

TPAS



Jargon Buster

TPAS Information Booklet



www.tpas.org.uk

hello...

Welcome to TPAS

By informing residents how to challenge, influence and control how their housing services are delivered, we can improve residents' quality of life and help Social Housing Landlords operate more effectively and efficiently.

As one of the first organisations to specialise in resident involvement (RI) at national level, TPAS has been leading the way ever since; successfully joining up government policy with front-line service delivery and grassroots tenants' groups.

Our nationwide membership is made up of local residents and their landlords, providing us with unique insight into the needs of all parties. With successful Resident Involvement we can get housing practitioners and residents all working together to effect positive change in social housing communities.

We act as a vital hub between government, social housing landlords and residents, forging strong partnerships essential to the creation of better communities.

This is one of many regularly updated documents which is produced by the TPAS Information and policy department. If you would like further information or additional copies of any of the information documents please contact:

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Jargon Buster: A Guide to Housing Jargon for Tenants and Housing Staff

This quick and easy Jargon Buster gives explanations to some of the many terms and acronyms Tenants and Housing Staff may come across in relation to Social Housing.

A

ABC Acceptable Behaviour Contract

A written agreement between a young person who has been involved in Anti Social Behaviour, the police and local housing office. ABCs are not legally binding.

Absentee Landlord

Landlords who do not live in or near to the property they own. The term is often used to describe landlords who show little concern for their property or their tenants.

AGM Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting is held by an organisation at about the same time every year. At the meeting they report on the organisation's work over the last year, present the accounts to their members and elect a new committee

Allocations

This is the term used by social landlords to describe the process of identifying properties and letting them to people, who then become their tenants.

Allocations Policy

An allocations policy sets down the rules for allocating (i.e. offering) housing, and should ensure that those most in need get offered a home first.

ALMO - Arms Length Management Organisation

A company set up and owned by a local authority which manages council housing stock. Because the council retains ownership, there is no change in tenancy status.

Almshouse

Form of charitable housing providing accommodation for older people or the homeless. Some almshouses are Registered Social Landlords, but their residents have different rights to tenants of none Almshouse Registered Social Landlords.

Annual Lettings Plan

This is a plan drawn up by a social landlord that covers the various groups in need of housing that the landlord intends to let properties to over the year. Most large housing associations and local authorities will have such a plan.

Area Based Regeneration

The improvement of a distinct geographic area by tackling a wide range of factors (e.g. unemployment, empty properties, unfit housing, poverty, crime etc).

ASBO - Anti Social Behaviour Order

An ASBO is an injunction taken out against individuals who have been causing persistent acts of Anti Social Behaviour. The ASBO might ban them from entering a particular area (such as an estate or district). Local Authorities and police can issue ASBOs against any individual over 10 years old.

Assignment

An agreement between a landlord and tenant that a friend or relative of the tenant can take over the tenancy.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

Assured Shorthold tenancies give the tenant the right to occupy a property for a fixed period of time, provided that they keep to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. At the end of the fixed period of time (often 12 months), the landlord or the tenant has the right to terminate the tenancy.

Assured Tenancy

Since January 1989 all new tenants of housing associations have assured tenancies. They have fewer rights in law than secure tenants, although regulatory guidance requires some of these rights be written into assured tenancy agreements.

Audit Commission

An independent body with the responsibility for the external audit of all local authorities. The Housing Inspectorate is part of the Audit Commission.

B

Basic Credit Approval

The amount of money the Government allows a local authority to borrow for capital investment each year.

Ballot

A vote, usually in secret and cast on paper.

Beacon Council

"The Beacon Council Scheme" was introduced as a result of the Government's 1998 White Paper 'Modernising Local Government: In Touch with the

People'. The aim of the scheme is to identify centres of excellence in local government from which other councils can learn.

Benchmarking

Assessing an organisation's performance by comparing it to that of other organisations of a similar size and purpose.

BME

Black & Minority Ethnic. Sometimes written as BEM (Black and Ethnic Minority).

Board of Management

Group of people who have volunteered or been elected to control the affairs of a housing association. They can come from all walks of life but must have some interest or experience which relates to the work that the housing association does and the community it serves. It may also be called a Management Committee, Management Board, Board, or Board of Trustees.

Board Member

The term used to refer to a member of the Board of Management of a housing association.

Budget

The amount of money an organisation estimates it will spend in one year.

Business Plans

These set out housing provider's key objectives and the proposals they have for running and developing their role over a period of time. Normally they are linked to budgets and performance targets.

C

CAB - Citizens Advice Bureau

A Citizens Advice Bureau can give free advice and information to local people, in person or by telephone. They advise on problems like benefits, debt and consumer rights.

Capacity Builders

The government agency responsible for the Capacity Builders programme which aims to develop the skills of the Third Sector.

Capacity Building

An enabling and empowering process that adds value to community development by strengthening the ability of community organisations to reach and deliver to target groups.

Capital Expenditure

The money that landlords spend on buying land, or building and improving housing.

Capital Programme

A plan, usually over at least one year, for building and improving housing.

Capital Receipts

Money received by councils when they sell homes or land either voluntarily or under the Right to Buy.

Cave Review – Every Tenant Matters

Published in 2007, the first wholesale review of social housing regulation for a generation. Argued for landlords to be more responsive tenants, for a system of co-regulation and for a single regulator for all social landlords. Made the case for a National Tenant Voice.

Choice Based Lettings

An approach to letting homes where people 'bid' for the vacant home they want. Priority is still given to people with pressing need.

Charitable Status

Many housing associations are charities. Charitable status gives Housing Associations certain privileges (e.g. tax advantages) but limits the objectives and activities the association can carry out. These have to be for 'charitable purposes'. Housing associations with charitable status can be charitable trusts or companies, or industrial and provident societies.

Charity Commission

Organisation responsible for the regulation and registration of charities in England and Wales.

CIH - Chartered Institute of Housing

Organisation that awards professional qualifications to people who work in housing. It is also the representative body for housing professionals.

