

SECTION G - Being Involved

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The Council wants to make sure that we are providing you with the services you want and to a standard you expect. Your views and feedback helps us do this.

There are lots of ways that you can give us your views including:

- Via the Internet on **www.harrogate.gov.uk**
- Through reading and contributing to the Tenants News and News4You newsletters
- By completing questionnaires
- Through attending meetings including the Area Panel meetings in your area which any tenant is free to attend (see below).

If you would like us to visit you please contact the Tenant Involvement Officer on 01423 551619 or your Neighbourhood Housing Office.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Your complaints and compliments are also very important to us. Please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Office in the first instance if you have comments or complaints about the Housing Service. If a complaint remains unresolved or you would prefer to pass your comments on in writing to us please complete a "Help Us to Help You" form which are available at any Council Office. You will receive a formal reply to your complaint if you complete one of these forms. If you remain dissatisfied then you can write to the Council's Chief Executive. You also have the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman if you remain unhappy with the Council's response. 

TENANT COMPACT

We believe tenants can help us improve services by being involved in the planning, management and monitoring of the service and you can do this in several ways. The District-wide Compact outlines the many ways you can be involved.

Area Panels – Any tenant may attend the Area Panels which are regularly held at varying locations throughout the District with Housing and Property staff and local councillors. At these meetings you will have the opportunity to discuss issues affecting your community and make suggestions on how we can improve the area. All tenants are welcome to come, just let your Neighbourhood Housing Office know in advance if you would like to discuss a specific topic. Dates and locations of these meetings can be found in the Tenants News.



Central Forum – If you want to be more formally involved in the Council's decision-making process then join the Central Forum. The Representative Tenants on the Central Forum meet 4 times a year with the Cabinet Member (Housing), other Councillors and senior housing staff to put forward suggestions on housing issues and proposed changes. Meetings are held at locations throughout the District. The Area Panels select the members of the Central Forum. Please contact the Tenant Involvement Officer if you're interested.

Leasehold Panel: We also have a Leasehold Panel discussing issues specific to people who have bought their flats or maisonettes from the Council under a lease agreement. The Leasehold Panel has also devised its own Leasehold Compact.

Residents' & Tenants' Associations - Residents and Tenants' Associations are groups of people who get together to improve their area. Associations can be very good at making the Council and other organisations (e.g. Police, Social Services and Health) aware of things that are important for residents in their area. The Council provides help with the funding and setting up of Associations and encourages tenants to join together to establish Associations.

Tenant Panel – If you don't want to attend meetings the Tenant Panel may be for you! The Tenant Panel consists of 100 tenants who have agreed to answer 3 or 4 questionnaires each year about the Housing service and proposed improvements.

Customer Information Panel – The panel is made up of tenants who receive details of information that is to be sent out by the Department to make sure it is in Plain English. Again there is no need to attend meetings but you can make a difference by improving the standard of the Council's communications.

Editorial Panel - A group of tenants who meet with Council officers to discuss the content and format of the Tenants' News.

60 Plus Group - The 60 Plus Group meets 4 times a year to consider how services to tenants in communal schemes can be improved. The Panel discusses specific and local issues such as garden maintenance, dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and the level of service for tenants over 60.

Working Groups - Tenants may be invited to join working groups with Council Officers and/or Councillors to look at policies and review the performance of the services. Current

groups include the

- ◆ Performance Monitoring Group
- ◆ Housing Strategy Group
- ◆ Repairs contractor liaison groups

Council Meetings

Any resident can attend meetings of the Council including Cabinet, "Full" Council and Scrutiny Commission meetings. At some meetings, for instance the Scrutiny Commission, you can raise issues of concern although it's best to let us know in advance.

Your local Councillor

You can approach your local councillor with a problem or issue and they will contact us on your behalf. You can obtain an up to date list of councillors at your Housing Office or other Council offices or log on to our website www.harrogate.gov.uk.

The Council will organise transport and help with caring costs for any tenant or leaseholder wanting to attend any of the meetings mentioned above.

For further information on any tenant involvement matter please contact the Tenant Involvement Officer on 01423 551619 or your Neighbourhood Housing Office. They will also give you a copy of any of the Tenant Compacts.

