

DISTRICT TENANT COMPACT 2011-2012

An agreement between Newark and Sherwood Homes and tenants and leaseholders of Newark and Sherwood District Council



Our Vision
is to deliver
excellent
Housing
Services

INTRODUCTION

Newark and Sherwood Homes manages the housing stock on behalf of the Council and are responsible for ensuring effective tenant involvement as reflected in this Tenant Compact.

The District Tenant Compact is an agreement which has been jointly developed and formalises the partnership between Newark and Sherwood Homes, the Newark and Sherwood Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (The Federation) and the tenants and leaseholders of Newark and Sherwood District Council (the Council).

It will enable Newark and Sherwood Homes to successfully encourage further involvement of tenants, either individually or collectively, in influencing how Newark and Sherwood Homes delivers its services and how it can improve its future performance.

Newark and Sherwood Homes engages with tenants to develop effective tenant consultation and participation opportunities. This agreement demonstrates our future commitment to tenant participation and consultation in Newark and Sherwood. The Compact will continue to be developed and monitored in response to future needs.

Newark and Sherwood Homes, the Council and tenants have all given their full support in developing the Compact to assist Newark and Sherwood Homes to deliver excellence in housing services.

Newark and Sherwood Homes would wish to involve everyone in the consultation processes. In cases where Newark and Sherwood Homes provides services to non council tenants, the same standards of involvement and consultation will apply.

If you know of anyone who would have difficulty reading or understanding this document, please ask them to ring 0845 258 5550 where a person will be able to assist them.



We are very pleased to have been involved in the review of this Tenant Compact. Tenants and leaseholders have always been at the heart of services with Newark and Sherwood Homes and the Federation are happy to support this.

This document has been created to benefit all tenants within the Newark and Sherwood area.

Tony Straw
Chair of the Federation

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DEFINITIONS

This Compact is for "tenants" of Newark and Sherwood District Council. In this document, we have used "tenants" to mean "tenants and leaseholders" of domestic properties within the District.

The Compact	District Tenant Compact
The Council	Newark and Sherwood District Council
The Federation	Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations
TRA	Tenants and Residents Association
LA	Local Authority
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
Formal Consultation	Consultation which requires timescales laid by legislation and regulation
Housing Monitoring Group	This group exists to monitor performance and service provision, to bring forward ideas to enhance current practice and shape future service delivery This group is chaired by tenants
NIPs	Neighbourhood Improvement Panels
Company Tenants' Panel	A Panel of tenants who scrutinise corporate performance and hear the final stage of the Company's complaints process
Recognition Criteria	Set of criteria which any group has to satisfy in order to be recognised by the Federation.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

"To value the contribution and involvement of tenants and leaseholders in our services to create a respected partnership working together"

1. What is a Tenant Compact?

The Compact is an agreement between Newark and Sherwood Homes and all the Council's tenants setting out:

- how tenants can get involved collectively in decisions on housing matters which affect them;
- what both parties want to achieve through the Compact, such as better ways of working together, improving local services, and enabling a better quality of life;
- how the Compact will be implemented and reviewed to make sure it is working properly.

In addition to this Compact it is anticipated that there may be Local Tenant Compacts dealing with local estate issues.

2. The Aims of the Compact

The aims of the Compact are:

- to give tenants a greater choice and opportunity to become involved in the management of their homes and thereby help shape and influence the services they receive;
- to create clear and understandable strategies, policies and mechanisms for participation and consultation, which are accessible to all tenants;
- to provide a real and meaningful role for tenants in the monitoring process in order to create continuous improvement and quality services;
- to create partnerships;
- to increase local democracy and strengthen local communities;
- to allow tenants and leaseholders to concentrate on issues most important to them;
- to raise the level of tenant awareness of involvement opportunities;

- to increase the effectiveness of tenant involvement.

