

Tenant Empowerment

Improve where you live by making sure your landlord provides what you need.

What is it?

If you're a social housing tenant, you have the power to make sure your landlord provides the services, support and advice you need.

This means that you can take a bigger role in your community by looking at your landlord's performance and negotiating improvements. You'll be able to help resolve local complaints, run a maintenance service, or even take on the management of local housing services.

How can I get involved?

You can play a bigger role in your community by:

- getting training and support to challenge your landlord
- setting up a tenant panel where you live
- helping to shape services
- managing a housing service or repairs budget
- exercising your 'Right to Manage', which lets council tenants take over management of local housing services

This is part of the **tenant empowerment programme**.

The Tenant empowerment programme

The government is giving all social housing tenants the power to ensure their landlord provides the services they want and support and advice for tenants.

The government is spending up to £2 million every year between 2011 and 2015 on the tenant empowerment programme, enabling tenants to:

- set up tenant panels
- take up training and support opportunities
- exercise their 'Right to Manage' (see below)
- take up opportunities to manage local housing services, such as repairs and estate management, through Tenant Cashback and Community Cashback

Tenant panels

The government is supporting the formation of tenant panels as a way to give tenants a bigger say over how local services are run, for instance by scrutinising landlord performance and pressing for improvement. We have supported the National Tenant Organisations to produce a [guide to help tenants and landlords set up strong and effective tenant panels](#).

The [Localism Act 2011](#) also gives tenant panels new powers to solve disputes at a local level. From 1 April 2013 tenant panels, councillors and MPs ('designated persons') will have the opportunity to play a more active role in resolving complaints at the local level. We have supported the National Tenant Organisations to produce a [guide to help 'designated persons'](#) carry out their new role effectively.

Tenant training and support opportunities

The government is funding a £1.2 million tenant training and support programme to empower tenants to play a bigger role at the local level and challenge their landlord in different ways on a wide range of housing issues.

Right to Manage

Local council tenants have the right to take over the management of local housing services. The [Right to Manage Regulations 2012](#) set out the procedures for a tenant management organisation to enter into a management agreement with a local housing authority. Statutory guidance is currently being updated.

We've made it easier for tenants to take up their Right to Manage by streamlining the regulations first introduced in 1994. So far, around 200 tenant management organisations have successfully taken responsibility for providing services such as repairs and estate management for 70,000 homes.

The Right to Manage grant and assessment processes have also been streamlined. For more information on the process, including copies of the application forms you need to get started, please email: tenantempowerment@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Community Cashback

Community Cashback encourages tenants to take control of small-scale local services, like cutting the grass or decorating in communal areas. Tenants can reinvest any savings they make from running these services into other community priorities.

Small grants may be available to help tenant groups set up Community Cashback schemes. Contact the [National Federation of our office](#) for more information.

Tenant Cashback

The Tenant Cashback scheme allows social tenants to take control of the repairs budgets for their homes, for example to carry out their own DIY, or commission it locally and pocket any savings made.

The scheme is supported through a provision in the [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#).