

# Can you make a difference for 7,000 tenants?

Read  
On!



**SDC is introducing an exciting new approach to tenant involvement; giving two tenants the chance to represent tenants' views at the council's housing committee and influence decisions potentially affecting the lives of 7,000 tenants. One appointment has already been made, and we are now looking for a second tenant representative. This unique opportunity is open to all tenants. An Independent Tenant Advisor from the Housing Quality Network will carry out the selection of the best candidates.**

**To get a broader picture of what this new role involves please read on.**

## **What does the housing committee do?**

It sets the policies for the way in which council housing is let, managed, repaired and improved and the services that council tenants receive. It ensures that services to tenants are the very best they can be.

## **Who sits on the housing committee?**

The committee is made up of elected councillors. They are elected to the council every four years.

## **Why does the committee want tenant representatives?**

The committee wants to know more about what tenants think of their housing service. There's no better way than having two tenants on the committee who can represent the views of tenants of all ages at their meetings.

## **How do I know what tenants think?**

You would have a tenant's perspective of course, but would need to be careful not to just focus on these. You would attend the tenant and resident meetings and hear what tenants there were saying - there are six of those a year.

You would also join in at 'Have Your Say' events where you would pick up more views. We'd welcome any other ideas and suggestions you might have to make this as quick and easy as possible.

### **How would I make the committee aware of tenant views?**

By being a part of the housing committee and attending its meetings (about six a year), you'd be working alongside councillors considering and debating issues and ensuring that tenants' views are heard. In that way you can influence, on behalf of tenants, councillors' decisions. You would not be able to vote; only councillors can do that. However, you can influence the shaping of services and make a difference.

### **Is there anything I must not do as a the tenant representative?**

Tenant representatives must not use this role for their own interests, or those of their neighbours, friends and relatives. They must not use views that are just personal to them – but to speak on behalf of tenants generally.

If the committee, having heard you tell them what tenants are thinking, still make a different decision, you would need to accept that.

Tenant representatives will be required to keep the same standards as councillors.

### **How will tenants know what I am doing at the committee?**

Meetings are webcast and can be seen on the council's website along with notes of meetings. You will also be invited to 'Have Your Say' events where you will have the opportunity to talk to tenants face to face (attendance would not be compulsory). There will also be information published in tenants' newsletters.

### **How will the two tenants be selected?**

The council has appointed HQN, independent consultants, to carry out the selection process. Selection will be based on your application form and informal interview. HQN will recommend to the council the two applicants that best meet these requirements. Although you will not be expected to have direct experience of being on a committee, you would be willing to:

- gain and understand what tenants are thinking about the council housing services they receive
- represent a wide range of tenants' views, regardless of what you might personally think, attend and listen at Tenant and Resident meetings (about six a year) and where possible 'Have Your Say' sessions to understand tenants' views
- prepare for, and speak in a committee alongside the other tenant representative and the councillors

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- abide by the code of conduct
- attend six housing committee meetings a year in the council's offices which are fully accessible

### Will I get training?

Yes, there will be induction training when you start and ongoing training after that. Exactly what this includes will depend on what your training needs are.

### Will my expenses be covered?

Yes, there will be reimbursement for out of pocket expenses for things like travel to meetings and other events, child care and carers allowance. Taxis can also be provided for travel.

### Need to know more?

Call HQN's 'hot line' - 01904 557191

### How to apply

Please complete the attached application form and post it to **Suzy Histon, HQN Limited, Rockingham House, St Maurices Road, YORK YO31 7JA** or to use email, visit the 'Tenant News' webpage in the Housing section of the website on Stroud District Council's website (see picture below). Click on the application form link and save the form to your computer. Email your completed application form to **stroudtenants@hqnetwork.co.uk**

**The closing date for applications is 8<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

