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RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

2008-2010

Resident
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Contents

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| | Pages |
|---|--------------|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Principles of Resident Involvement at Newark and Sherwood Homes | 5 |
| Tenants and Leaseholders Rights to Consultation | 6 |
| Methods of Involvement | 7 |
| Resources for Participation | 15 |
| The Scope of the Strategy | 17 |
| Appendix 1 – The Circle of Resident Involvement | 18 |
| Appendix 2 – The Criteria of Recognition | 19 |

Foreword



Source: Tenants Annual Conference 2007



Having undergone a major review of resident involvement Newark and Sherwood Homes now has a fresh approach to how we involve residents and leaseholders in our core business. This strategy will give tenants and leaseholders a wider and more innovative choice of methods to “make a difference” to the work of Newark and Sherwood Homes and the services they receive.

The term ‘resident’ used throughout the strategy includes tenants, leaseholders and other service users who access and use the services provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes.

Newark and Sherwood Homes would like to thank the Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations, tenants and residents associations throughout the district and all those who helped to bring this strategy to completion.

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Introduction



Source: Tenants Annual Conference 2007

This document sets out Newark and Sherwood Homes Strategy for Resident Involvement. It outlines the organisations' strategic aims and principles in resident participation, how the Strategy is to be implemented, the resources available for resident involvement and a framework for monitoring and reviewing the strategy.

This Resident Involvement Strategy puts the resident at the heart of everything we do. This ensures that residents who want to influence the decision-making process can have their priorities reflected in the way services are being delivered, through working closely with Newark and Sherwood Homes staff in a way which is suitable to them. A variety of methods for participation can be found at appendix 1, in the Statement for Involvement and in the Tenant Compact.

At Newark and Sherwood Homes we adopt the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) definition of tenant participation: -

“is a two way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening” (CIH/TPAS)

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Principles of Resident Involvement at Newark and Sherwood Homes

This gives resident involvement focus and redirects our energies and resources by adopting the following principles.

- To involve residents both collectively and individually in the development, delivery and review of the services they receive in order to demonstrate our accountability.
- To work with residents to develop participation structures and mechanisms that will increase resident and leaseholder opportunities to “make a difference” to the service they receive.
- To develop residents’ knowledge, skills and capacity to enable them to become more influential with the service delivery.
- To encourage and support residents to become more actively involved in tackling social, economic and environmental issues in order to benefit the communities in which they live.

In order to assess the success of the strategy and the methods of involvement within it, progress will be regularly monitored using a range of performance indicators (see page 16 for more information).

This part of the strategy tells you about the rights you have, and how consultation and participation fits within various government acts.

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Tenants and Leaseholders Rights to Consultation

| LEGISLATION | WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU |
|---|--|
| <p>1985 Housing Act Section 105</p> | <p>Tenants have the right to basic information and are consulted upon the manner in which we will share this information with you.</p> <p>Tenants have the right to be consulted regarding how we manage, finance, maintain and improve your home.</p> |
| <p>1999 Local Government Act Section 3, part 1.</p> | <p>Services provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes are assessed by the Audit Commission, this ensures that these services are continually improving and providing residents and leaseholders with excellent housing services.</p> <p>As tenants and leaseholders you will have the option to be a part of this inspection process and let the Audit Commission know what you think.</p> |
| <p>Freedom of Information Act 2005</p> | <p>Tenants and Leaseholders have the right to information about Newark and Sherwood Homes and how we work, e.g. how we are performing and how we are doing financially.</p> |

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Newark and Sherwood Homes has a vibrant and active participation movement comprising of a active Tenants and Residents Federation, a number of individual Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA's), including a Youth TRA, and a leaseholder group all of which covers a high percentage of Newark and

Methods of Involvement

Sherwood District Council's housing stock.

Residents and Newark and Sherwood Homes recognise it is important to have a variety of involvement methods, which will enable those who wish to participate to do so in a way that suits them.

