltenants.org)





# Cashback

## Community cashback

### Savings for the community.

You can earn cash for your community by managing services like cleaning or grass-cutting.

A community cashback agreement is a win-win:

**For the landlord** it can mean things go better because they have satisfied tenants who care about their property.

**For tenants** it means up to £3,000 to help you get started.



You can get more information about community cashback from NFTMO ([www.nftmo.com](http://www.nftmo.com)) or TPAS ([www.tenantcentral.org.uk/community-cashback](http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk/community-cashback)).

## Tenant cashback The savings are yours to keep.

Ask your landlord if they offer a tenant cashback scheme. You could earn cash by organising your own repairs or doing it yourself.

You can read about other people's experience of tenant cashback with landlords such as [Bromford Group](#) and [Home Group](#). Ask your landlord about their tenant cashback plans.



## The Russell Chambers experience

The Russell Chambers Residents Association in Camden were the first in the country to sign a community cashback agreement in July 2013. They have been delivering improved cleaning services to the shared spaces of their flats.

94% of the residents voted to continue the arrangement in a recent survey.

# Manage where you live

You could help run your local housing services the way you want.

Over 70,000 households in England are run by **tenant management organisations**. It's been shown that residents are more satisfied. Better still, they make savings, which they can decide how to use for their community.

We've recently made the process easier, so many more tenants can take up their **Right to Manage**.



There is more information about Right to Manage on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK) or email us at [tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

## The Childwall Valley experience

"Childwall Valley Estate Management Board (EMB) was established in the 1990s by a group of Liverpool City Council tenants because we were concerned about the decline of our estate. We used our Right to Manage and took over housing management in 2000. Since then the estate has been transformed. Repairs response and re-let times are outstanding, rent arrears and levels of anti-social behaviour are low. The EMB has also become a focus for all sorts of other community services and activities, restoring not just the physical fabric of our estate but also the pride of our local community."

*Joan Minard, Chair, Childwall Valley Estate Management Board, Liverpool.*



# An example

## How Winchester City Council works together with tenants.

In Winchester, the council and tenants are working in an equal partnership. The tenants get great service, and the council gets value for money. They have an agreement called a Tenant Participation Compact, which gets tenants, councillors and staff working closely together.

They don't just consult and talk, but actively work together on day-to-day management, inspecting estates and making decisions together.

They communicate in many ways, such as training, social events, newsletters, forums, websites and meetings.

Winchester offers tenants a choice of things to do. They range from 2 hours a year to join a focus group or Streetmeet, to 3 hours a month to become a Tenant Inspector. They can choose from:

The **Winchester Readers Panel** reads all newsletters, information leaflets, and standard letters to check everything is easy to understand and free from jargon.

**Mystery Shoppers** test council services using this market research technique. Their work has improved the quality of repairs, and the council's response to complaints.

**Scrutiny Groups** do detailed research into a particular aspect of the Council's service, such as repairs.

**Walkabouts and Streetmeets** mean getting out to meet other residents, and hearing what they have to say.

Winchester residents get training to help them get involved, and say that they learn valuable life skills. Over 40 tenants have been trained to act as inspectors, monitoring grounds maintenance services.

Visit [www.winchester.gov.uk](http://www.winchester.gov.uk) for more information.



# Choose to take part

## Ask your landlord what their plans are for getting tenants involved.

Search your landlord's website or call them to ask what is happening in your neighbourhood.

Scheme	What is it?	Time and effort needed	Next steps
<b>Tenant activities</b> pages 2 and 6	Tenant inspections, mystery shopping, walkabouts, fun days, etc.	This varies from a one-off activity to a few hours a week.	Ask your landlord what activities they run and how you can take part – or suggest new ideas.
<b>Tenant panels</b> page 3	A panel set up to represent and lead the tenant community.	This will take some time to organise, then a few hours every month for panel members.	Ask your landlord if there is a panel you can join. If not, ask them to help you set one up.
<b>Community cashback</b> page 4	Up to £3,000 government grant to get you started.	You'll need to work with some of your neighbours, but the process is quite easy.	Ask your landlord if there is a scheme. If not, talk to your neighbours about starting one. Ask your landlord and <a href="http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk">www.tenantcentral.org.uk</a> about start-up grants.
<b>Tenant cashback</b> page 4	Up to £500 a year for each tenant, for doing or organising simple repairs.	You can do this on your own, and it's a simple process.	Ask your landlord about their tenant cashback scheme.
<b>Right to Manage</b> page 5	Tenants form a tenant management organisation, and take over the management of their services.	A big commitment, but you can get help from the organisations listed on page 8.	Find out more on <a href="http://GOV.UK">GOV.UK</a> or email us at <a href="mailto:tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk">tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk</a>

# Useful contacts

## Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

Tenant Central is run by TPAS and helps tenants engage with their landlords. Residents can get training and guidance.

**Address** Suite 4B Trafford Plaza, 73 Seymour Grove, Manchester M16 0LD

**Phone** 0800 0356351 (free phone)

**Email** [info@tenantcentral.org.uk](mailto:info@tenantcentral.org.uk)  
[www.tenantcentral.org.uk](http://www.tenantcentral.org.uk)

## Trafford Hall – Tenant Futures

Trafford Hall offers residential training for tenants who want to gain a wide range of skills to play a bigger role in their community.

**Address** Ince Lane, Wimbolds Trafford, Chester CH2 4JP

**Phone** 01244 300246

**Email** [info@traffordhall.com](mailto:info@traffordhall.com)  
[www.traffordhall.com/training](http://www.traffordhall.com/training)

## Tenants and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE)

TAROE is a national organisation for tenants' and residents' groups across England. They help to get equal rights for all tenants and to improve the quality of life in local communities.

**Address** The Old Police Station, Mersey Road, Runcorn, WA7 1DF

**Phone** 01928 798120

**Email** [runcornoffice@taroe.org](mailto:runcornoffice@taroe.org)  
[www.taroe.org](http://www.taroe.org)

## Homes and Communities Agency

The regulator that sets standards and intervenes where there have been serious breaches.

**Address** 7th Floor Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7BN

**Phone** 0300 1234 500

**Email** [mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk](mailto:mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk)  
[www.homesandcommunities.co.uk](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk)

## National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO)

NFTMO offers support to Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) going through the Right to Manage process. They also advise about Community Cashback.

**Address** c/o Burrowes Street TMC, Resource Centre, Burrowes Street, Walsall, WS2 8NN

**Phone** 01704 227053

**Email** [contact@nftmo.com](mailto:contact@nftmo.com)  
[www.nftmo.com](http://www.nftmo.com)

## Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

You can find out more about tenant involvement and the support available for the schemes described in this leaflet.

**Email** [tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

**Follow us on Twitter** @tenantpower

## Housing Ombudsman Service

You can contact them to sort out a dispute that you cannot resolve locally.

**Address** 81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

**Phone** 0300 111 30000

**Email** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)