



*Tenant Participation Advisory Service*



OFFICE OF THE  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

# information sheet

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Jargon Buster:  
A Guide to Housing  
Jargon for Tenants



# Jargon Buster: A Guide to Housing Jargon for Tenants

This Jargon Buster gives explanations of terms tenants may come across. It was originally written for our website, so we have retained the web site addresses. However, these will only be current from the date of printing.

If you spot any jargon that does not have an explanation here, or would just like to know what something means, contact the TPAS Information Service and we will give you the information you need.

If you would like to receive further information about any of the terms mentioned here, again, please contact us (our details can be found on the back page). Social housing tenants and TPAS members can use this service for free.

Please note that legislative and legal information applies to England only.

Terms in bold within the text are explained elsewhere within the Jargon Buster.

## **ABC - Acceptable Behaviour Contract**

A written agreement between the police, the local housing office and a young person who has been involved in anti-social behaviour. In an ABC, the young person agrees to stop committing acts of anti-social behaviour. Unlike **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders**, 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.

## **ACAS - Advisory Conciliation & Arbitration Service**

ACAS aims to help people work together effectively, either by helping to ensure the right structures and systems are in place, or finding a way of settling disputes when things go wrong.  
[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

## **ACU - Active Community Unit**

Government body whose aim is to "promote the development of the voluntary and community sector and encourage people to become actively involved in their communities, particularly in deprived areas."  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/inside/org/dob/direct/acomu.html>

## **ADP - Approved Development Programme**

The **Housing Corporation** allocates an annual cash limit every year for **housing associations** to spend on the capital costs of new housing developments. The Corporation distributes funds between its regions and on to individual housing associations, who have to apply annually for approved development programme funding for projects they want to pursue. Not every housing association will get what they ask for each year. The Housing Corporation decides.

## **AGM - Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting is held by an organisation at about the same time every

year. At the Meeting the **committee** report on the organisation's work over the last year and present the accounts to the organisation's members. A new committee is also elected at the AGM.

## **ALG - Association of London Government**

Organisation committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best deal for London's 33 councils.

[www.alg.gov.uk](http://www.alg.gov.uk)

## **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**

A policy is a statement, usually in writing, about how an organisation will work. 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 by a local authority or in which a local authority has a majority share, 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 non-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. It also sets out targets and monitoring procedures. 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.) that are contributing to the decline of the area.

## **Area Committee**

see **Estate & Area/District Committees**

## **Arrears**

see **Rent Arrears**

## **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. Breaching the order carries a 5 year prison sentence. The Government is currently considering changing the law to allow **housing associations** to issue ASBOs. (See the TPAS Information Sheet on **anti-social behaviour** for further information)

## **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 Shorthold Tenancies can be renewed for another fixed period of time if both parties agree to it.

## Assured Tenancy

Since January 1989 all new tenants of **housing associations** have assured tenancies. They have fewer rights in law than **secure tenants**, although **Housing Corporation** guidance requires most 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.

## Basic Credit Approval

The amount of money the Government allows a **local authority** to borrow 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." (ODPM Website)

## Benchmarking

Assessing an organisation's performance by

comparing it to that of other organisations of a similar size and purpose.

## Best Value

"A duty to deliver services to clear standards - covering both cost and quality - by the most economic, efficient and effective means available" (ODPM definition).

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on Best Value for further information)

## Best Value Inspection

Inspection carried out by the **Audit Commission** to measure landlords' (both **local authority** and **housing association**) performance against **Best Value** objectives. Audit Commission Best Value Inspections - [www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk](http://www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk) (See the TPAS Information Sheet on **Best Value** for further information)

## Best Value Reviews

**Local authorities** must show that they have applied the four Cs of **Best Value** (challenge, compare, compete, consult) by carrying out reviews of their various housing services. This is meant to show service users, inspectors etc., how they are achieving continuous improvement year on year.

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on **Best Value** for further information)

## 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**.

## **BRE - Building Research Establishment**

Gives information on technical design and building matters.