We recognise that residents may wish to become involved: -

- In their own right as an individual.
- With other residents as members of a TRA.
- As part of a Street/Block Group or as A Village Voice
- By taking part in service development groups with Newark and Sherwood Homes
- With other individuals or agencies on community projects and estate based initiatives.

Individual Residents

As part of the structure for resident involvement there are a number of options through which individual residents can become involved. These include: -

- Surveys,
- Telephone Panels
- Service Development Groups
- Other methods that will give individuals far greater opportunities to be involved (see appendix 1)

Tenants and Residents Associations

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Residents that wish to form a group and go on to join the Federation will be supported by Newark and Sherwood Homes. There will also be provision for smaller street groups or a village voice to

Methods of Involvement

be formed where a TRA does not presently exist.

Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

The Federation is an umbrella organisation made up of groups of residents who are active in their own areas and come together to discuss mutual issues relating to housing and the community, which includes monitoring the services provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes.

The Federation works to support all TRA's throughout Newark and Sherwood District in partnership with Newark and Sherwood Homes. This involves the group signing criteria of recognition and being formally registered. Further information can be found in appendix 2.

Directors of the Board of Newark and Sherwood Homes

All tenants have the opportunity to put themselves forward as a Director of the Board of Newark and Sherwood Homes. This involves setting the strategic direction of the company to ensure delivery of our vision and objectives. Annual elections are held to appoint Directors of the Board.

Neighbourhood Improvement Panel (NIP)

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There are two Neighbourhood Improvement Panels (NIP's); one for the East and one for the West of the

Methods of Involvement

District. This forum is designed to provide maximum customer impact. Positions on the Panel will be made available to:

- Two residents from each Tenants and Residents Associations from the respective area
- Two District Councillors;
- Two Police representatives;
- Appropriate representation from Newark and Sherwood Homes;
- Panel Administrator from Newark and Sherwood Homes.

The Panels meet 3 times a year to discuss community and housing issues relevant to their area. All residents have the right to attend a NIP.

Panels can also work with Newark and Sherwood Homes in order to assist in the identification of funding sources to support community initiatives.

The Panel operates to a formal code of conduct and the chair and vice chair are elected by the panel yearly.

District Improvement Panel (DIP)

DIP represents both of the NIP's. Positions on the panel will be made available to:

- Four Federation nominated residents from Tenants and Residents Associations across the district. Ideally two from the East and two from the West. Four more will be nominated by Newark and Sherwood Homes from other groups.
- Two District Councillors, ideally one from the East and one from the West. (nominated by NSDC, however Councillors will also be welcomed at their local NIP's)
- Two Police representatives, one east and one west

District Improvement Panel—Continued.

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- Service Leaders from Newark and Sherwood Homes.

Methods of Involvement

- Panel Administrator from Newark and Sherwood Homes

The DIP meets 3 times a year and allows Newark and Sherwood Homes to consult with residents and leaseholders on a wide variety of issues, which affect their homes and communities.

The panel provides an opportunity for all agencies to work in partnership for the benefit of all citizens of the district, therefore adding value to the services provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes.

Monitoring Groups

Newark and Sherwood Homes currently facilitate 4 monitoring groups covering the following service areas:

- Housing Management
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Leasehold Services
- Resident Involvement

The groups are held approximately every 6 weeks and are chaired by tenants. These groups exist to monitor performance and service provision and to bring forward ideas to enhance current practice and shape future service delivery.

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Street/Block Group

Methods of Involvement

Residents and leaseholders of a street or block of flats may wish to establish a group where no recognised TRA exists in order to promote the interests of their immediate community and environment.

These groups can be recognised by Newark and Sherwood Homes as a developing group while aiming towards reaching full recognition as a TRA.

A development grant and a stationary pack will be offered to the group in conjunction with the support of their local housing officer and the Federation. The formation of the group can be reviewed after a period of 12 months.

Village Voice

In the absence of any formal TRA or Street/Block group individuals may come forward to represent their communities. In order to ensure that the views of the community are represented the individual should provide an annual statement of support signed by 25% of the designated population. The signing of this statement indicates an acceptance by the community that they are happy for the individual to bring forward their views.