Citizens' Jury

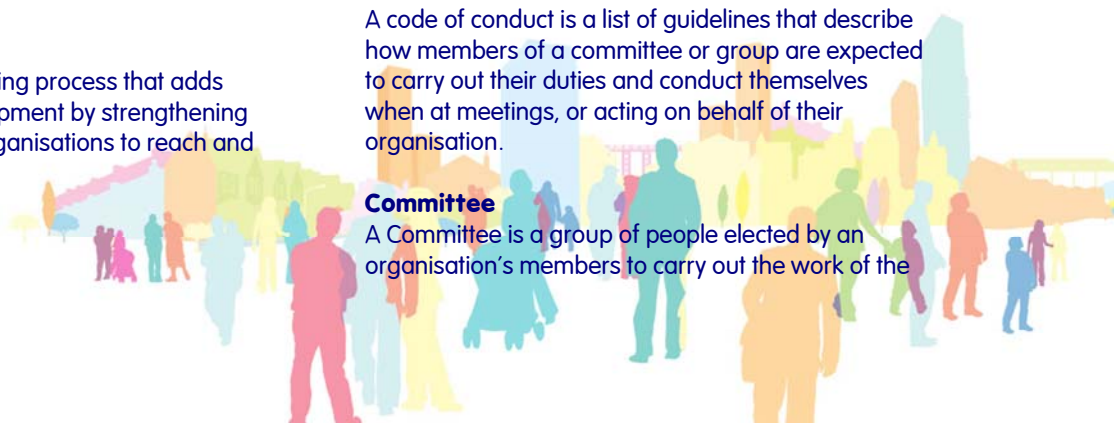
A method of consultation which uses a small representative cross section of the community to look in depth at an issue, come to a conclusion and make recommendations for change.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a list of guidelines that describe how members of a committee or group are expected to carry out their duties and conduct themselves when at meetings, or acting on behalf of their organisation.

Committee

A Committee is a group of people elected by an organisation's members to carry out the work of the



organisation. The Committee organises group meetings, and the group's Annual General Meeting and is responsible for carrying forward any decisions made at these meetings. Committees should always have a Chair, Secretary and a Treasurer.

(Community) Asset Transfer

Transferring under-used public buildings – e.g. community centres - (or sometimes unwanted private building) into community ownership.

Community Based HA

A housing association set up to acquire and rehabilitate dwellings. Such associations are community run, have strong connections to the locality in which they operate and often have tenant majorities on the board of management.

Community Cohesion

A cohesive community is a community that is in a state of well-being, harmony and stability. Local authorities have an important role in facilitating community cohesion, through listening to communities and engaging residents.

Community Development

Generic term covering the process of building active and sustainable communities by giving residents access to information and training.

Community Development Foundation

The Government sponsored independent agency that supports and promotes community development.

Community Development Officer (CDO)

A Community Development Officer is a community worker, employed by the council or a voluntary organisation, to help build, support and service community and residents' groups.

Community Empowerment

Catch all term for a wide range of activities that are intended to ensure that citizens have more say in how their neighbourhoods and areas develop.

Community Empowerment Fund

Strategic fund set up to help voluntary and community groups get involved in decision making through the Local Strategic Partnership.

Community Fund

New name for the National Lottery Charities Board. Community Fund gives out grants from money raised through sale of National Lottery tickets.

CLG - Communities and Local Government

Communities and Local Government (formerly the ODPM) - this is the Central Government Department

which is responsible for the Supporting People programme and monitors the performance of each administering authority.

CLT - Community Land Trust

A way of giving community based organisations ownership of land so that they can re-use any rise in land value for the benefit of the community (often used for housing).

Community Plan / Sustainable Community Strategy

Under the Local Government Act 2000 all local authorities are required to work in partnership with the community, businesses, the voluntary sector and other partners to develop a long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their local communities.

Compulsory Competitive Tendering

Government policy that required local authorities to put out to competitive tender work previously carried out by council staff. This has now been replaced by Best Value.

Competitive Tendering

The process of inviting offers from outside organisations to run a specific service, e.g. grounds maintenance, catering etc. The tendering process is competitive and decisions on who wins the tender are usually made against a set of pre-determined criteria that covers quality of service issues as well as price and value for money.

Constitution

A constitution is a document, produced by a group, that states its aims, objectives, membership, rules etc. It is essential that a group has a good constitution, as it is the document that should be referred to if any questions arise about the way the group is run, how and when meetings occur, who looks after the money and what to do if a dispute occurs. Some Landlords may ask a group to adopt a standard Constitution in order to receive funding.

Contractor Accreditation

This is a review and measure of a housing contractor's record in resident involvement. The contractor is awarded accreditation if they meet the standard required.

Co-operative

See Housing Co-operative

Co-Regulation

The idea in the Cave Review for the form of Housing regulation that there should be a more equal relationship between residents, landlords and central regulators. Landlords would have more freedom

from central control if they do more to listen to and involve residents.

Council Housing Transfer / Large Scale Voluntary Transfer / Stock Transfer

The process by which a local authority (Council) transfers the ownership and management of its Housing stock to a not-for-profit Registered Social Landlord. (Before the transfer can take place, a vote is usually conducted to see if tenants are in favour of it. If they are not, the local authority cannot go ahead with the transfer). The new landlord takes over responsibility for managing properties, rents, repairs, maintenance etc. The local authority continues to manage all non-housing related services (such as refuse collection, street lighting etc).

Credit Union

Credit unions are locally based savings schemes that provide low cost loans to people on a low income.

Crime & Disorder Act 1998

Gave Local Authorities extra powers to deal with people who commit acts of Anti Social Behaviour.

Criteria of Recognition

Social Landlords often have a set of guidelines called 'Criteria of Recognition' that set out what a Tenants' Association must do in order to be 'Recognised' by the landlord as the official group for their area. Being Recognised means that a group can receive funding, resources and support from the landlord.

Cyclical Maintenance

See Planned Maintenance

D

Data Protection / Data Protection Act

Under the Data Protection Act (1998), individuals have certain rights to access information that is being held about them by organisations and companies. These organisations and companies also have a responsibility under the Act to store and use the data that they hold in a responsible way.

Decant

Tenants can be temporarily moved out of their homes (decanted) to another dwelling if their landlord needs to carry out work that is disruptive or that would be difficult to do with the tenant in situ.

Decapping

Taking the top storey or storeys off a block of maisonettes or flats, usually to turn them into houses. Sometimes also called top slicing.