<http://www.bre.co.uk/>

## **Budget**

The amount of money an organisation estimates it will spend over a certain time period, usually one year.

## **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.

<http://www.adviceguide.org.uk>

## **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. The communities whose capacity is to be enhanced may be "communities of place" or "communities of interest".

## **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**.

## **Choice Based Lettings**

Choice-based lettings are based on the Dutch style of advertising and letting homes and aim to give a more customer focused approach to the letting of social housing.

## **Charitable Status**

The majority of **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, which have to be for 'charitable purposes'. Housing associations with charitable status can be charitable trusts or companies, or industrial and provident societies. They can also be registered charities (registered with the **Charity Commission**) or **exempt charities**.

## **Charity Commission**

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

[www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

## **Charter Mark**

A Government award scheme which "recognises and encourages excellence in public services" (Cabinet Office definition).

[www.chartermark.gov.uk](http://www.chartermark.gov.uk)

## **CIH - Chartered Institute of Housing**

(Formerly the Institute of Housing)

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

[www.cih.org](http://www.cih.org)

## **Citizens' Juries**

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.  
(See the TPAS Information Sheet on citizens' juries for further information)

## Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a set 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.  
(See the TPAS Information Sheet on codes of conduct for further information)

## 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, including 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 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**". (CIH definition)

## Community Chest

Communities in the 88 **local authority** areas eligible for **Neighbourhood Renewal Funds** are also eligible for funding through Community Chests, which supports participation in community self-help and mutual support activity.

<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/commchest.asp>

## Community Development

Generic term covering the process of building active and sustainable communities by giving residents access to information and training to enable them to take control of their communal life.

## 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 Fund

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

## Community Fund

(Formerly the National Lottery Charities Board) The Community Fund gives out grants from money raised through the sale of National Lottery tickets.  
[www.community-fund.org.uk](http://www.community-fund.org.uk)

## Community Housing Task Force

"Created in May 2001 to assist **local authorities**, tenants and acquiring **Registered Social Landlords** through the process of **stock transfer**. Since then, the team's remit has been extended to include **Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs)** and **Option Appraisals**." (ODPM)  
[www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk)

## Community Plan/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.

### **Community Training & Enabling (CTE) Grant**

A programme of grants distributed by the **Housing Corporation** to finance **housing association** projects which show innovation and/or good practice in housing management. (An offshoot of the **Innovation and Good Practice Grants** programme)

### **Compensation**

Something given as a redress to loss, injury etc. **Secure tenants** have a right to compensation for certain improvements, which gives reimbursement of an amount of money, when a tenancy ends, to tenants who have made certain improvements to their home.

### **CCT - 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 value for money.

### **Concierge**

A French word used to describe someone who looks after a block of flats. Their job may include some of the work of a caretaker and a receptionist.

### **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 problems arise around the way the group is run e.g. 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 or model constitution in order to receive funding. (See the TPAS Information Sheet on Constitutions for further information)

### **Co-operative**

see **Housing Co-operative**

### **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, rent collection, repairs, maintenance etc. The local authority continues to manage all non-housing related services (such as refuse collection, street lighting etc.). (See the TPAS Information Sheet on council housing transfers for further information).

### **Credit Union**

Credit unions are locally based savings schemes that provide low cost loans to people on a low income.  
<http://www.abcul.org> (Association of British Credit Unions)

## 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' or 'Recognition Criteria' 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 their landlord.

## Cyclical Maintenance

see **Planned Maintenance**

## 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.  
<http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk>

## 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 fitness and 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.

The government has produced more detailed guidance in their publication "**Decent Homes Standard: Revised Definition and Guidance**" available from their website at [www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk).

## 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.

## Delft Model

Form of **Choice Based Lettings** first adopted in the Netherlands in 1990.

## Density (Housing Density)

Describes the number of dwellings (houses, flats, maisonettes etc.) that exist within a particular area (e.g. acre or hectare). An area with many dwellings per acre would be described as having high density housing.

