

Dudley Federation general meeting summary – Tuesday 30th January 2024

There were 10 TRAs represented at this meeting at Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre / on Microsoft Teams.

- 📄 **Tenants and Residents Associations:** Room hire still continues to be an issue for some TRAs as schools have increased their room hire prices to a level that isn't affordable for groups. There are also issues with bank accounts charging monthly fees, information on free community accounts will be sent to groups by the Participation Development Team.
- 📄 **Dudley Federation end of year accounts March 2023 & financial reports:** These are available to view via [our website](#).
- 📄 **Dudley Council contracts:** There were some reports that operatives had been turning up to properties saying that an appointment has been arranged but it hasn't, and not attending when appointments had been made. If there are any instances of this that you would like us to report, please let us know via info@dftra.org.uk.
- 📄 **Community Housing Team:** The information online gives a list of 6 Housing Officers active in the area, it doesn't specify which Housing Officer is yours, but if you call the duty line then they can tell you. The Participation Development Team are working on an interactive way of finding out who your housing Officer is and will keep us updated.
- 📄 **Dudley Council finances:** There is currently a stop on new discretionary spend, and aerial money has been stopped. If groups have projects in progress via aerial money and believe that they should be completed, please email participation@dudley.gov.uk and they will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- 📄 **Service charges:** There was a significant discussion around the proposed introduction of service charges to properties with communal areas. The cost of the charge will depend on the services provided to each block, and tenants will only pay for the services they receive but the average weekly amount is expected to be £12.46. This would mean that there will be a legitimate right to complain if the services aren't provided.

There are a lot of concerns around the affect that this will have on tenants, particularly when combined with the proposed rent increase.

It was said that Dudley Council know that around 70% of customers are entitled to and claim full or partial financial support for their rent, and if they get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, the services charges will be within that. Those not in receipt of benefits and on the breadline are who the council are most concerned about, so they will put in place a transitional discretionary fund for at least the first year and potentially up to 3 years to support the people who need it. It will operate like a Discretionary Housing Payment but will be operated by Housing, the process is currently being refined.
- 📄 **Damp and mould:** Anyone with damp and mould issues were encouraged to report it to the Repairs Management Centre and re-report if the work hasn't been completed.
<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements/>
- 📄 **Elections to the Dudley Federation Board:** Stan Chance and Elaine Lloyd (Butterfield Court TRA) were both elected to the Dudley Federation board for a 3 year term.
- 📄 **Customer Involvement and Engagement Strategy:** Consultation began at our AGM, but there was a limit on time. If you are interested in being involved in this consultation, please email info@dftra.org.uk and we will ensure that you are invited to sessions or sent a digital link to complete.
- 📄 **The next general meeting will be in April 2024 (date TBC).**