Decent Homes Standard

The Decent Homes Standard is a target set by Government for all social housing providers to meet set standards of design for their homes by 2010. In brief, a decent home will have to pass four tests: -

- It has to meet the current statutory minimum standards for housing
- It needs to be in a reasonable state of repair
- It needs to have reasonably modern facilities and services
- It needs to provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Decentralisation

A process by which local authority departments make their services more local, for example by having a number of smaller estate offices instead of one central office in the town hall.

Density (Housing Density)

Describes the number of dwellings (houses, flats, maisonettes etc.) that exist within a particular area (e.g. acre or hectare).

Desktop Review

A way of monitoring the performance of an organisation without actually visiting it. The organisation submits statistics and reports to its monitoring body who then use them to assess its performance.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

"Aims to end the discrimination which many disabled people face. This Act gives disabled people rights in the areas of: employment, access to goods, facilities and services, buying or renting land or property. The final rights of access will come into force in October 2004. In addition, this Act allows the Government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can use public transport easily." (DWP definition)

Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

The DDA 2005 updates 1995 Act. It introduces the new public sector equality duty; it will ensure public bodies such as local councils, universities, hospitals and housing providers think about the needs of disabled people when planning their services.

District Committee

See Estate & Area / District Committees

District Councils

Councils covering areas outside large towns and cities.

Disturbance Payments

Social Housing Tenants who are forced to move home on a temporary or a permanent basis due to



their landlord carrying out major repairs or demolition are entitled to claim Disturbance Payments to help them cover the cost of moving.

Direct Service Organisation (DSOs) and Direct Labour Organisations (DLOs)

Councils often provide housing services directly. With the shift to competitive tendering many councils created Direct Services Organisations so that they could compete with private companies. Many housing providers have established direct service organisations to ensure control over the quality of services.

DMC - District Management Committee

Some councils and housing associations have District Management Committees (e.g. Kirklees, Camden, Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Association). These are area committees that tenants are represented on, which normally have a budget devolved from the local authority, and which make recommendations to Housing Committee/Management Board.

Draft

Any version of a document, such as a report, in which the ideas or wording have not yet been finally agreed.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Government department dealing with employment, pensions, child welfare and disability. They have recently also taken responsibility for Health and Safety.

E

EMB - Estate Management Board

Tenants and landlords can agree to share the responsibility of running their estate by setting up an Estate Management Board, with the majority of members being tenants. An agreement is drawn up saying which issues are the Board's responsibility and which are the landlord's.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (from 2007)

The body responsible for protecting people's statutory rights to equal treatment and promoting equality and diversity. Formed from the merger of the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission

Equal Opportunities

Means treating all people equally, and not being prejudiced or discriminating against someone because of their ethnic origin, religion, sexuality, disability, gender or age.

Equal Opportunities Policy

A written agreement by an organisation which sets out how it will go about treating all people equally and fairly. For landlords this should include how they choose and treat their tenants and workers. For tenants this should include how they organise their association or federation.

Equity Stake

Housing providers can offer exiting tenants the chance to buy a small proportion of their homes.

Estate Action

A series of renewal projects set up in 1985 by the Department of the Environment (now the CLG). The programme aimed to help councils improve run down estates by providing funding for improvements, better management, training and enterprise initiatives.

Estate Agreement

An Estate Agreement is a yearly agreement negotiated between the landlord and all tenants on an estate. The agreement sets out issues such as: priorities for action, standards of service for the estate, how tenants will be kept informed and consulted, how service standards will be monitored etc. The agreement is not legally binding and does not guarantee extra resources will be given to the estate to tackle any problems.

Estate & Area / District Committees

Joint tenant/resident and landlord committees. Estate Committees deal with local issues, not all of which may be the direct responsibility of the landlord. Area Committees concentrate mainly on the landlord's policies and how these affect residents.

Estate Based Management

(Not to be confused with Estate Management Boards). Housing management services delivered from local estate offices instead of from the town hall or housing association head office. These services may also include repairs, re-housing and recreational services and in some cases social services, welfare rights and environmental health services.

Eviction

Being removed from your property by a bailiff following the serving of a Possession Order.

Executive Committee

A sub-group of an organisation's management committee, which meets to deal with decisions which cannot wait until the next management committee meeting, as well as carrying out detailed work as directed by the main committee.

‘Exempt Charity’

Charitable organisations that do not have to register with the Charities Commission are referred to as exempt charities. Charities do not have to register if they are considered to be adequately supervised by, or accountable to some other body or authority.

F

Feasibility Study

A study undertaken to establish if a particular course of action will be viable and successful.

Federation / Tenants’ Federation

A tenants' federation is a group of tenants' associations who have decided to work together in the interests of all tenants in an area. Most federations can give help and advice to existing and new tenants' associations and can put associations in touch with each other so that they can share ideas and experiences.

Focus Group

Draws together people for a discussion on a specific topic and aims to find out what people think, feel, believe and their reasons for doing so, but not to reach any agreement. Mainly used as a research technique.

Foyer

Foyers provide accommodation for young homeless people. Unlike hostels, they take an active role in helping their residents gain access to training, education, and employment, and to gain independent living skills.

G

General Fund

The council account into which people's council tax is paid. It used to be called the General Rate Fund.

GGFD General Government Financial Deficit

An internationally accepted measure of the balance between general government expenditure and revenue.

GO - Government Offices

Responsible for delivering government policy in the regions, they were established in response to the European agenda but have evolved to be the voice of Whitehall in the regions.

Green Paper

Consultation paper issued by the Government prior to making something law.

Group structures

Many housing providers now consist of a number of housing associations or companies brought together under one parent company. Their activities and services often cover large areas. They are said to have group structures to manage and make decisions about the organisation and its parts.

H

Hills Review - Ends and Means

A major review in 2007 of the value and purpose of social housing. Supported social housing but argued for a wider range of ownership and part ownership options. Argued for focus on existing homes as well as new build and a closer relationship between social housing and employment services.

HMOs - Houses in Multiple Occupation

A single property divided into flats.