## 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.

## **DETR - Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**

Former Government department dealing with housing. Now the **ODPM** (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

## **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." (**Department of Work and Pensions** definition)

<http://www.disability.gov.uk>

## **Disregards**

Some types of income, for example, Attendance Allowance, which can be ignored when working out how much Housing Benefit someone is entitled to.

## **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.

## **DSO - Direct Service Organisation/DLO - Direct Labour Organisation**

The people employed by a **local authority** under **Compulsory Competitive Tendering** to provide services (such as street cleaning, refuse collection etc.).

## **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 the **Housing Committee** or **Management Board**.

## **Draft**

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

## **DTLR - Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions**

Former Government department dealing with housing. Now the **ODPM** (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

## **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**

Government department dealing with employment, pensions, child welfare and Health and Safety.  
[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

## **E - Government/Electronic Government**

The Government has said that, where possible, all **local authorities** and publicly funded bodies must aim to make their services available in an electronic format by

2005. This Electronic Service Delivery is known as E-Government. 'Electronic format' can mean via the internet, digital TV, public access terminals, kiosks and mobile phones.

## **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. (See the TPAS Information Sheets on Estate Management Boards and Tenant Management Co-operatives for further information)

## **Equal Opportunities**

This means treating all people equally, and not being prejudiced or discriminating against someone because of their ethnic origin, religion, sexuality, disability, gender or age. Groups should adopt an **Equal Opportunities Policy** that sets out their commitment to equal opportunities and states what someone can do if they feel that they have been discriminated against. (See the TPAS Information Sheet on Equal Opportunities for further information)

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

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

## **Estate Action**

A series of renewal projects set up in 1985 by the Department of the Environment (now the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**). The programme aimed to help councils

improve run down estates by providing funding for modernisation, better management, training and enterprise initiatives. Over 1,200 projects had received funding from the programme before it became part of the **Single Regeneration Budget** in 1993.

## **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**, this is where housing management services are 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 (e.g. the Friendly Society or the **Housing Corporation**). However, exempt charities are still subject to the same legal rules that apply to all charities.

### **FBHO - Federation of Black Housing Organisations**

Provides help, support and training to black housing organisations, workers and tenants. <http://www.fbho.org.uk>

### **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.

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on **focus groups** for further information)

### **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.

<http://www.foyer.net/>

### **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 revenue and expenditure.

### **GNI - General Needs Index**

An index of need used by the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** (ODPM) to assist them in making **Housing Investment Programme** allocations to councils.

### **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.

### **HAT - Housing Action Trust**

Organisations set up by the Government to temporarily take over **local authority**

estates, in order to manage and improve run down properties. These have a limited life span with tenants transferring to a new landlord when the work has been completed (Housing Association Training Schemes also use the same initials).

## **HIP - Housing Investment Programme**

Annual plan a council makes for its housing **capital programme**. It forms the bid to the **ODPM** for resources to build, **repair** and improve their housing stock.

## **HMOs - Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Property shared by people who are not from the same family, e.g. shared student houses, bedsits, flats etc.

## **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. The **Housing Corporation** uses this data to decide how many new homes a **Registered Social Landlord** must build in that area. It then allocates grants to the Registered Social Landlords to enable them to build the new properties.

## **Home Loss Payment**

**Social housing** tenants who are required 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**.

## **HOMES - 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.

[www.homes.org.uk](http://www.homes.org.uk)

## **Homebuy**

Scheme run by selected **Registered Social Landlords** to help people buy a home on the open market. Homebuy is funded by the **Housing Corporation**.

## **Homeless/Homelessness**

Someone without permanent accommodation is described as being homeless. All **local authorities** have an obligation to house the homeless.

<http://www.shelter.org.uk/>

## **Homeswap**

Scheme set up by **HOMES** to help **social housing** tenants find someone to exchange 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.  
[www.homezones.org](http://www.homezones.org)

## **Hostel**

Hostels provide temporary accommodation for homeless individuals, families and people with special needs.

