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**7th National Tenant Panel Conference**

**Focusing on the voice of our customers - Innovation, efficiency and effectiveness**

**Wednesday 29th November 2017, The Principal Hotel, Station Rd, York**

**Flip Chart Notes:**

**Ideas from Tenant Consultation on Health and Safety matters**

We set 4 questions for involved tenants the same questions were worked on over 3-4 tables.

There were 15 tables and over 100 delegates participated.

1. **How can you help your landlord to make tenants feel safe(r)?**
2. **How can you support your landlord to communicate expectations of tenants on safety?**
3. **What information do you need from your landlord about safety in your home/estate/neighbourhood?**
4. **Top tips on sharing your concerns, ideas and solutions with your landlord**

**Top 15 ideas first, followed by the notes of the debates on tables**

**Top 15 – in table order:**

1. Blocks or street champions – like Nottingham City Homes
2. Be observant and aware – be clear how you need to report hazards and how to report – publish costs
3. Be safe, clarify and consult on what this means to tenants as there will be different expectations and definitions
4. Get tenants to get involved in scrutinising compliance actions
5. How can we be more strategic – link the tenants to the health and safety officer – be clear on different circumstances between different types of home
6. Do campaigns, like we have done on gas safety – can we name and shame like ASB? Can we fit carbon Monoxide alarms – where the landlord acquires them cheaper and the tenants pays? Discount passed on to tenants
7. Look at how information is presented by landlords – check the literature is understood – can landlords design a standard template which is helpful for tenants and can this work across landlords?
8. A Facebook page, without other corporate messages on – like Your Homes Newcastle – where tenants debate the issues on line
9. Education from the landlord – how appliances can be maintained and how fires can be prevented
10. Tenants role – raise awareness of this – can PAT testing be done for tenant own appliances at a cost to the tenant (service charge?)
11. Publish safety information, outside and after the sign up process
12. Train community leads to pick up neighbourhood issues and to walk around estates reporting matters found
13. Review the green warden and other similar services where tenants volunteer – can they find communal hazards and report back on these?
14. Monthly appointments and embed in the involvement roles to make appointments on involvement and collect information
15. Hoarder concerns – bigger problem than we think – can we report these matters at Tenant Panel meetings and discuss solutions with them? Raise more awareness as part of tenant engagement

**Detail of table discussions (in no particular order, just by heading)**

**1 How can you help your landlord to make tenants feel safe(r)?**

**Table**

* Ideally if lived in a block would want the landlord to ensure health & safety checks were carried out annually on domestic appliances – gas & electrical tests
* Scrutinise & ensure all appropriate checks are applied, complaints are carried out
* Provide adequate H & S information to residents in format easy to understand
* Scrutinise services areas & ensure all appropriate checks are carried out & we are compliant, what are the actions - if they are not?

**Table**

1 Communication

* Notice boards
* Fire assessments on boards
* Include details of how to respond
* How to follow up if no response
* Write on board

2 Observation

* Promptly report issues
* Be clear how you report
* Hotline – is not being listened to – route if not satisfied
* Recognition re cost of calling – people facing austerity – e.g. Freephone ONLINe

**Table**

* Ask landlord what measures in place re safety of particular issue related to safety
* Carry out scrutiny exercise on an aspect of safety & feedback recommendations
* Consultation on what does safety mean to tenants

**Table**

* Social media
* Block & street champions, popular in high rise block (voluntary role)
* Tenants to attend fire risk assessment
* Reward scheme: for residents that comply with gas safety checks
* Fire safety in the home leaflet
* Training for residents to carry out inspections
* Residents spread news in blocks of flats
* Encouraging tenants to take responsibility for H&S
* Keeping residents informed about the outcomes of board meetings
* Community Mediation Service: as long as one party accepts mediation
* Let residents know when checks are going to be held
* Consultation w residents following Grenfell incident
* Involved residents to work closely w/fire safety

**2. How can you support to communicate your expectations of tenants?**

* Scrutiny depends on the area you’re looking at – level of communication
* H & S – looking to do more work
* Receiving digital
* Key work
* Retirement properties
* Lots of groups to help get message out on H & S
* H & S officer –strategic

Making use of different forms of communication

* Newsletter
* Social media
* Good to have communication but more challenging to get 2-way communication from tenants
* Still mainly use phone and online forums – due to area - more digitally
* Tailored to where they live
* Planned approach
* Series of roadshows
* Scrutiny teams/panel
* Go out to different places in the communities
* Wide range of tenants
* Opinion of customers
* More strategic with dedicated health & Safety Officer - gaining feedback
* Tailor it to where and types of homes they live in
* Roadshows gain views & expectations
* Already have the resource – make more use of it

**Table**

* Message to tenants reminding them that appliances must be kept in good order/respond to recalls. PAT testing service – landlord could provide
* Fine for customer who are preventing access to gas safety. Supply cut off after an agreed period name & shame!
* More flexible appointment system for gaining access
* Encourage fire brigade to visit individual properties to see if people are living in a safe way
* Awareness of how mobility issues affect people’s ability to leave a home fast
* Landlord inspection of the property on agreed frequency (Inc. storage in loft)
* Landlord to provide carbon monoxide alarms at reduced cost – why are social landlords not regulated to do this?