3. The Make up of the Compact

The Compact consists of three documents:

- ✓ the Formal Signed Agreement
- ✓ the Summary Document
- ✓ the Action Plan

The Formal Signed Agreement contains the terms and arrangements needed for effective participation by all tenants and residents, members of the Newark and Sherwood District Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (the Federation), and Newark and Sherwood Homes.

A copy of the full Compact will be provided to all TRAs.

Every tenant will receive a Summary Document of the Compact through the Company's newsletter, Home from Homes and the complete Compact is available on request.

The third key part of the Compact is the Action Plan. This identifies specific targets, who is responsible for them and the timescale for completion. The Action Plan will be updated annually.

The Compact will not stand alone but be complimented by other strategies, policies and documents already in place including:

- ✓ Resident Involvement Strategy
- ✓ Tenants Handbook
- ✓ Service Standards

4. Compact Review

The Compact will be reviewed annually and be monitored throughout the year at the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group. The frequency of meetings will be set out in the Action Plan. The formal agreement will be fully consulted on every two years and the Action Plan will be updated annually.

The Compact will be reviewed by using:

- district-wide surveys;

- measuring performance against Action Plan targets;
- responses received from tenants;
- measuring our success against those of other authorities and other landlords;
- Value for Money evaluation.

5. Levels of Involvement

One of the main aims of the Compact is to give tenants the opportunity to become involved in shaping future service provision at a level to suit them.

Informal Level

Available to all tenants and includes receiving newsletters and leaflets, and for instance, participate in district-wide surveys and attend the Annual Tenant Conference.

Formal Level

In addition to the above you can think about joining the Tenant Consultation Register, single-issue working parties, attend NIPs, service monitoring groups as well as belong to the local TRAs.

This could also include being a committee member of the TRAs, a member of the Company's Tenants' Panel or a Board Member for Newark and Sherwood Homes.

Tenants can become involved in all levels of the company.

6. Resolving Compact Breaches

Any tenant that feels that the Compact has been broken can use the 'Complaints Matter' scheme to register their comments. The Housing Monitoring Group will be made aware of any complaints and make recommendations for an improvement or changes in the Compact if required.

Newark and Sherwood Homes will adhere to the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act and other relevant legislation that may impact on the distribution of information.

There are some things we cannot change, such as actions we must take by law. If this is the case, we will explain why this is and tell you who to contact for further advice.

7. Core Standards

a. Resources for Resident Involvement

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Help develop new groups and develop new forms of participation and consultation. We will promote, support and develop new and existing TRAs including publishing achievements.
- Assist with advice and support on housing related issues through media such as newsletters and advertising.
- Provide opportunities through the NIPs, Monitoring Groups and working parties for tenants to contribute to the overall consultation structure and to comment on ways to improve the present structure.
- Provide details on staff roles and responsibilities.
- Facilitate consultation and involvement events for tenants as appropriate.
- Where appropriate provide access to independent tenant advice.
- Provide the Federation with office facilities.
- Set out in the Action Plan the total Newark and Sherwood Homes' budget allocation for tenant involvement.
- Provide funding to recognised TRAs through the Federation and ensure adequate financial control is administered.
- Display details of local TRA contacts e.g. leaflets and posters in local offices.
- Provide opportunity for individual participation by letter, telephone, in person or on the website and any other available forms of communication.
- Where appropriate combine skills of TRAs to address specific issues where there is more than one in an area.
- Newark and Sherwood Homes will run events and local surgeries around the District attended by relevant staff.
- Value all individual views and contributions in a positive manner.

- Seek to minimise barriers to participation as a result of transport difficulties.
- Provide staff with the information to enable them to assist with enquiries.
- Ensure staff will be aware of, and promote participation.
- Support the Federation and TRAs in publicising their approach to participation.
- When appropriate provide information and reports direct to TRAs.
- Provide resources to include those tenants that are not involved with the Federation or TRA's within the overall budget for tenant involvement.