## **Housing Association (HA)**

A non-profit making organisation which provides accommodation either for people who cannot afford to buy their own home or who need special types of housing, for

example elderly people. Associations usually have paid workers and are managed by a voluntary **Management Committee**. (See the TPAS Information Sheet on housing associations for further information)

## **Housing Benefit**

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

## **Housing Co-operative**

There are two types of housing co-operative:

**Primary Co-op** - Where a group of seven or more people agree to work together in a co-operative to provide decent housing for their members.

**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 Corporation**

Government organisation which oversees **housing associations**. The Housing Corporation makes sure they abide by the law and government guidelines and provides their finance.

[www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

## **Housing Finance**

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 three 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).

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on **housing finance** for further information)

## **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 Renovation Grants**

A grant available from the **ODPM** to help private tenants, landlords and **owner-occupiers** with the cost of repairs to a property.

[www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk)

## **Housing Subsidy**

Money from the Government, paid into a **local authority's Housing Revenue Account**. 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 rental 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, 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.  
<http://www.humanrights.gov.uk>

## **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**. Before the IHO can be called in to investigate, the person making the complaint must have been through the association's own complaints procedure. The IHO only investigates complaints made against landlords who are members of the IHO scheme.  
<http://www.ihos.org.uk/>

## **Innovation & Good Practice (IGP) Grant**

A programme of grants available from the **Housing Corporation** to finance housing

association projects which show innovation and/or good practice in housing management.

## **Innovation into Action (IIA) Grant**

A grant programme funded by the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** to develop radical or new ways of involving local authority tenants in managing their homes.

## **Inspection**

The process under **Best Value** by 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 issue these or not, but if they do, then it must apply to all new tenants.

## **ITA - Independent Tenants' 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.

## **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** 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.

### **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. Keyworkers often struggle to find housing in areas where house prices are very high, leading to shortages of essential workers in places such as London.

### **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 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**

The Association of District Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities joined into one organisation in 1997, forming the Local Government Association.

### **LGO - Local Government Ombudsman**

Responsible for 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.

[http://www.lgo.org.uk/work\\_lgo.htm](http://www.lgo.org.uk/work_lgo.htm)

### **Local Housing Quasi-Corporation**

A proposed framework which creates a new organisation controlled by the **local authority** to take over its homes, but does not involve **stock transfer**.

### **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** 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**

## **Major Repairs**

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

## **Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)**

A 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**

A 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, including each other's point of view, thus reaching an agreed resolution to the dispute.

## **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.

## **National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal**

In 1997 the **Social Exclusion Unit** was set up to report on the problems faced by people living in deprived neighbourhoods. In 2001 the Government produced the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal which is an action plan setting out how to stop the decline in the country's poorest neighbourhoods.

## **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) <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>

## **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 emerged from the **National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal** as a solution to the problems of deprived neighbourhoods. It aims to join up services at a local level and make them more relevant to users.

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on Neighbourhood Management for further information)

## **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**. Based in the

**ODPM**, 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**.  
<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk>

## **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)  
<http://www.nof.org.uk/>

## **NHF National Housing Federation**

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

## **NIMBY**

Stands for "Not in my Backyard".

## 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.

## ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

The Government department that deals with housing laws, policies and finance.

[www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk)

## Option Appraisals

Councils need to assess the level and type of disrepair within their stock, compare this to the decent homes standard and work out how much it will cost to bring homes up to standard. They also need to assess the options available for them to raise the necessary investment.

There are four housing investment options councils need to look at:-

- **Transfer ownership** of some or all of their housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Association that is allowed to raise private funding
- Use the **Private Finance Initiative (PFI)** to introduce private sector investment to some parts of the housing stock, which stays in council ownership
- Set up a **Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)** to manage the housing, which stays in council ownership, and gets some extra resources when the council demonstrates it is providing a good service
- **Keep the housing in council ownership**, managed the way it is now and with the same level of resources

All Option Appraisals have to be completed by July 2005.

## 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.

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on Options Studies for further information)

## 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.

## 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.

## 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).

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on **Repairs and Maintenance** for further information)

## **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**

## **Professional Witness**

Someone who gives evidence in a court of law as part of their job. Examples of professional witnesses could be Police Officers, Private Investigators and Housing Staff. Professional Witnesses can be used by **local authorities** and **housing associations** if tenants do not want to give evidence about their neighbours.