HNI - Housing Needs Indicator / Housing Needs Index

Data compiled from various sources that is used to measure how much new housing is needed in each Local Authority area.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

The new housing and regeneration agency for England. They provide funding for affordable housing and improve quality of life by raising standards for the physical and social environment and it also has responsibility for the Decent Homes Programme and for the overseeing of new Council Housing.

Home Loss Payment

Social Housing Tenants who are forced to permanently move to another house / flat due to their landlord carrying out redevelopment or demolition are entitled to claim Home Loss Payments. They may also be entitled to claim Disturbance Payments.

H.O.M.E.S Housing Organisations Mobility & Exchange Services

National agency working with local authorities and housing associations throughout England which helps social housing tenants to move from one area to another.

Homeless / Homelessness.

Where a person or a household are homeless they may be entitled to be rehoused by a local authority or by another housing provider on behalf of the Council. Housing providers like Housing Associations are required, by law, to co-operate with Council in meeting their duties to the homeless.



Homeswap

Scheme set up by HOMES to help social housing tenants find someone to swap homes with.

Home Zone

Started in the Netherlands in the 1970s, Home Zones work by changing the layout of roads to make them safer for the community to use. By positioning 'street furniture' (such as bollards, speed bumps, trees etc) and reducing speed limits, Home Zones hope to increase safety levels for children at play, and improve the 'look' of the community.

Hostel

Hostels provide temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and families.

HA - Housing Association

A non-profit making organisation which provides homes either for people who cannot afford to buy their own or who need special types of housing, for example elderly people. Associations usually have paid workers and are managed by a voluntary Management Committee.

Housing Benefit

Extra money paid to the landlord people on income support or low incomes to cover housing costs.

Housing Co-operative

1. Primary Co-op

A group of seven or more people who agree to work together in a co-operative to provide decent housing for their members.

2. Tenant Management Co-op (TMC)

Where local authority or housing association tenants take on the management (but not ownership) of their own homes and estates.

Housing Finance

Is a system of money and credit that operates to enable all types of residential property to be built, managed, repaired, and exchanged. Housing finance's 3 broad categories are: capital expenditure (i.e. construction, conversion, improvements), revenue expenditure (i.e. repairs, maintenance, and administration of properties) and income (i.e. rent collection).

Housing Inspectorate

Under the Best Value regime all local authority and housing association's housing services will be inspected to check they are showing continuous improvement and providing value for money. This external inspection is carried out by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate team.

Housing Officer

Person employed by a local authority or housing association to carry out a range of Housing Management duties, which may include Tenant Participation if there is no dedicated Tenant Participation Officer.

Housing Plus

A concept which promotes a wider social and economic perspective when providing social housing, for example, employment, crime prevention, education, health etc. Housing Plus aims to enable local people to improve their opportunities in life and add value to their communities.

Housing Providers

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 introduced the term Housing Providers to cover all organisations that provide social housing who are registered with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). The term covers Councils, Housing Associations and private companies that provide social housing.

Housing Subsidy

Money from the Government, paid into a local authority's HRA. This makes up the difference between what the Government thinks the local authority should spend on housing, and what it assumes it is receiving in rent income.

Housing Transfer

See Council Housing Transfer

Housing Trust

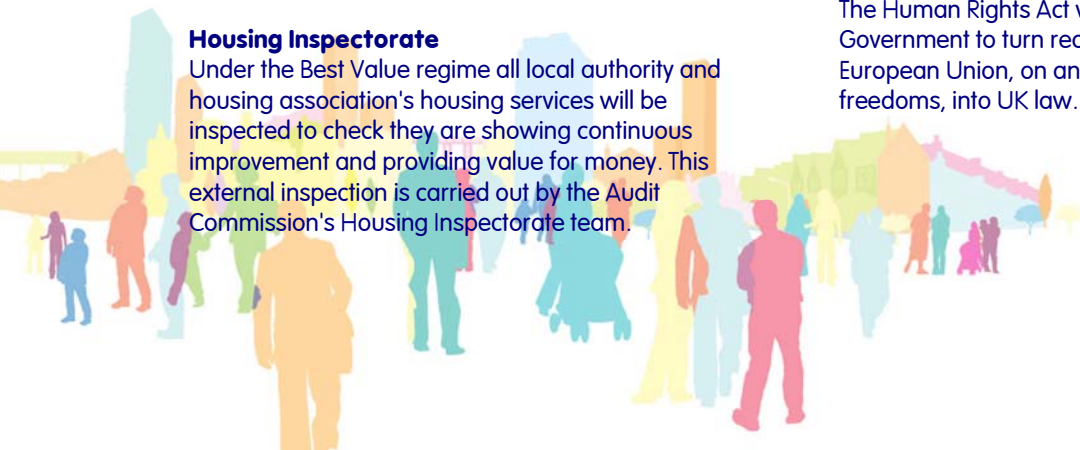
An organisation which is required by its constitution to use all of its funds, including any surpluses, to provide housing accommodation, or one whose constitution states that it must use all, or nearly all, of its funds for charitable purposes and in fact uses all, or nearly all, of the money to provide housing.

HRA - Housing Revenue Account

Local authority account into which rents and any money from the Government are paid. It pays for repairs, managing and maintaining the housing stock, and repaying any money borrowed for past building and improvements.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act was introduced by the Government to turn recommendations made by the European Union, on an individual's rights and freedoms, into UK law.



I

Impact Assessments

These are a process for reviewing and judging the impact or effectiveness of a housing providers resident participation services.

Improvement Grants

Grants paid by the local authority to owner-occupiers and private landlords to help them to improve their property to meet standards set by the Government.

Independent Housing Ombudsman (IHO)

In charge of investigating complaints made about Housing Associations. The IHO only investigate complaints made against landlords who are members of the IHO scheme.

Inspection

This is the process under Best Value in which the regulatory agency (which at the moment is the Audit Commission) goes out in the field to examine what is actually happening in local authority housing departments and housing associations.

Introductory Tenancies

The Housing Act 1996 allows councils to offer introductory tenancies to new tenants. These last one year and then change to a secure tenancy if the tenant has not broken the terms of the agreement. It is discretionary whether local authorities choose to do this or not, but if they do, then it must apply to all new tenants.

