

# National Tenant Alliance (NTA)

## Project Working Group

Minutes from meeting held on 9 December 2025, 11:00 – 13:00 via Teams

**Present:** Joseph De-Ville (Chair), Yaw Boateng, Alicia Mortlock, Neal Wylde, Aileen Edmunds, Merron Simpson, Steve Inett, Martin Wheatley, Stephanie Lee (Note-taker), Neil McGregor-Patterson (for the communications item)

**Apologies:** Stella Parkin

### Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Project Working Group: Tenant Role Description
3. Tenants at the Table
4. About this project
5. Tenant recruitment
6. Project and logistics
7. Communications
8. AOB

## 1. Welcome, Introduction, Apologies

- 1.1 Joseph welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted from Stella.
- 1.2 Joseph introduced colleagues attending the meeting from the Longleigh Foundation (Aileen) who are funding the project and The Health Creation Alliance (Merron, Martin, Steve, Stephanie) who are facilitating the delivery of the project.
- 1.3 Joseph provided context on the project's background, explaining that The Health Creation Alliance was commissioned to produce the initial report '[Tenants at the Table](#)' (stage 1) and has been engaged to support implementation of its recommendations (stage 2 and the current project). He emphasised the vision to establish a tenant-led, self-sufficient advocacy organization that centres tenant voices The Health Creation Alliance will eventually transition out as the Group becomes independent (stage 3).
- 1.3 Members of the Project Working Group (Joseph, Yaw, Alicia, Neal) introduced themselves, the strengths and experiences they are bringing to the project, and what they hope to see coming out of the project.

## 2. Project Working Group: Tenant Role Description

- 2.1 Joseph provided a recap on the roles and responsibilities of Project Working Group (PWG) members, including the time commitment and remuneration - *slide 4 of the PowerPoint presentation*. The aim is for the PWG to meet every 6 weeks so that there is time in between meetings to progress actions.

## 3. Tenants at the Table

- 3.1 Joseph provided a summary of the Tenants at the Table project and report recommendations and how these have informed the development of the current project and the development of a National Tenant Network/Alliance - *slides 6-16 the PowerPoint presentation*.

3.2 Working Group members were invited to ask questions/share thoughts. The following points were raised:

- **Risk of becoming a ‘tick box exercise’** - concern that landlords, regulators, and government may acknowledge the alliance exists but not genuinely listen to tenant voices
- **Need for early access to decision-making** - tenants must be ‘in the room’ when policies are being developed, not consulted only after decisions are finalized
- **Policies created then imposed** - current pattern where landlords/organisations develop policies first, then seek tenant input but are reluctant to make meaningful changes
- **Lack of recognition for tenant contributions** - tenant work and achievements not credited
- **Constant need to prove tenant value** - ongoing challenge of having to justify why tenant voice matters and what's ‘in it for’ landlords/partners coupled with frustration that in 2025, tenants still need to prove their input has value rather than it being accepted as essential.
- **Outdated and disrespectful attitudes from sector leaders** - CEOs ‘living in 1950’ with stereotypical views of social housing tenants, fundamental lack of respect
- **Communication failure** - must avoid repeating landlords' mistakes; need strong, consistent communication showing impact and progress
- **Power imbalance not recognised** - landlords act as though they're doing tenants a favour, when reality is ‘they don't exist without us’ (rent payers)

3.3 These points raised above highlight the importance of the following for the project:

- **Ensure early access** to policy development processes
- **Build communication strategy** that demonstrates tenant impact continuously
- **Document and publicise** tenant contributions
- **Secure commitments** from government, regulators, and landlords to genuinely listen
- **Maintain grassroots connection** to demonstrate broad tenant representation
- **Challenge stereotypes** and outdated attitudes among housing sector leadership
- **Keep tenant leadership** at centre throughout all phases

## 4. About this project

4.1 Merron shared a diagram of what a National Tenant Alliance could look like which has purposely been designed as a network/alliance model, rather than a single centralised organisation - *slide 17 of the PowerPoint presentation*. The model has local, regional, and national levels and would build on existing local tenant groups across England. The framework is based on phase 1 tenant consultation and has been designed to be intentionally flexible to allow for further input, as many structural details will be developed in stage 3 of the project.

4.2 Merron set out the project’s five objectives:

1. **Diversification:** Engage a diverse range of tenants of social housing for development of NTAS and to gain insights into how to best to engage their group
2. **Tenant Leadership:** Increase the number of tenant leaders for NTAS in this project and develop a leadership programme for NTAS to use to train leaders going forward
3. **Engagement and participation:** Increase the number of tenants engaged and participating in the process of shaping NTAS
4. **Shaping of NTAS as an organisation:** Bring more clarity to core functions and activities of NTAS to enable early phases to be costed (not a full organisation plan)

5. **Costings:** produce an estimate of costs, based on activities, that can be used to guide the development of a NTAS.