The role of the village voice will be to represent the interests of the community at local level by being a two-way conduit for information. Access to training and travel expenses will be available. This role will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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Local Surgeries/Joint Working

Methods of involvement

In areas where no TRA exists the Federation works with the Tenancy & Estate Team on a casual basis in the provision of surgeries in these areas.

A programme of local surgeries is published each year where residents of sheltered housing can meet officers of Newark and Sherwood Homes to discuss specific issues.

Involving Hard To Reach Groups

Newark and Sherwood Homes works hard to achieve greater involvement from those tenants whose voice is sometimes not heard.

We are looking to increase levels of representation and involvement in decision-making from:

- Black and ethnic minorities
- Young parents
- Less abled residents and leaseholders
- Residents and leaseholders of remote rural properties
- Gypsy Traveller community
-

In order to do this Newark and Sherwood Homes will: -

- Hold a series of 4 information days per year that will inform residents of the range of opportunities available to them.

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Methods of Involvement

- Set up service development groups where necessary to address specific needs and concerns.
- Encourage all staff to be pro-active in creating opportunities for residents and leaseholders from under represented groups to become involved, and to provide support and training for the group to allow it to become more effective.
- Support the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice for Rented Housing and Employment.

Newark and Sherwood Homes will monitor the levels of involvement from these groups on a regular basis to assess if the methods being used are effective (see page 16)

Community Initiatives

Newark and Sherwood Homes are also keen to support residents wishing to become involved in community-based projects. For example community garden schemes, estate improvement groups, community clean-ups and multi-agency action weeks. All these initiatives focus on residents and working together for the good of their community, adding value to their environment and daily lives.

This reflects our commitment to help create sustainable and cohesive communities.

Tenant Compact

Newark and Sherwood Homes is committed to resident involvement and participation. A regular review of the Tenant Compact reflects this.

Tenant Compact continued

The Tenant Compact is an agreement developed by working in partnership with residents. This agreement helps to formalise participation arrangements and promote an effective working relationship.

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Methods of Involvement

The aims of the compact are:

- To acknowledge the relationship between Newark and Sherwood Homes and residents with regards to involvement opportunities
- To create a formal agreement between all parties highlighting the company's commitment to tenant participation
- To explain to residents the type, level and frequency of information, which is available to them
- To provide a review structure to ensure the compact is monitored by all parties.

Residents are more likely to continue to be involved if they can see that they are making a difference, feel valued and are adequately resourced to carry out projects within the community.

Newark and Sherwood Homes via the Federation will provide all registered groups with the following

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financial and administrative support:

Resources for Participation

- Annual grant of £400 per group (subsequent grant applications will be assessed and any monies remaining from the previous year could be deducted)
- Assistance with administration and newsletter production available from the Federation
- Developmental support and advice from an officer with expertise
- Affiliation to TPAS or other national body under the Federation's existing membership
- Provide all registered groups with a re-conditioned computer and printer by end of year 2009
- All new groups will be provided with a limited start-up grant of £100 and a stationary pack.

Travel Expenses

Newark and Sherwood Homes will help with childcare costs, carer allowance (where appropriate) and travel expenses for those attending meetings over and above normal TRA duties:

Residents and leaseholders who qualify for expenses will be issued with a claim form at the meeting to complete and leave with the officer leading the meeting.

Training

Newark and Sherwood Homes recognises that if participation is to grow, residents need to have the knowledge and skills necessary to make them feel able to play an active part in the decision making process.

As part of this drive to enable our residents to play a greater role in service delivery Newark and Sherwood Homes will carry out an annual survey to identify training needs. The results of which will form the basis of training sessions to meet these needs.

Communication

We recognise that excellent communication is essential to effective involvement therefore Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Involve resident representatives in the production of resident publications; to ensure the

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information being provided is clear and tailored to individual needs.

- Maintain a database of residents and leaseholders who require alternative communication formats.

