

**A representative voice for London's social housing tenants - *facilitated by Pat Turnbull, LTF and Rhiannon Hughes, SGTO***: The social housing green paper suggests the development of a national representative tenants' body. What kind of structures and principles would we need to ensure the voices of London's social housing tenants are properly represented at both the London-wide and national level? If established, what should the role of a national tenant body be?

1. **A body representing tenants at the national and London-wide level needs to be bottom up – not top down.** We can't have something like the tenants' panels that we have seen at the local level where landlords or consultants select tenants to engage.
2. **At the regional and national level, we (and landlords) should encourage the re-establishment of borough- and or landlord-wide tenants and residents' federations / organisations.** We need to be part of rejuvenating the tenant movement. We need effective grass-roots tenants and residents' associations in each borough that include the diversity of tenants and residents living in social housing and their household members (including young 'hidden homeless' households who struggle to get their voices heard). We need this because the boroughs and the London Mayor have strategic housing responsibilities. We know that some tenants are afraid that there will be consequences of speaking out against their landlord.
3. **Tenants groups at the local, regional and national level should be democratic, accountable and non-party political.**
4. **At the national level we need to have voices not just one voice –** to accommodate the variety and variation in issues for tenants across the country. The re-establishment of regional tenants and resident's organisations could be an effective way of achieving this.
5. **At the regional or national level, a tenant's body would need to unite and be representative of all tenants and leaseholders (but not absentee landlords) - housing association, council, TMOs and co-operatives.** It is important for us to bring people together in London, or the Government will set up a voice on our behalf. We need to ensure we are not divided. London Tenants Fed is a perfect model that gives us strength; it facilitates sharing and exchanging amongst member groups and with members of member groups. It operates by consensus.
6. **If established, a national tenants' body should have genuine power; be engaged in policy and strategic decision-making. It can't be just about consultation.**
7. **A national tenants and residents' body should map existing representation and gaps** (which needs to be highlighted and addressed).
8. **Issues that it should focus on include:** stigma (which has grown) and social inclusion (e.g. the green paper suggests that you are not a valid person unless you are a home owner); overcrowding; temporary housing and homelessness; gentrification; positive investment in existing and new social housing; rebalancing of funding for social housing (rather than home ownership).