4.3 Working Group members raised the following questions:

- Neal noted that trade unions already have established local-to-national structures that have worked for over 100 years and suggested examining trade union models as a template for the tenant alliance
- Martin highlighted that Sweden has a national tenants union with regional and local elements operating for 100+ years. Alicia added that Tpas already has links with the Swedish model.
- Alicia noted that SHAC (Social Housing Action Campaign) is already running a national voice initiative, part-funded by Unite union
- Joseph highlighted the tenant alliance already running in Wales who he has reach out to and are happy to come and speak with the Project Working Group

4.4 It was agreed that Alicia and Joseph will provide an overview of the Swedish and Welsh models and the next Project Working Group meeting before potentially inviting representatives from these models to speak directly to the Group.

4.5 Merron presented an overview of the project plan - *slide 19 of the PowerPoint presentation* – and a diagram (*slide 20*) which illustrates the different groups involved in the project.

## 5. Tenant Recruitment

5.1 Steve provided an overview of the different tenant roles and their involvement in the project -*slide 21 of the PowerPoint presentation*. PWG members were invited to give thoughts on the recruitment of tenants involved in the leadership programme design, to ensure the process is open and transparent. Members raised the following points:

- Identifying Hidden Leadership Talent - many community members have natural leadership skills but don't recognise them yet so it will be important to reach out to people working in communities who may not see themselves as leaders
- The tension in creating a balance between being pragmatic and getting started quickly by approach known tenants and avoiding the appearance of selecting 'mate' or creating an 'old boys club'. A way to mitigate this will be to reach out to known contacts and advertise openly
- The potential need for independent oversight to mitigate the perception that selection is biased, even if panel acts fairly. To counter this, it was suggested that the Group could make its meeting recording and notes publicly available online
- Encouraging the involvement of younger people with less experience who can bring fresh perspectives
- Commitment and drop-out risk when people realise the time requirements. It will be important to be clear about commitment involvement when advertising the different roles and to provide lots of notice of the workshop dates.
- Need to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair, open and accessible e.g. clear skills criteria when advertising, balance between requiring expertise and being accessible

5.2 In order to address the points raised above, the following were agreed:

- **Role Description Development:** Steve to work with the PWG develop clear role descriptions which will include time commitment requirements and skills needed

- **Dual Recruitment Approach:** directly approach known suitable candidates (e.g. people involved in Phase whilst simultaneously advertising openly)
- **Transparency Measures:** consider publishing meeting minutes on Longley Foundation website
- **Programme Design:** consider ‘wedge-shaped’ approach starting broad with low commitment (1-1.5 hours online) and gradually identifying those with higher commitment/skill in order to find candidates who meet the skills requirements and can commit the necessary time.

5.3 Steve shared the proposed strategy for reaching diverse tenants - *slide 22 of the PowerPoint presentation* - and asked for the Group’s views on recruitment via landlords. The following points were noted:

- Yaw noted that most landlords have tenant involvement groups which can be a benefit e.g. using landlords’ newsletters, but it would be important to guard against landlords just picking the chosen few.
- Neal highlighted the need to consider the cost implications of working with disabled people (and their carers), people with EAL and single parents who may require childcare support to participate.
- Building on Neal’s point, Joseph highlighted the need to ensure the project was geographically inclusive and the potential costs of achieving this.

## 6. Project and logistics

6.1 Merron talked through the ‘project critical elements’ - *slide 22 of the PowerPoint presentation* – which can form the PWG’s Terms of Reference. PWG Members were invited to feedback on these before the next meeting.

## 7. Communications

7.1 Neil provided an overview of the key considerations for the project’s communications strategy.

### 1. Programme Awareness & Credibility

- Maintain consistent communication of core messages
- Ensure alignment across all stakeholders throughout programme completion

### 2. Strategic Focus & End Goals

- Define clear end objectives before communications begin
- Avoid changing strategic direction mid-programme (cannot shift goals after 6 months)
- Maintain consistent messaging aligned with long-term outcomes

### 3. Issues Management

- Proactively manage and mitigate arising issues

7.2 Aileen noted that it would be helpful to put out a communication before Christmas about the project launch, particularly to ensure that tenants involved in the previous project were informed of this next phase.

7.3 Neil noted the importance of agreeing a clear and consistent message that includes the project outcomes. It was therefore agreed that a interim holding statement about the project’s launch will be shared publicly before Christmas and that a more detailed project statement along with key issues will be developed in January.

## 8. AOB

8.1 The date of the next meeting will be in January and Stephanie will contact the PWG for their availability.

**Action summary**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>By who</b>	<b>By when</b>
1.	Gather information about the Swedish and Welsh model from contacts to report back at the next Project Working Group	Alicia – Sweden Joe – Wales	Agreed to pick up at the February PWG meeting
2.	Consider the suggestion for meeting minutes/recording to be hosted online on the Llongleugh website	Joseph & Merron	Complete
3.	Review ' <i>project-critical elements</i> ' which will form ToR for the PWG	PWG members	Complete
4.	Set dates for future meetings of the Project Working Group	Stephanie	Complete
5.	Develop a draft launch statement for review by the PWG	Neil	Complete
6.	Develop and draft core statement and specific issues that may come up, answers to which will form FAQs	Neil	Complete