

## **LSE and Trafford Hall Housing Plus Think Tank: Welfare Reform and Tenants' Experiences**

### **Summary and outline programme**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Trafford Hall, near Chester

**Housing Plus** is about social landlords adopting a **wider role in communities** where they are based. Tenants need this wider support in order to manage changes in rents and benefits, employment opportunities and skills, special care needs and many other aspects of community life. In poorer households and areas, social landlords need to reinforce their role if they are to manage their properties and make neighbourhood good places to live in.

The bedroom tax, benefit caps and other **welfare reforms are having a dramatic impact on the lives of social housing tenants**, particularly those under 60. Landlords face big challenges in helping their tenants and collecting rents which pay for housing services. For tenants the impacts are serious and immediate. We have uncovered real struggles, deep conflicts and urgent needs. We have also seen how much active social landlords and their tenants can achieve.

This is the second special Think Tank for social housing tenants. The first was extremely popular and we had a big waiting list. The aim is to **help tenants understand the reforms and build resilience**. We want to gather real evidence from the ground and share it widely. We are interested in discovering who are the most vulnerable and worst affected tenants, whether there is more that can be done, whether landlords are developing better access routes and more support for tenants as a result of the pressures of welfare reform, and also whether welfare reform is being properly connected to work and job opportunities.

Welfare reform is posing many difficulties for low income households. It is an area where communities are coming together and where much can be done to help young people, families and those whose families have grown up and are being particularly hard hit by changes. It is **important for tenant voices to be heard**, and their experiences are shared.

## **LSE and Trafford Hall Tenant Think Tank: Outline Programme**

**All sessions will be held in the Ballroom in the main building**

The purpose of this event is to gather people's experiences of the impact of welfare reform in their communities. We will aim to come up with clear recommendations for community groups, landlords and the government.

### **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

12.30 – 13.30	Sandwich lunch, registration and getting to know each other
13.30 – 13.45	<b>Introduction and welcome to Trafford Hall</b>
13.45 – 14.00	<b>Session 1: Why we are having the Think Tank and what we already know</b>
14.00 – 15.15	<b>Session 2: What is welfare reform doing to us? Which residents are most affected?</b>
15.15 – 15.35	Break
15.35 – 16.50	<b>Session 3: Why is welfare reform happening? What are the pros and Cons?</b>
16.50 – 17.15	Break
17.15 – 18.00	<b>Session 4: How are social landlords helping? Could they do more?</b>
18.00 – 18.30	Break
18.30 – 19.30	Dinner
19.30 – 21.00	Socialising/Quiz

### **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

8.00 – 9.00	Breakfast
9.00 – 9.15	Assemble in the Ballroom
9.15 – 10.45	<b>Session 5: How can communities help?</b>
10.45 – 11.15	Break
11.15 – 12.45	<b>Session 6: What are the lessons from tenants' experiences? What next? What messages?</b>
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch and depart