Resources for Participation

Measuring our Performance

We will report our performance in relation to resident involvement using a computer-based system, which will include the following performance indicators:

- Number of residents registered as Friends of Newark and Sherwood Homes
- Resident satisfaction with methods of involvement against value for money
- Percentage of black and ethnic minority residents involved with Newark and Sherwood Homes
- Number of information days held to target hard to reach groups.
- Number of recognised Tenants and Residents Associations.
- Percentage of Newark and Sherwood Homes managed properties covered by Tenants and Residents Associations
- Percentage of tenant involvement in Newark and Sherwood Homes formal decision-making structures (i.e. Board).
- What has been achieved by those residents that are involved.
- How satisfied are all tenants with the opportunities to be involved.

The results of these indicators will be published in Home from Homes, Newark and Sherwood Homes newsletter sent to tenants and leaseholders.

Resident opinions will be sought in a variety of ways. These opinions will provide a useful indication to gauge levels of satisfaction with existing provision and serve to improve future service delivery.

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The Scope of the Strategy

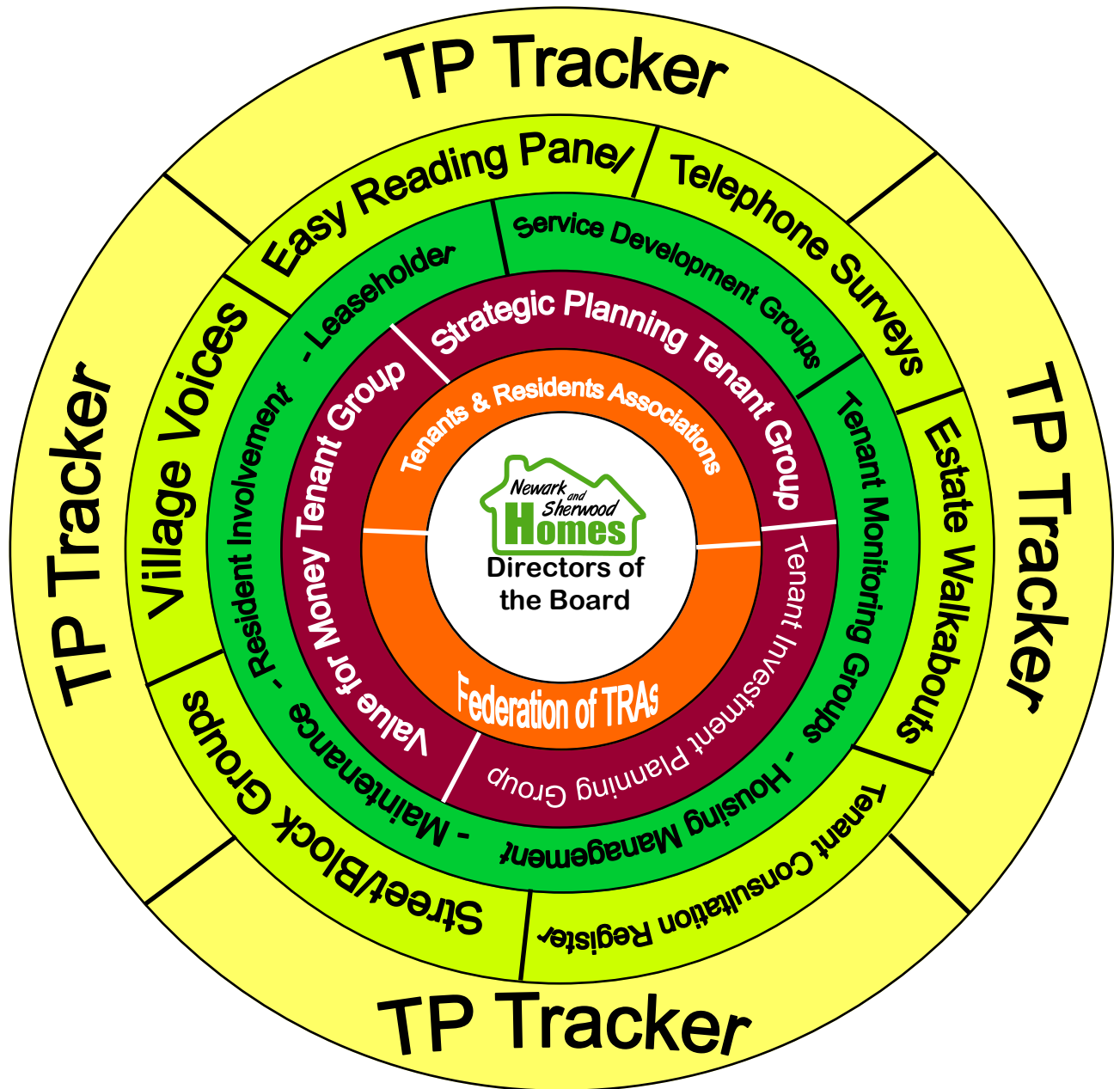
The strategy will be implemented over a 2-year period.