ITA - Independent Tenant's Advisor

An external agency, independent of the landlord, employed during a major project (such as an LSVT or Options Study) to work on behalf of the tenants. An ITA provides independent information and impartial advice, as well as support and assistance, enabling tenants to understand the processes involved in the project and to play an active role in any negotiations.

J

Joined up Thinking / Joined up Government

Proposed to make local and central government services quicker and easier for the public to use. The idea is that you can access a number of services from one source, e.g. one telephone number for all council services, one website for searching all government departments or combined benefit and housing offices.

Joint Funding

Money from banks, building societies and sometimes from local authorities to help housing associations to

provide special types of homes, for example hostel schemes.

Joint Tenancy

Where two or more people share a property and the tenancy agreement for the property.

K

Key Worker

A term used by Government to define people who do jobs that are essential to the community, such as Firefighters, Nurses, Teachers etc.

L

Landlord Accreditation

This is a review and measure of a housing provider's record in resident involvement. The landlord is awarded accreditation if they meet the standard required.

Leaseholder

A person who does not own the land their home is built on, and pays a ground rent for a fixed number of years. Tenants who live in flats and buy them from their landlord are called leaseholders.

Legislation

Law.

Loan Charges

The money a local authority pays back on what it has borrowed.

Local Area Agreement

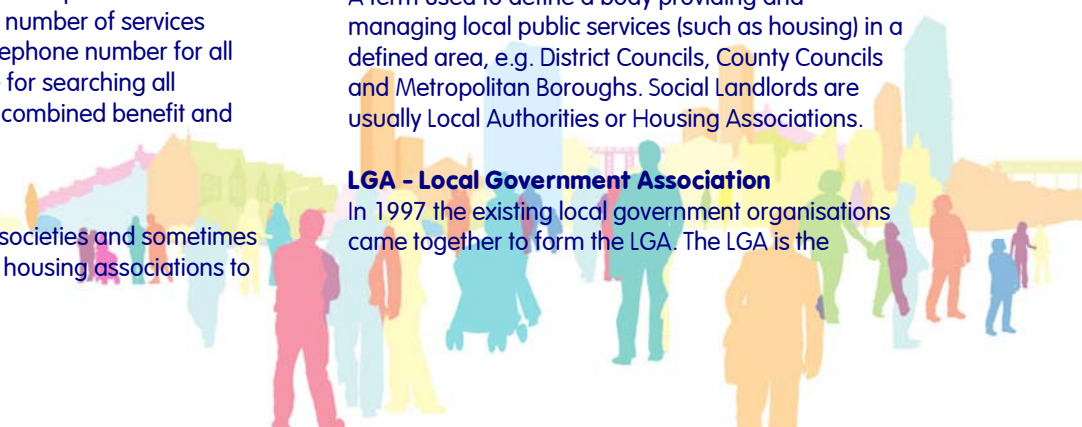
An agreement between a Local Authority and Government about the targets for the development of the Local Authority and how it will spend money. Pools many budgets together so that Local Authority has more freedom to choose how it will achieve its aims. Should be developed with strong input from the Local Strategic Partnership and reflect the aspirations of communities.

Local Authority (also referred to as "The Council")

A term used to define a body providing and managing local public services (such as housing) in a defined area, e.g. District Councils, County Councils and Metropolitan Boroughs. Social Landlords are usually Local Authorities or Housing Associations.

LGA - Local Government Association

In 1997 the existing local government organisations came together to form the LGA. The LGA is the



representative body of all Local Authorities in the country

LGO - Local Government Ombudsman

In charge of investigating complaints made about local authorities. Before the LGO can be called in to investigate, the person making the complaint must have been through the local authority's own Complaints procedure.

Local Housing Company (LHC)

A Local Housing Company is a specially created "not-for-profit" company set up to own and manage rented homes in an area. Existing local authority housing could be transferred to the company. The company board could consist of tenants, local authority representatives and representatives from the private sector and other organisations.

Local Lettings / Local Lettings Policy

Practice of involving local tenants in the letting of Social Housing properties in order to give them an opportunity to become involved in the management of their estates and to develop stable, harmonious communities.

LSP - Local Strategic Partnership

A single body that brings together (at a local level) public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to tackle key issues for local people.

LSVT - Large Scale Voluntary Transfer

See Council Housing Transfer

M

Major Repairs

Improvements to housing stock that are too substantial to be covered by normal allowances for repairs and maintenance work.

MRA - Major Repairs Allowance

The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) was a new source of Central Government funding for Housing Revenue Account capital expenditure introduced from 1st April 2001. The MRA is intended to reflect the cost of maintaining housing stock in its current condition and is an annual cash payment made to local authorities through the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system.

Management Agreement

The legal contract which sets out how an estate or group of homes will be managed and by whom, for example an agreement between a local authority

and a Tenant Management Co-op or Estate Management Board.

Management Committee

The group of people responsible for managing an organisation and making sure that it obeys its own rules. It can either be elected by members, like a tenants' association, or be made up of a group of people who have volunteered to serve, like many housing associations.

Mediation

A method of resolving disputes between two parties using a third, external party, known as a 'Mediator'. The Mediator, who must be neutral in the dispute, aims to bring the two opposing parties to an understanding of the issues.

Metropolitan Authorities

Councils which cover large towns and cities are called metropolitan authorities.

Monitoring

The checking of a system or process to make sure it is working properly and achieving its goals.

N

NCVO - National Council for Voluntary Organisations

"The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) works with and for the voluntary sector in England by providing information, advice and support and by representing the views of the sector to government and policy-makers." (NCVO Definition)

National Empowerment Partnership

A group of national voluntary sector organisations which aims to help guide the way the community empowerment agenda develops.

National Tenant Voice

Proposed in the Cave Review. A national organisation to make the case for tenant rights and issues at the national level.

Needs Allowance

The sum set by the Government to be used in benefit calculations to cover the basic amount that a person needs to live on each week.

Neighbourhood Management

Neighbourhood Management has emerged from, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal as a solution to the problems of deprived neighbourhoods. It is about joining up services at a local level and making them more relevant to users

Neighbourhood Renewal

Neighbourhood Renewal is a term used to describe how the Government proposes to improve deprived communities by providing decent housing, improving services and facilities, increasing economic prosperity and providing jobs. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit was set up in 2001 to implement the above proposals.

Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan

Launched on 15 January 2001, the Action Plan sets out how the Government's strategy will work to arrest neighbourhood decline in the poorest 10 per cent of wards in England. It highlights the proposals for change at national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels, and new methods of testing for success.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

Fund available to the 88 poorest local authorities if they have a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The intention is that the money be used for whatever purpose by the local authority to improve services for deprived communities. However the local authority must have an agreed plan with the LSP for spending these funds.

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

Set up to lead the Government's role on Neighbourhood Renewal. It oversees the development of Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies and the running of key new funds for the National Strategy including New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Neighbourhood Management, Community Chests and Community Empowerment Fund.

Neighbourhood Warden / Street Warden

Employed to 'patrol' estates in an attempt to reduce incidents of crime, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. They work closely with the local police, but do not themselves have any powers to arrest offenders.

New Deal for Communities

The New Deal for Communities is a new fund set up in 1998 to help turn around the poorest neighbourhoods. The programme supports plans that bring together local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business in an intensive local focus to tackle the problems of poor job prospects, high levels of crime, rundown environments, etc.

New Opportunities Fund

"The New Opportunities Fund is a Lottery Distributor created to award grants to education, health and environment projects throughout the UK." (NOF Definition)

NHF - National Housing Federation

Provides information and support for its members and develops common policies and guidelines for housing associations to follow.

Not for Profit

Although charities can charge for their goods or services, and can make a profit, they must not be set up specifically for commercial or profit making purposes. These are referred to as "Not for Profit" or "Non Profit Making" organisations.

O**Options Study**

Options Studies take place on local authority estates over a short period of time. They give the residents of the estate and the local authority an opportunity to look in detail at the issues that affect it. A plan of action is put into place to address the issues that matter to residents by establishing the best way for them to be involved in the future.

OTS - Office of the Third Sector

The Government body within the Cabinet Office that is responsible for creating better relationships between government and community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. It also promotes the 'third sector' and is responsible for training and capacity building programmes that support it.

Outstanding Debt

The total amount a local authority still owes on money it borrowed to build or improve its housing.

Owner Occupier

Someone who has purchased their home.

P**Par Value**

A form of co-operative where members of housing associations and housing co-ops each buy one £1 share. They cannot own more than one share, do not get any interest and cannot sell it for a profit.

Performance Indicators

The Government requires local authorities to publish Performance Indicators which is a report on (amongst other things) how effectively it is managing and repairing its properties.

Place-making/Place-Shaping

Relatively new term (common from late 2006) which covers all of the activities that go into developing of sustainable communities. Commonly used to focus



strategic tasks like bringing land together with investment.

Planned Maintenance

A system of repairs and maintenance carried out by a local authority or housing association that has been decided in advance, and accounted for in the yearly budget. Planned maintenance is often carried out on a cyclical basis (e.g. every 10 years).

Possession Order

A legal document obtained from a magistrates court by a landlord to gain possession of a property from a tenant.

Primary Housing Co-operative

See Housing Co-ops.

Private Finance

Money raised from non-government sources, e.g. banks.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Is a form of public/private partnership (PPP) using private sector finance for the provision of public services through joint working. A PFI arrangement for local government is that the private sector partner may own the capital assets (your home in the case of housing PFI) as well as delivering the service.

Probationary Tenancies

See Introductory Tenancies

Prudential Framework

This refers to the ability of Councils to borrow money against income flows. They could borrow to build new homes. The rental income provides the income stream to meet the repayment costs of the prudential borrowing.

PPP - Public/Private Partnerships

Joint working arrangements between the public and the private sectors.

PSA - Public Service Agreement

Partnership agreements between a local authority and the Government which outline how best to deliver a range of public services.

Public Liability Insurance

Also known as third party insurance. This insures an organisation against the possibility of claims from the public for injury, loss or damage etc., to a person or a property.

Q

Quiet Enjoyment

All secure, assured and assured shorthold tenants have a statutory Right to Quiet Enjoyment. This does not refer to noise or anti-social behaviour, as the phrase might imply, but to the possession and enjoyment of the property without undue disturbance from the landlord (or a representative of the landlord) by acts that are likely to interfere with the peace and comfort of the tenant, for example harassment or illegal eviction.

Quorum

The minimum number of members an organisation needs at any meeting to make any decision, as laid down in its constitution.

R

RA - Residents' Association

See Tenants' Association

Race Relations Act

"The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin. The amended Act also imposes general duties on many public authorities to promote racial equality." (CRE Definition)

RDA - Regional Development Agency

Set up by the Government to decentralise decision making on regeneration and economic development issues to the regions of England.

Rechargeable Repairs

Repairs carried out by a private landlord which the tenant must pay for, because they caused the damage.

Refurbishment

The renovation and improvement of a property.

Registered Charity

An organisation registered with the Charity Commission and working within charitable aims and objectives.

Regulations

Detailed rules issued by the Government on how laws are carried out.

Regulatory Judgments (RJ)

The TSA's public performance assessments of Registered Providers are known as TSA Regulatory

Judgments. An 'adverse regulatory judgment' indicates that the TSA has concluded that the RP is performing at below the required standard.

Rehabilitation

Large scale improvement to a building to bring it up to a good standard of repair. Also called modernisation or refurbishment.

Repairs

Mending something that is broken, inside or outside of your home e.g. a blocked drainpipe or a dripping tap. A tenant should refer to their tenancy agreement to see whether they, or their landlord is responsible for carrying out a particular repair.

Rent

Money paid to a landlord by a tenant in exchange for occupying a property.

Rent Arrears

If you fall behind with your rent payments (whether paid by Housing Benefit or yourself), you are said to be in rent arrears. This means that you owe your landlord money. Tenants who are in rent arrears would be advised to contact their landlord as soon as possible to try and sort the problem out, as being in arrears is a breach of the tenancy agreement and can lead to eviction.

Rent Reform / Social Rent Restructuring

The Government has introduced guidelines for social landlords that set out how social housing rents are to be changed so that they are all calculated to the same standard by 2012. This is known as Rent Restructuring. By doing this, the Government hope to keep rents affordable for social housing tenants and to bring local authority and housing association rents in line with each other.