The Federation will:

- Provide support for TRAs and ensure that new groups are developed.
- Be open, transparent and accessible.
- Encourage attendance at appropriate forums.
- Encourage and promote membership of local TRAs.
- Take account of individual views when developing policies and monitoring the Compact.
- Signpost tenants who contact the Federation office to appropriate staff at Newark and Sherwood Homes.
- Provide volunteers to service the Federation office for the benefit of all recognised TRAs within the District.
- Comply with health and safety regulations in regard to operating and staffing the Federation office.
- Provide a formal committee to distribute funding to new and existing TRAs in line with Newark and Sherwood Homes' guidelines.
- Provide details to tenants of local TRAs and contacts, etc.
- Assist in providing opportunity for individual participation by letter, telephone, in person or on the website.

- Be involved in estate-wide consultation on larger estates and combine TRAs for specific issues where there is more than one in a defined area.
- Help with transport issues to enable tenants to participate.
- Provide dedicated Federation Officer support to TRAs.
- Demonstrate their own commitment to consultation and participation including support of the Annual Tenant Conference.
- Provide a community resource facility and reprographic service for TRAs on a not-for-profit basis.
- Engage with independent tenant advisors and encourage tenants in participation.
- Provide information and reports for officers and tenants as required.
- Comply with all financial regulations and controls, and account for resources.
- Publish Federation office opening times.
- Ensure that it uses its resources efficiently and that the services it provides represent Value for Money.
- Be transparent including providing a full set of audited accounts to Newark and Sherwood Homes annually.

All tenants will:

- Be able to join a TRA, attend appropriate forums, surgeries, and events.
- Be able to contact Newark and Sherwood Homes or the Federation by letter, telephone, in person or by the website.
- Be encouraged to give their views and be involved in estate-wide consultation on larger estates.
- Be reassured that all views offered will be considered equally and fairly
- Be able to be involved in any tenant involvement structure/ mechanism operated by Newark and Sherwood Homes.

b. Standards for Meetings

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Encourage participation by under-represented groups.
- Help the Federation to secure suitable premises in which to hold meetings.
- Aim to ensure meeting venues and times are arranged to maximise attendance.
- Respond positively to requests from the Federation to attend meetings and seek to ensure that the appropriate staff are available to attend meetings when the need arises.
- Ensure that meetings are publicised effectively, e.g. NIPs, including the use of "Home from Homes".
- Seek to maximise attendance at NIPs.
- Provide high quality information and reports for meetings where officers attend.
- Not discuss individual issues within general meetings. Private issues can be discussed once the meeting is over.
- Ensure meetings are run to agreed rules and protocols and the appropriate decision making process is applied.

The Federation and TRAs will:

- Encourage participation by under-represented groups.
- Aim to ensure meeting venues and times are arranged to maximise attendance.
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.
- Ensure meetings are run to agreed rules and protocols and the appropriate decision making process is applied.
- Ensure that meetings are publicised effectively.
- Request a member of Newark and Sherwood Homes' staff attends for appropriate issues through agreed procedures.

- Plan meeting agendas to ensure the most effective use of time.

All tenants will:

- Have access to details of meeting times and venues and be able to attend open meetings.

c. Standards for Information and Communication

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Provide quality and relevant information on a range of issues including policies and priorities, and housing investment options and plans.
- Make arrangements for developing and implementing a quality service, including monitoring and reviewing performance, service plans and setting service standards and targets.
- Listen to tenants information needs and meet them in accessible and relevant ways.
- Ensure all information provided is relevant and up to date and provided in a timely way.
- Provide information on opportunities for support for tenant involvement, influence, participation and advice.
- Ensure that communications are in plain English and expressed clearly to avoid bias.
- Avoid the use of jargon.
- Ensure information is available at local offices and other venues and provided in a variety of formats, e.g. large print, audio (on request).
- Include tenant issues in regular and single issue newsletters where appropriate.
- Ensure that the Federation is provided with all new information and literature available for tenants for their notice board.
- Ensure that all information adheres to the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act and other relevant legislation that may impact on the distribution of information.