Everyone in the organisation will have a part to play in the implementation of the strategy and will have access to the strategy. Team meetings will be used to maintain a regular flow of information about the implementation of the strategy.

Specific responsibility for implementation of the strategy will lie with the Property and Estates Manager assisted by the Estates Manager.

The Estates Manager will be the main point of contact for the Federation and will manage the budget for Resident Involvement, with the Tenancy & Estate Team providing day-to-day support to TRA's.

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Criteria for Recognition



In conjunction with

**Newark & Sherwood District Federation of Tenants
and Residents Associations**

Criteria for the Recognition of:

- 1) Tenants Groups
- 2) Tenants and Residents Groups
In Newark & Sherwood

Newark and Sherwood Homes
Kelham Hall
Kelham
NEWARK
Nottinghamshire
NG23 5QX

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF REGISTRATION

In order to establish what is a Tenants and Residents Group and to avoid any misunderstanding within the District, both Newark and Sherwood Homes and The Federation established clear guidelines to let existing and potential groups know if they are eligible for support.

Note: The title Tenant or Youth Tenant in reference to this document is defined as someone who resides in a Newark and Sherwood District Council property.

Help is acknowledged from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service in drafting these guidelines.

These amended Criteria have been consulted upon with the Federation on 30th May 2002.

1) NAME AND COMPOSITION

- a) All groups must have the word "tenant" within their title.
- b) Any group that receives funding from Newark and Sherwood Homes, should ensure that at least three of the following positions are held by Newark and Sherwood District Council Tenants.
- c) These posts are:- Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Development Officer (optional position). Should there be no Newark and Sherwood District Council Tenants available to take officer positions, then each group can elect non-tenants to these roles.
- d) Decisions to apply for and spend grant funding from Newark and Sherwood Homes will be discussed and voted upon by Newark and Sherwood District Council Tenants only. Residents cannot vote on these matters.
- e) Issues that affect Newark and Sherwood District Council Tenancy Conditions directly, i.e. Rent Increases, shall be negotiated and voted on by Newark and Sherwood District Council Tenants only.

2) AREA OF ACTIVITY

All groups must clearly define the area they wish to represent. This avoids any future claim by other groups in the same area. Newark and Sherwood Homes will only recognise one group in one area.

3) CONSTITUTION

After the group has been established a constitution must be drawn up and adopted. The Service Development and Participation Officer will be able to help with this. The constitution must be able to tell us the following:

- i) Aims of the group
- ii) Membership (who can join)
- iii) Finance (how financial business will be sorted out)
- iv) The Committee (how they will be elected, how often they meet etc)
- v) AGMs and special meetings (when and how it will be held and how Members will be informed)
- vi) Quorum (the number of Members required for meetings)
- vii) Changes to the Constitution
- viii) Dissolution
- ix) When and where adopted

4) AREA AND DISTRICT PANEL MEETINGS

As part of the acceptance of being a bona fide Tenants and Residents Group you should endeavour to ensure that at least one member of your group attends all Area and District Panel meetings.