Resident Involvement Strategies

Housing Associations are required to produce strategies that show how they will ensure effective resident involvement in their activities. This does not apply to Council who have to produce Tenant Compacts.

Resident Led Self Regulation (RLSR)

This is a process for placing tenants at the heart of the running of a housing provider. It empowers people to judge performance, influence policy and to hold the board of a provider to account.

Resource Centre

See Tenants' Resource Centre

Response Repairs

Repairs carried out by a landlord in response to a tenant reporting one, such as a broken window, overflowing cistern or damaged kitchen cupboard.

Revenue Spending

The money for such things as paying off loans, employing workers and buying materials for repairs.

Right to Acquire

Scheme giving eligible tenants of Registered Social Landlords the right to buy the home they currently live in. The criteria for the Right to Acquire are very specific.

Right to Buy

Some local authority and housing association tenants have the legal right to buy their home at a price lower than the full market value, if they have been living there for more than two years.

Right to Manage

Introduced in 1994 and revised in 2008, the Right to Manage gives local authority tenants a statutory right to take over the management of their homes by setting up a Tenant Management Organisation.

Right to Repair

Local authorities are obliged to carry out certain small, urgent repairs which are likely to affect a tenants' health, safety or security, within a prescribed time limit. This is known as a tenant's Right to Repair. If the repairs are not carried out in the time given, the tenant can require the landlord to instruct another contractor to do the work.

Ring Fencing

Introduced in the Local Government and Housing Act (1989), this stops councils from moving money between the Housing Revenue Account and the Council Tax Fund.

RSL - Registered Social Landlord

This term was introduced by the Housing Act 1996 to describe a social landlord that is registered with the TSA. Housing associations and local housing companies are RSLs.

S

Scattered Stock

A local authority or housing association may own a whole estate, in which case all the properties will be together. They may also own properties that are 'scattered', and therefore dotted around an area or county amongst privately owned property and property that belongs to other landlords. Tenants living in scattered stock can find it hard to form



Tenants Associations as they may not know where other tenants of their landlord live. Sometimes Street / Village Voices are used to represent tenants in such areas.

Scrutiny Committee / Scrutiny Panel

A group of people who are elected or appointed to examine a local authorities decisions to make sure that they are right and fair. Some local authorities include Tenants on the Scrutiny Committee/Panel. Many housing providers are increasingly establishing scrutiny committees.

Secondary Co-operative

An organisation which provides a wide range of services to housing co-operatives, small housing associations, local authorities and their tenants.

Section 16 Funding / Section 16 Agency

Under Section 16 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986 grants are available from the CLG to pay for a properly constituted tenants' association, working with an authorised Section 16 agency, to pursue certain projects or receive training. This might involve looking at setting up a Tenant Management Organisation, carrying out an Options Study or receiving training from the National Tenant Training Programme. Section 16 Grants are only available to local authority tenants' groups. Section 16 grants are also known as Tenant Empowerment Grants

Secure Tenancy

The vast majority of local authority tenants, and housing association tenants whose tenancies began before 15 January 1989, are secure tenants and have a range of additional rights covered in the Housing Act 1985.

Security of Tenure

A tenant's right to remain in their home indefinitely provided that they keep to the conditions of their tenancy agreement.

Self Build

When people or communities decide to build their own homes or community buildings using their own labour.

Service Charge

The money tenants and leaseholders pay for services such as wardens, common rooms and cleaning, lighting and maintenance of common parts.

Service Delivery

The way a service, such as repairs, is provided to the people who receive it.

SLA - Service Level Agreement

A semi-formal arrangement covering the services that one department within an organisation will provide to another, or one organisation will provide to another.

Shared Housing

Accommodation in which people live in separate, private rooms but share certain facilities such as the kitchen and bathroom with other residents. Hostels, and some housing schemes for older people or people with special needs are Shared.

Shared Ownership

Scheme which allows tenants to part buy / part rent a property. Tenants can increase their mortgage payments (and decrease rent) until they own the whole property.

Sheltered Housing

Special housing for elderly people who need someone near at hand to help them in an emergency.

Short Life Housing

Properties being used on a temporary basis until permanent accommodation is found.

Social Exclusion

A term used by the government to describe the situation of the millions of people living in the country's worst housing estates who suffer from poor housing, poverty, high crime rates, unemployment etc.

Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)

"Set up in 1997 sitting within the Cabinet Office the SEU works with colleagues in departments right across Government to find solutions to some of the most intractable social problems and act as a catalyst for change at the heart of Government." (SEU website)

Social Housing

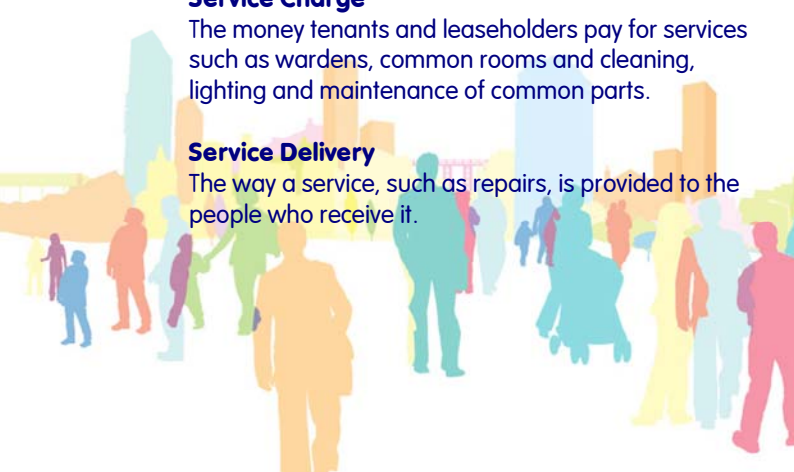
Housing of an adequate standard which is cheaper than that which is generally available in the local housing market. This can comprise a combination of subsidised rented housing, subsidised low cost home ownership including shared ownership, and in some market situations cheap housing for sale.

Social Housing Grant

The money that the Government gives housing associations or co-operatives to help them to buy, build, repair or improve homes for rent or sale.

Social Landlord

Provider of Social Housing such as a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord.