**Table?**

* Knowledge – in some cases not there – needs worked on
* Tenant surveys/focus groups -> what is involved in H&S – H&S boring
* Social Media ->discussion & debate forum - tenant led – Questions coming in – answers disseminated
* Word of mouth – tenant communication to others
* Not regs but domestic appliances who’s responsible for products, fuses?
* Tenants held responsibilities -> awareness campaign similar to e.g. Christmas lights
* “It won’t happen to me”
* Regs clear landings staff visits – “121” communication – tenants have been asked –idea – joint officer/tenants visits –again relationship
* Relying too much on self-appointed busy body
* On mass feedback meetings
* Handbook/website – topic profiles with tenants - case studies explained od’s & don’ts
* Social media – but take responsibility to feed back to tenants

**3 What information do you need from your landlord about safety in your home, estate or neighbourhood?**

**Table - Appliances**

* How to maintain – safety checks where to buy
* General contact information – who to contact eyes and ears
* What is landlord inspection regime against various requirements?
* What are legal requirements?
* What is the landlord able to do directly? (e.g. in emergency)
* What are the results of issues referred
* Tenants need information about appliance safety and general safety to prevent issues and know how to react

**Table**

* A culture change – tenancy agreement - outline Tenants & Landlords responsibilities clearly from the start. Needs to be specific
* Itemised checks for tenants & landlords, utilities & home done together & publicise results
* Is your landlord sticking to checks 5yrs etc. Are they adhering? A schedule of what’s coming
* Past history of premises
* Like to see L/lord benchmarking
* Should be someone’s responsibility for checking properties
* It is Landlords responsibility to check everything or is it the tenants. Needs to be clear e.g. gutters? Property health check every year. Tenants should know if there is asbestos in their home – should be in sign up pack. Need to know where it is in property. Is there a register?
* What is the policy on fly tipping make sure its enforced on a nhood basis

**Table**

Home

* Tenants to be aware of their role & what landlord role
* What they do to help e.g. PAT testing – could offer for nominal charge
* Difficulties getting access to leaseholders e.g. for gas testing
* Tenants want certificates for gas/gas electrical testing
* Individuals tenants
* Don’t want copies of FRA but want to know it is available
* Clear line of communication to get safety information
* Should FRA’s – go on website – won’t work in areas with high tower block stock

Estate

* Change in warden services less staff on the ground
* How are tenants kept safe out of hours – e.g. after 5pm when staff go home – police cuts don’t help
* How can we reduce ASB – diversionary activities
* Get info to TRA’s so they can share more widely

**Table**

* Devoted number for ASB – how to report it
* Details provided through newsletter/involvement team
* Promote contractors, so tenants know who is doing work
* Let tenants know what safety issues are out there
* Clarify who is responsible for safety check, etc.
* Feedback number relating to completed safety checks
* Estate tours in local communities- looking for involved tenants to get involved – community led
* Training available

**Tenancy Agreements – They a given – How can we go further?**

H&S - how is the information presented?

* Does it account for language barriers, educational attainment, generally understandable language?
* Template – a standardised template for all HAs?
* Account for disabilities?
* Good data collection & knowledge of tenants
* Use tenant publications – e.g. St Leger “House Proud” magazine
* Face to face meetings
* Common sense on domestic appliances and under safety in the home/take some responsibility for own H&S
* Use social media and online channels have a focus week
* Use community engagement officers to encourage the disengaged

**4 Top tips on sharing your concerns, ideas and solutions with your landlord**

**Table**

* Green warden at Great Places Manchester
* Broadacres too
* Local monitor scheme – communal hallways blocked – trip hazards – bin areas
* Estate maintenance also
* Customer Team – Housing Officer, Property Surveyor
* Satisfaction surveys completed after repairs & inc. a H&S Question
* Feed into performance Scorecard

**Table**

* Review involvement plan
* CEO going live once a month to answer questions
* Hot topic on social media for a week
* Computer available in services to get people on line
* My account area on website to link to next account
* Embed involvement in everyone roles
* Involve directors in regular meetings – get their support
* Make sure there’s a variety of ways for tenants to communicate with landlord

**Table**

* Southway Housing – consider H&S issues Residents Consultative group
* Should be more dialogue – raise H&S profile at scrutiny panel
* Should be regular updates on core agenda
* Updated re. gas safety certificate progress
* Independent living schemes – tenants involved in H&S inspections
* Raise awareness testing smoke alarm, tenants’ responsibility & PAT testing
* Every housing provider has - report at scrutiny panel level strategy – include H&S

This was a key issue – hoarding, risk assessments, role of Fire Service, enforcing Landlord responsibility.

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**30th November 2017**

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