

TSA regulatory framework will bring new roles for tenants in setting housing standards and the scrutiny of their landlords.

Social Landlords are needing to rethink the role of tenants in their organisations as the Tenant Services Authority moves forwards with:-

- A new regulatory framework for social housing
- The development of local standards for social housing

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 empowers the TSA to set standards for social housing. The Act allows for standards to be national or local and tailored to the specific needs of an area. This will affect Councils and ALMOs as well as RSLs as the TSA moves towards being the regulator across the sectors.

The TSA recently ended its consultation period on governance and we expect to see its conclusions in December this year. We expect however that the new regulatory code will contain the idea of co-regulation, bringing tenants more strongly into a role of scrutiny of their landlords services, polices, decisions and actions.

Tenants have already shown their ability to take on such roles, when given access to training and support:

- Acting as Board Members of RSLs Stock transfer organisations and ALMOs
- Managing services at a neighbourhood level through Tenant Management Organisations.

So, PEP expects to see requirements within the new regulatory framework that will require landlords to rethink how their tenants fit in, how meaningful and practical arrangements can be established allowing them to:

- Be involved in defining local housing standards
- Providing a bottom up scrutiny of services and regulation.

In the meantime, the TSA has grant funded 37 projects to pilot the development of local standards. These include Councils and ALMOs as well as RSLs. The pilots are testing local standards for:

- Tenant empowerment
- Allocations
- Repairs and maintenance
- Anti social behaviour
- Neighbourhood and estate management
- Quality of accommodation
- Tenant choice/ Customer experience.



The 37 pilots are expected to provide interim reports on progress in December this year with local standards in place by April 2010.

These developments bring a changed focus to what tenant empowerment is to be about. It will require landlords to develop new arrangements and structures for tenant engagement and capacity building for tenants to enable them to participate in the regulation of their landlord.

PEP, a member of ATIC (Agencies and Trainers for Involved Communities, the trade body representing organisations working on Tenant Management and empowerment) contributed to an ATIC response to the TSA's consultation on the new regulatory framework.

PEP has worked for over 30 years shaping the role tenants can actively play in the way their housing service is delivered. We are passionate about local solutions for local needs particularly when taken to the estate or neighbourhood level. Our work in particular developing tenant management organisations has shown the impact local solutions can bring to targeted service delivery.

PEP is a leading consultancy and training organisation with the range of specialist skills you may be looking for in considering how these key changes may impact on your organisation.