Special General Meeting

'Emergency' meeting of a group that occurs outside of usual group meeting times. A Special General Meeting might be called if new officers of the committee need to be elected, or if an urgent matter needs to be discussed. The group's constitution should state how a Special General Meeting is called e.g. "A Special General Meeting open to all members will be held if 12 or more members submit in writing a request for such a meeting to the Secretary. The Secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place within 14 days."

SRB - Single Regeneration Budget

A special government fund to improve estates. Started in April 1994, the SRB brought together over 20 existing funding programmes (e.g. Estate Action, City Challenge, HATs etc.) under one umbrella. Now subsumed into the Regional Development Agencies.

Starter Tenancies

The Housing Association term for Introductory tenancies.

Statutory Instruments

An order issued by the Secretary of State which changes the law.

Stock (Housing Stock)

Property owned by a particular landlord is often referred to as their 'housing stock'.

Stock Transfer

See Council Housing Transfer

Street Warden

See Neighbourhood Warden

Street Voices

Street Voices are usually used in urban areas where the setting up of a tenants' association is unwanted (i.e. there is not enough interest). A Street Voice is an individual who represents the views of the tenants to the landlord.

See also Village Voices.

Sub Committees

Small specialised committees who make recommendations and report to a full committee.

Succession / Right of Succession

The right to automatically transfer the tenancy of a property on the death of a tenant. For example, if a husband and wife lived together in the property and the husband was the tenant, upon his death the wife would automatically take over the tenancy.

Supported Housing

Accommodation for people with specific care needs (such as elderly people, and people with special needs). Residents are 'supported' in their accommodation by paid staff.

Supporting People

A Government programme that came into place in April 2003. 'Supporting People' changes the way that supported housing is managed and financed in the social housing sector.

T

TA - Tenants' Association

A voluntary group made up of people who live in a particular area or scheme, who have got together to have their say on local issues, improve their area or organise social events. Can also be called a Tenants' and Residents' Association, Residents' Association, Tenants' and Leaseholders' Association etc. (See our web guide to Tenant's & Resident's Associations for further information)

Tenancy Agreement

A signed contract between a landlord and a tenant. A tenancy agreement sets out what is expected of each party, and what rights each has.

Tenant

A person, or persons, who agree to occupy a property owned by someone else in exchange for payment (i.e. rent).

Tenant Consultation

1. Refers to arrangements for involving tenants in decisions on housing policy and practice that goes beyond information provision but does not include actual housing management.
2. The legal definition as stated in Section 105 of the 1985 Housing Act is: a council must inform tenants of its proposals, it must give tenants the right to comment, and it must give consideration to tenants' comments before it takes a decision.

TEG - Tenant Empowerment Grant

Grant available to local authority tenants to help them fund projects that allow tenants to get more involved with the management of their neighbourhood.

Tenant/Community Led Stock Transfer

Transferring housing into to a tenant/community managed housing association (see council housing transfer).



Tenant Management

Tenant Management refers to tenants taking over all or part of the running of Housing Management services (e.g. repairs and maintenance) by forming a TMO.

TP - Tenant Participation

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

Tenant Participation Compacts (TP Compacts)

Locally-negotiated agreements between a local authority landlord and its tenants, setting out how tenants will be involved collectively in taking local decisions on housing issues which affect them.

Tenant's Handbook

Handbook given to new tenants by a local authority or housing association. It contains useful information about the tenancy and the landlord.

Tenants' Panel

A consultative body made up of tenants and others, selected or elected from the local community to discuss housing issues and issues relevant to tenants.

Tenants' Resource Centre

Drop in centre staffed, usually but not always, by tenant volunteers to give information and advice on tenants' issues.

TSA - Tenant Services Authority

The organisation that regulates Housing Associations in England to make sure they deliver good quality services to residents.

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

Form of consultation with tenants to find out how satisfied they are with Housing Services such as repairs.

Tenant Triggers

The Tenant Services Authority which has been established as the new regulator of social housing will be able to put in place 'triggers' that allow tenants to call upon the TSA to investigate the actions or performance of their landlord.

TMC - Tenant Management Co-operative

A TMC is a group of residents who enter into an agreement with their local authority or housing association to take over all or some of the running of the houses, flats or estate where they live.

TMO - Tenant Management Organisation

Term used to describe organisations where tenants have taken over the running of some or all of the services on their estate such as Tenant Management Co-operatives and Estate Management Boards.

TPO - Tenant Participation Officer

Mainly employed by local authorities and housing associations. Their jobs vary but they usually act as go-betweens for tenants and landlords. Tenant Support Workers, Tenant Liaison Officers and Community Development Workers do similar jobs.

Third Sector

The catch all term for organisations that don't fit easily into 'private' or 'public'. Includes community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, non governmental organisations, social enterprises and housing associations.

Transfer HA

Term used to describe any Housing Association that takes over the ownership and management of local authorities' housing stock after a successful Large Scale Voluntary Transfer.

Trickle Transfer

A trickle transfer is what happens when a local authority sells its housing stock to a housing association slowly, one property at a time. As a property becomes vacant, the local authority sells it to the HA.

U

Under Occupation

Occurs when the tenants in a property are not fully occupying it. An example might be a couple in a 3 bedroom house, whose children have left home. Tenants in under occupied properties are frequently offered incentives to move to a smaller property because larger houses for families are in short supply.

V

Village Voices

Village Voices are usually used in areas where the setting up of a Tenants' Association is inappropriate or unwanted. A Village Voice is an individual based within a village who represents the views of the tenants to the landlord. See also Street Voices.

Voids

Empty homes usually waiting for some work to be done or someone to move in.

Voluntary Board Member

See Board Member

Voluntary Purchase Scheme

Scheme to help RSL tenants to buy the property they live in. Unlike the Right to Buy, the Voluntary Purchase Scheme does not apply to all tenants. It is up to the landlord to decide whether or not to take part in the scheme.

W

Warden / Warden Controlled

Someone employed by the landlord to look after elderly or disabled tenants in blocks or small estates of flats or houses.

White Paper

Following a Green Paper consultation, a White Paper sets out the Government’s plans for changes to the law on certain issues. Although open to general discussion, this is not a consultation document.

Working Party

A group set up to work on a particular task. It may only have the power to make suggestions rather than make decisions.

Workshop

A small discussion group at a conference, which may be given a task to work on.



TPAS

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