

**Tenant Services Authority consultation on new arrangements for regulating the council's landlord services**

**Outline of proposed Tenant Services Authority standards**

**1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard**

**• Customer service and choice**

Registered providers must design and deliver housing services that tenants can access easily. Tenants must be offered choices over the services they receive, and be treated with fairness and respect. In relation to all the standards, registered providers must consider equality issues and the diversity of their tenants, including tenants with additional support needs. Registered providers must understand their tenants' needs and use this information to:

- design and deliver housing services
- communicate with tenants.

**• Involvement and empowerment**

Registered providers will offer all tenants opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing. This must include opportunities to:

- influence housing related policies and how housing related services are delivered
- be involved in scrutinising performance in delivering housing-related services.

Registered providers must offer tenants support so they are more able to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered.

**• Responding to complaints**

Registered providers must have a clear and accessible policy. They must deal with tenants' complaints and any other feedback promptly, politely and fairly. The policy must include how they use complaints and other feedback to:

- change how they do things
- improve services.

**2. Home standard**

**• Quality of accommodation**

Registered providers must ensure that all homes are warm, weatherproof and have modern facilities. They must meet the Decent Homes Standard or above by 31 December 2010 and be maintained at that standard. The TSA may agree an extension to this date where it is reasonable and will take account of the extent to which providers require capital funding from government and when it is likely that such funding will be available.

Registered providers must ensure their tenants have the opportunity to agree a local standard which is higher than the Decent Homes Standard.

• **Repairs and maintenance**

Registered providers must provide a cost effective repairs and maintenance service that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants. They must meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of tenants in their homes.

Registered providers must ensure their tenants have the opportunity to agree a local standard for repairs and maintenance.

**3. Tenancy standard**

• **Allocations**

Registered providers must let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They must take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They should demonstrate how their allocations processes:

- make the best use of available housing
- contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities.

There should be clear decision making and appeals processes.

• **Rents**

The rent standard is based on the government's direction to the TSA which only applies to providers that are not councils. The government has indicated that it intends to direct the TSA in relation to a rent standard that applies to local authority providers at a later date.

• **Tenure**

Registered providers must offer and issue the most secure form of tenure compatible with:

- the purpose of the housing
- the sustainability of the community.

They must meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements.

**4. Neighbourhood and Community standard**

• **Neighbourhood management**

Registered providers will keep the common areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. To achieve this, they will work in partnership with:

- their tenants
- other providers and public bodies, where this is the most effective way of achieving this standard.

Registered providers must ensure their tenants have the opportunity to agree a local standard for neighbourhood management.

- **Local area co-operation**

Registered providers will co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic well being in the areas where their properties are.

- **Anti-social behaviour**

Registered providers must work in partnership with other public agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

Registered providers must ensure their tenants have the opportunity to agree a local standard for anti-social behaviour.

## **5. Value for Money standard**

- **Value for money**

In meeting all national standards and their local standards, registered providers have a comprehensive approach to managing their resources to provide cost effective, efficient, quality services and homes to meet tenants' and potential tenants' needs.

Registered providers must ensure their tenants have the opportunity to agree a local standard for tenants to influence the services delivered and the cost of those services that result in service charges to tenants.

## **6. Governance and Financial Viability standard**

This standard requiring registered providers to have effective governance arrangements and to manage their resources effectively to ensure their viability is maintained does not apply to local authority landlords as there are different arrangements for regulation of these areas.