5) THE FEDERATION

Your group will be entitled for Membership of the Federation, an independent umbrella organisation that Newark and Sherwood Homes accepts looks after the interest of all Tenants and Residents within the District. This set of criteria has been produced in consultation with them.

6) CONDUCT

- a) As you will be coming into contact with Newark and Sherwood Homes staff on a regular basis, and will expect them to treat you in a cordial manner, Tenants and Residents Group officers and Committee members should demonstrate the highest standards of conduct. Shouting and abusive behaviour will not be tolerated and it will be the responsibility of the Tenants and Residents Groups involved to discipline the individuals.
- b) Newark and Sherwood Homes prides itself on good staff/tenant representative relations. If a tenant representative is treated unfairly or badly in any way by a Newark and Sherwood Homes officer, they should report the incident using Newark and Sherwood Homes' 'Complaints Matter' scheme.
- c) If, in the opinion of Newark and Sherwood Homes, following consultation with the Federation, one or more Tenants and Residents Groups are not complying with the requirements of this Criteria, Newark and Sherwood Homes may cease to recognise that group(s).

7) STANDARD

- a) **On Establishing**
 - i) In order to be considered for registration groups should provide evidence that there is active support in the area.
 - ii) Membership should be determined by the tenant signing to say the Association represents them, or by expressing her/his support at a public meeting.
 - iii) Once recognised the group will be included in Newark and Sherwood Homes' consultation procedures.

Appendices

| | | | |
|---|--|------|--|
| We agree to the rules and regulations as set out in the Criteria for Recognition | | | |
| Name of Group | | | |
| Signature of Chairperson | | Date | |
| Signature of Secretary | | Date | |

GUIDANCE NOTES

- a) The Criteria is formulated so that Newark and Sherwood Homes can establish a standard of operation with prospective and established groups within the Newark and Sherwood District who wish to forge links with Newark and Sherwood Homes and the Federation with a view to receiving funding.
- b) Funding for Tenants and Residents Groups is provided by Newark and Sherwood Homes. The responsibility for the distribution of funds is given to the Funding Committee of the Federation, which operates according to strict criteria.
- c) It is a condition of funding, that any decision, which affects tenants directly, i.e. rent and service charge increases or any other tenancy issue, can only be voted upon by Newark and Sherwood District Council tenants in a named vote. This means that voting on tenant related issues at group meetings must be done with a show of hands and their names recorded in the minutes as evidence of taking part in the vote. It is not necessary to minute if individual tenants voted for or against an issue although the minutes will need to show the overall vote. Groups must conduct this part of the meeting very carefully and ensure that **ONLY** tenants vote on these issues, otherwise your funding may be affected.

If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.


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Racial Equality Monitoring

The following questions are optional (please circle as appropriate)

Male Female Age_____

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No

I would describe my ethnic origin as: (These categories are approved by the Commission for Racial Equality)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| White | Black and Black British |
| British | Caribbean |
| Irish | African |
| Romany Gypsies | Other |
| Irish Travelers | |
| Others | |
| | Chinese or other Ethnicity |
| Mixed | Chinese |
| White and Black Caribbean | Other |
| White and Black African | |
| White Asian | |
| | Refused |
| Asian or Asian British | |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Other | |

Would the formats listed below be useful? If so please tick

Large print Braille Audio tape

Alternative language (please state)

Thank you for taking your time to complete the above form.

Please return this form to:

Newark and Sherwood Homes Limited
 Tenancy and Estates Team
 Kelham Hall
 Newark
 Notts. NG23 5QX

**For more information on how to become involved
with Newark and Sherwood Homes**

Contact any member of staff or alternatively:

Write to:

Tenancy and Estates Team

Kelham Hall

Newark on Trent

Notts

NG23 5QX

Telephone:

(01636) 655516

Email:

housing@nshomes.co.uk

Visit our website on:

www.nshomes.co.uk

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