The Federation and TRAs will:

- Provide their ideas for improving the service delivery and policies.
- Respond in a constructive and positive manner when reviewing services, which should also reflect the views of their members.
- Contribute to the communication process, e.g. provision of articles for newsletters.
- Promote information to tenants generally, and facilitate support to those who have difficulty reading.
- Ensure that communications are in plain English, avoid jargon and do not use sexist, racist or abusive language.
- Provide information on opportunities for support for tenant involvement, influence, participation and advice.
- Ensure information about the Federation and their services is available at the Federation office.
- Produce a regular newsletter for TRAs at least twice each year.
- Ensure the Federation and TRA notice boards and website remain relevant and up to date.

All tenants will:

- Where possible receive information on all relevant issues.
- Where possible be able to comment on information.
- Where possible be able to expect that information in a variety of formats.
- Receive information on opportunities for support for tenant involvement, influence, participation and advice.
- Receive communications in plain English that are unbiased and avoid jargon.

d. Good Governance for TRAs

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Aim for the majority of tenants to be represented through TRAs or an alternative representation system.
- Work in partnership with TRAs to improve services.
- Provide a Recognition Criteria, together with the Federation, to ensure that as many TRAs as possible are representative, constitutional, democratic and accountable.
- Ensure that the Federation have access to consultation mechanisms such as NIPs, and the Monitoring Groups.
- Provide support in ensuring new TRAs are encouraged and developed.
- Promote benefits of publicity opportunities for TRAs.
- Promote the role of TRAs to tenants.

The Federation and TRAs will:

- Work in partnership with Newark and Sherwood Homes to improve services.
- Work towards ensuring that as many TRAs as possible meet the Recognition Criteria.
- Provide help and support to emerging TRAs including a community resource facility, reprographic facilities and training until grant aid is received.
- Promote the role of TRAs to tenants.
- Have procedures to ensure that information about TRAs is made available and that tenants are encouraged to play an active role.
- Have a membership which is clearly open to all tenants of the defined area.
- Have regular written communication with its members.
- Have the means to show that TRAs have met the objectives and work in an efficient manner.

- Act in the interest of its members.
- Provide a full set of audited accounts to Newark and Sherwood Homes annually, and be open to auditing for up to four times a year.

All tenants will:

- Be able to join the TRA in their area.
- Be able to set up a TRA where a recognised one does not already exist.
- Be able to receive the help and support of Newark and Sherwood Homes and the Federation in the working of TRAs.
- Be able to receive information on the roles and benefits of TRAs.

e. Standards for training

Newark and Sherwood Homes will, (subject to resources available):

- Provide up to date topical training courses, together with the Federation, for new and existing TRAs.
- Help to identify other organisations who can provide training to suit the needs of the Federation and TRAs.
- Assist with tailored training to meet the needs of tenant representatives or representative groups.
- Carry out an annual Training Needs Survey for each TRA to identify needs.
- Provide training to staff in tenant involvement to maximise services to tenants.
- Where possible, maximise joint training opportunities.
- Ensure courses are of appropriate duration and relevance.

The Federation and/or TRA will:

- Identify independent sources of training and maximise access for members to take advantage of any training offered.

- Take advantage of training opportunities when offered.
- Publicise and encourage take up of training among the TRAs.
- Ensure that training needs are identified and work together with Newark and Sherwood Homes to find solutions to meet the needs.
- Attend any compulsory courses which are required by health and safety or other legislation.
- Provide a feedback summary to their members and Newark and Sherwood Homes when attending training.
- Be able to access training in relation to participation through the TRAs.

