



## Lessons from Grenfell: Social housing at the forefront

### Policy Think Tank

4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at Trafford Hall, Chester, CH2 4JP

### Briefing Note

Following the Grenfell fire disaster, social landlords need to act: what fire safety measures are right; how to enforce and control standards; how to win the confidence of tenants; how to help tenants feel more in control. This Think Tank will help landlords, housing organisations, government officials, and emergency services pool their ideas and produce some clear, deliverable proposals. This is a critical turning point in social housing.

The housing minister is holding ten meetings around the regions with 1000 tenants to gain fresh insights into their experiences, needs, anxieties and ideas. The Secretary of State is arguing for a big expansion in social housing, for priority to making existing homes safe, particularly flats; there is a need for tighter regulation. Social landlords have a unique opportunity to show their value and make their contribution clear.

The Lessons from Grenfell Think Tank for policy makers and practitioners will give social landlords a chance to pull together vital evidence on what should happen next:

- The safety and security of all multi-storey blocks of flats;
- The enforcement of existing standards and the uprating of building and fire regulations as required following the Lakanal House inquiry;
- Information sharing, training and involvement of residents to ensure their full cooperation in safety and enforcement;
- The necessary investment to uplift social housing;

Government is listening to tenants. They will surely want to listen to landlords. So book now, and contribute to this programme that could shape the future of social housing.

**Costs:** £250 per participant including bed and breakfast, all meals and refreshments, and event materials. The charge for a day delegate is £190. Contact Philippa Meehan at Trafford Hall on [P.Meehan@traffordhall.com](mailto:P.Meehan@traffordhall.com) to book. You can also book online at: <http://www.traffordhall.com/haevents/tenant-think-tank-lessons-grenfell/>.

**Travel details:** Trafford Hall is only two hours by direct train from London Euston. Trafford Hall is a short taxi ride (approximately 15 minutes) from Chester train station. Regular trains run from Warrington, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. NB: Please look out for other Think Tank participants when queuing for taxis outside Chester station to share a ride.

*The Housing Plus Academy reflects the diversity of social housing among our staff, tenants and customers because we believe that diversity gives us access to better ideas, innovation and solutions. Recognising the benefits of diversity means that we would like to invite more people from a wide variety of backgrounds to join us. So, for example, if you have a different thinking style, are from an ethnic minority background, are younger, or perhaps you have a disability, your experience will be invaluable in keeping us current and relevant, and will be welcome.*



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### **Policy Think Tank Outline Programme**

**4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> December 2017, at Trafford Hall, near Chester, CH2 4JP**

**Chaired by Lucy de Groot**

#### **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

3.30pm

**Arrivals**

4pm

**Tea and cake**

4.30pm-6pm

#### ***Session 1: Social landlords and multi-storey blocks***

- The implications of the Grenfell fire
- Making blocks of flats work
- Has the government neglected social housing
- *Contributors: David Edwards (Oxford City Council), Lucy Grove (National Housing Federation) and John Gregory, (One Housing Group)*
- Question and answer session

#### **Table discussion:**

What needs to change as a result of the Grenfell Tower Disaster?

What can social landlords do in practice?

- Feedback

6.30pm-7.30pm

**Dinner**

7.30pm-8.30pm

#### ***Evening debate: "There's lots of talk about social housing. Is anything going to change?" Arguments for and against this question***

*Contributors: Jason Strelitz (Kensington & Chelsea), Lucy Glynn (Notting Hill Housing, Simone Strachan (Shelter) TBC, Eva Watkinson (Shelter) TBC.*

#### **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

**8.50am-9.05am**

Brief walk around Trafford Hall to explain how it was set up, its environmental and energy saving measures

9.15am-10.45am

#### ***Session 2: Making high rise safe***

- Essential know-how and avoidable mistakes
- Challenges of cost investment needs, procurement
- Complex systems, complex repairs
- Getting the necessary skills
- *Contributors: Tim Vincent (Rockwool), Guy Keen (Merseyside FRS), Sunand Prasad (PPRIBA), John Tweed (Tweed Nuttall Warburton)*
- Question and answer session



**Table discussion:** Why is management so important in making multi-storey housing safe?  
What are its key ingredients?  
How can they be funded?  
- Feedback

10.45am-11.00am

**Coffee break**

11.00am-12.30pm

**Session 3: Who lives in multi-storey blocks? Making them work**

- How to rise to the challenge of diverse needs and diverse groups
- Controlling and maintaining communal spaces and services
- Right to Buy leaseholders and private tenants
- Knowing all residents and working with them
- Different groups sharing common space
- *Contributors: Adrian Hipkiss (L&Q), Paul Vinten (Southern Housing), Stewart Grant (Redbridge Council), Liz Dunn (North Hertfordshire Homes).*
- Question and answer session

**Table discussion:** How can social landlords prioritise the right kind of Lettings in multi-storeys when there is so much pressure on homes?  
How can social landlords stay on top of all the complexities of multi-storey blocks (such as lifts, shared landings and balconies, common entrances, plumbing, alarm systems, electrics)?  
- Feedback

12.30pm-1.15pm

**Lunch**

1.15pm-2.30pm

**Session 4: How can social landlords respond to public concern and build on positive messages from government about social housing**

- Focusing on the existing stock and existing communities
- Recognising the scale of landlord responsibilities
- Involving residents and listening to their views
- *Contributors: Debbie Lerner (CIH), Colette Prior (Hammersmith & Fulham Council), Lynsey Hanley (writer), Lee Sugden (Salix Homes)*
- Question and answer session



**Table discussion:**

How can we make social landlords more recognised?  
How can they get their voice heard in government and in public?  
What is their most important contribution?  
- Feedback

2.30pm-2.40pm

Evaluation and feedback forms

2.40pm-2.55pm

***Round up ideas, key messages to government and representative bodies – Anne Power***

- Top actions to take forward for discussion
  - Tighter building regulations
  - More careful and exacting fire safety
  - Dedicated funds for upgrading
  - Increased supply