## **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 the neighbourhood management approach.

## **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.

## **Quango**

**Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation** set up by and answerable to a department of Government. The **Housing Corporation** is an example of a quango.

## **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**.

## **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)

<http://www.cre.gov.uk/legaladv/rra.html>

## **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 & Statistical Return (RSR)**

**RSLs** must enter statistical data into an “RSR Form” as part of their regulatory requirements with the **Housing Corporation**. Forms are submitted annually to the Housing Corporation.

## **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.

See also **Response Repairs** and **Planned Maintenance**.

(See our Information Sheet on Repairs and Maintenance for further information)

## **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 Reform**

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 Reform. 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.

## **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.

(see our Information Sheet on **Repairs and Maintenance** for further information)

## 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, please read the **Housing Corporation's** guide to the right to acquire for more information about eligibility.

## 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.  
[www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk)

## Right to Manage

Introduced in 1994, 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**. **Section 16 Grants** are available from the **ODPM** to pay for a properly constituted **tenants' association**, working with an authorised **Section 16 agency**, to explore the options for taking on housing management functions.

## 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. (See our Information Sheet on **Repairs and Maintenance** for further information)

## 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 **Housing Corporation**. **Housing associations** and **local housing companies** are RSLs.

## 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** or **Village Voices** are used to represent tenants in such areas.

## Scrutiny Committee/ Scrutiny Panel

Independent group of people who are elected or appointed to examine **local authorities'** decisions to make sure that they are right and fair. Some local authorities include tenants on the Scrutiny Committee/Panel.

## 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 **ODPM** 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**

<http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk>

## 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.

## Service Level Agreement (SLA)

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 classed as shared housing.

## Shared Ownership

Scheme set up under **HOMES** 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.

[www.shelteredhousing.org](http://www.shelteredhousing.org)

## 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. . . the SEU [works] with colleagues in departments right across Government to find solutions to some of the most intractable social problems and acts as a catalyst for change at the heart of Government.” (SEU website)  
<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/>

### 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”. (ODPM definition).

### 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 that occurs outside of usual meeting times. A Special General Meeting might be called if new officers of a **committee** need to be elected, or if an urgent matter needs to be discussed. A 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.

### Standing Orders (for Tenants’ Groups)

Standing Orders are a set of ‘rules and regulations’ which usually cover how meetings are run, how decisions are made, terms of reference for **committees**/sub-committees and other procedural matters. Standing Orders should be used alongside a group’s **constitution**.

### Starter Tenancies

The housing association term for **introductory tenancies**.

### Statutory Instruments

An order issued by the Secretary of State which changes the law without having to go through Parliament.

### 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.

SP Knowledge Web - [www.spkweb.org.uk](http://www.spkweb.org.uk)

## 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 the TPAS Information Sheets on 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

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. 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".

## Tenant Empowerment Grant (TEG)

**ODPM** grant available to **local authority** tenants to help them fund projects that allow tenants to get more involved with the management of their neighbourhood. The grant can be used to fund training, **Options Studies** or **Tenant Management** projects. See also **Section 16 funding**.  
[www.housing.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.housing.odpm.gov.uk)

## 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**.

## Tenant Participation (TP)

"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)

(See the TPAS Information Sheet on Tenant Participation for further information)

### **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.” (ODPM Definition December 1998)

(See the TPAS Compact Briefings on TP Compacts for further information)

### **Tenant Satisfaction Surveys**

Form of consultation with tenants to find out how satisfied they are with housing services, such as **repairs**.

### **Tenant’s Handbook**

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

### **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 by tenant volunteers to give information and advice on tenants’ issues.

(See our Information Sheet on **Tenants’ Resource Centres** for further information)

### **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**

Sometimes employed by **local authorities** and **housing associations**. TPO 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.

### **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** one property at a time, as a property becomes vacant.

### **Under Occupation**

Occurs when the tenants in a property are not fully occupying it. An example might be a couple in a three 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.

### **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, and which properties to extend it to.

## **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.



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