f. Monitoring Performance

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

- Provide the Federation and TRAs a minimum of 21 days for formal consultation, unless otherwise agreed.
- Set clear service standards for tenant participation, consultation and involvement.
- Publish performance indicators which set down clear standards for housing services.
- Develop comparisons and set standards to compare performance with other housing providers, e.g. registered social landlord, ALMOs, LA's.
- Consult effectively with tenants in a variety of ways, including:
 - Surveys (telephone, written and face to face)
 - Tenants/resident feedback
 - Estate visits/walkabouts
 - Mystery shoppers
 - Focus groups
 - Exhibitions
 - Surgeries
 - One off events
- Provide feedback to the Federation and TRAs from surveys through Monitoring Groups or similar as appropriate.
- Provide indicators such as awareness of the Compact, number of TRAs in operation and satisfaction levels.

- Advertise to tenants the use of the procedure, 'Complaints Matter' to challenge aspects of the Compact that are not working
- Provide new tenants with a summary of the Compact with the Tenant Handbook.
- Ensure under-represented groups are given the opportunity to be involved in the monitoring process.
- Review practices, policies and performance at regular intervals.
- Ensure regular monitoring of existing structures of consultation and involvement takes place.
- Monitor and evaluate different approaches to tenant participation, introducing change that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of consultation and involvement.
- Monitor complaints.
- Monitor equality of opportunity.
- Provide feedback on actions taken.

The Federation and TRAs will:

- Normally respond to formal consultation within 21 days.
- Be involved in the review of practices, policies and performance at regular intervals and contribute to the development of specific targets.
- Ensure regular monitoring of existing structures of consultation and involvement takes place.
- Monitor and evaluate different approaches to tenant participation, introducing change that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of consultation and involvement.
- Publicise their financial accounts.
- Monitor equality of opportunity.

All tenants will:

- Be consulted.

- Receive information relating to monitoring and performance.
- Have the opportunity through the TRAs to be involved in Monitoring Groups.
- Have access to the complaints procedure, 'Complaints Matters'.
- Be provided with a Summary Document of the Compact.

g. Housing Standards

Newark and Sherwood Homes will:

Involve TRAs in the following areas:

- Housing policy and strategy.
- Capital and regeneration programmes.
- Developing and implementing improvement programmes.
- Monitoring of Newark and Sherwood Homes' services.
- Repairs and maintenance.
- Production of Tenant Handbooks.
- Management and neighbourhood issues where appropriate.
- Methods of consultation to include, but not limited to:
 - Via TRAs
 - Housing Matters forms
 - Focus groups and working parties
 - Tenant magazine and newsletters
 - Annual Tenants Conference
 - NIPs
 - Surveys

The Federation and TRAs will:

- Have the opportunity to respond to consultation on policies.
- Have the opportunity to be involved in issues affecting local areas.
- Have the opportunity to be consulted on drawing up programmes of work.

All tenants will:

- Have the right to share in information on any proposed changes and be consulted.
- Receive information in tenants newsletters.
- Be kept informed and advised of works to their homes at the earliest opportunity.

8. Addresses and Contacts

By Telephone:

General enquiries (local call rate): 0845 258 5550
Repairs freephone (24 hours): 0800 561 0010
Emergency Out of Hours service: 0800 561 0010
Minicom: 01636 655960
Fax: 01636 655514

By visiting our Offices:

Registered Office

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

Local Offices

Hawtonville Office
77c Eton Avenue
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG24 4JH

Phone: 01636 655503
Fax: 01636 655504

Ollerton Office
Sycamore Road
Ollerton
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9PS

Phone: 01623 860740
Fax: 01623 860729

Over the internet via our Website:

www.nshomes.co.uk

Via email to:

housing@nshomes.co.uk

Community and Voluntary Partners:

Newark and Sherwood District Federation
of Tenants and residents Associations
Brooks House
21b Bailey Rd
Newark on Trent
Nottinghamshire.
NG24 4EP

Phone:01636 684343

Website: www.nsfederation.co.uk

E-mail: info@nsfederation.co.uk

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(Polish)

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Signing



The Big Word
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Audio Tape

V.8