

Dear fellow resident,

We are writing to introduce ourselves to you because your housing association has done something amazing, but more about that later!

We are the independent Tenant Advisory Panel (TAP for short) and we have been set up to help the National Housing Federation (NHF) by guiding, challenging and supporting the national rollout of Together with Tenants.

### **So, who are we?**

We are 14 people from different backgrounds that have a massive interest in housing, because of this we are able to give a different range of views. The one thing that brings us all together is the passion we have for social housing and helping to improve the relationships between residents and our housing associations. Call us what you like – residents, tenants or customers – but in our role as the TAP we have you, our fellow residents, at the heart of what we do. We represent you at the NHF, as your voice and champion what's important to you, and we have been doing this for the past 18 months.

### **Who are the NHF?**

The NHF is the voice of housing associations in England. Housing associations are members of the NHF, and they work together to deliver their vision – for everyone to live in a good quality home they can afford. This involves working closely with the government to make change happen.

Did you know that almost 800 housing associations are members of the NHF? This means that their members provide homes for around six million people. How incredible is that!

### **So, what is the aim of Together with Tenants?**

Following the awful fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, the government spoke to residents to understand how people feel about their housing association, and what change needed to happen. A big theme from these conversations was that residents aren't listened to enough, and this was mentioned a lot in the government's Social Housing Green Paper. So, in 2018 the NHF created an initiative called Together with Tenants to improve this. Its aim is to strengthen the relationship between residents and housing associations.

After speaking to lots of residents and their members, the NHF developed a four-point plan for change. This included a new charter with six commitments, setting out in clear terms what residents can and should expect from their landlord – and how residents can hold them to account on these.

Remember we said that your housing association has done something amazing? They have taken the really important step and signed up to this charter!

### **What does this mean for you?**

It means your housing association has committed to six things:

- 1. Relationships:** To treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions, and for relationships between residents and housing associations to be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
- 2. Communication:** To send you clear, accessible and timely information on the issues that matter to you, including important information about your home and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.
- 3. Voice and influence:** To seek and value the views of residents, and use this information to inform decisions. Every individual resident should feel listened to on the issues that matter to them and speak without fear.
- 4. Accountability:** To allow residents to collectively work in partnership to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of homes and services.
- 5. Quality:** To ensure homes are good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
- 6. When things go wrong:** To provide residents with simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. And for residents to receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

Can you see how amazing and important this is?

Your housing association along with the NHF, TAP and others are joining us all in moving towards a brighter, more collective future for residents.

We need your input, views and most importantly want YOUR voice heard. So we are encouraging you to get involved with your housing associations and talk to them about the charter and how they have developed it with residents.

Remember, to help make this change we need your voice to be heard. You can find out more by visiting [www.housing.org.uk/tenants](http://www.housing.org.uk/tenants) or you can follow the hashtag #TogetherWithTenants on social media to see what is happening with others and things are developing.

You will hear from us again soon.. But, in the meantime you can:

- Watch our video on the NHF website [www.housing.org.uk/tenants](http://www.housing.org.uk/tenants)
- Join or watch a recording of the NHF's resident-focused webinar by registering on the NHF website [www.housing.org.uk/event](http://www.housing.org.uk/event)
- Email your housing association to find out more

We hope you can get involved.

Yours sincerely,

The Tenant Advisory Panel