



Dudley Federation

of Tenants and Residents Associations

Spring newsletter 2024

Including our Annual Report for 2023

Dudley Federation Update

We are in a state of uncertainty at Dudley Federation at the moment as we haven't had confirmation of our funding for the next 12 months.

The Service Level Agreement that we have been asked to sign encompasses a lot more responsibility - particularly around the running of Tenants and Residents Associations and we have called an extra-ordinary general meeting with our members to discuss these potential changes and the ramifications moving forward.

We will of course keep our members who aren't able to attend the meeting updated on any decisions and outcomes.

In the meantime, if you need anything from us please don't hesitate to get in touch.

- ▶ Stronger protections for tenants: The standards are designed to empower tenants and give them more influence over their housing situation.
- ▶ Focus on good communication and service: Landlords are required to be more transparent with tenants and treat them with respect.
- ▶ Safer and higher quality homes: Landlords must ensure their properties meet safety standards and are well-maintained.

The Regulator of Social Housing has expanded its enforcement powers to ensure compliance and Landlords are required to submit data on their performance by 30th June 2024.

If you'd like to learn more, you can visit the UK government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing> for more information.

Consumer Standards

The new regulator of social housing consumer standards will come into effect on April 1, 2024.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) is responsible for enforcing these standards, which are designed to improve the quality of service and living conditions for social housing tenants.

The new standards focus on four areas:

- ▶ Safe and quality homes
- ▶ Transparency and accountability
- ▶ Good neighbourhoods
- ▶ Clear tenancy terms

The main goals are to improve the quality of social housing and the services provided to tenants, such as:



Dudley Federation Annual Report 2023

We have produced this report in line with the key outputs that were set out in our 2022-2024 Service Level Agreement with Dudley MBC (Metropolitan Borough Council).

a) Support the way forward for customer involvement

"To positively work in partnership with Housing and Communities to develop and co-produce a Customer Involvement Strategy and Customer Involvement Framework which will provide everyone with clarity of the approach to customer involvement and expectations of all stakeholders".

Dudley Federation have:

- ▶ Attended a Customer Involvement Strategy workshop in April 2023.
- ▶ Promoted and attended a Tpas SMART review of Participation in September 2023.
- ▶ Promoted and attended a Safety Matters event in September 2023.
- ▶ Attended Tpas 'Your Voice Matters' - Member Focus Groups, which discussed the 4 sections of the consumer standards and the proposed changes.
- ▶ Kept members updated on changes to The Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

b) Increase the number of involved customers

"As part of the new Customer Involvement framework, we will be developing a series of opportunities including Service Improvement Groups for customers to become involved. DFTRA to find, support and encourage 100 new people / customers to refer to the Community Involvement Team which reflects our communities across the borough, to become actively involved in new opportunities for their involvement".


Dudley Federation have:

- ▶ Sent the Dudley 500 information once it was received in July 2023. We continue to share this with anyone who signs up to our public mailing list.
- ▶ Sent a further 4 update emails throughout 2023 to up to 76 individuals who are not part of a TRA.

c) Provide support for existing TRAs

"To demonstrate and evidence focused support and mentoring for new and existing Tenants and Residents Associations to enable them to provide a representative and effective voice for the communities they represent. To encourage feedback from residents in neighbourhoods where there is an active TRA".

Dudley Federation have:

- ▶ Attended many TRA general and committee meetings in place of/as well as Participation Development Officers while the team was short on resources during 2023. Dudley Federation continue to attend TRA meetings when requested or where extra support may be needed.
 - ▶ Held 4 general meetings in 2023 and increased attendance throughout the year.
 - ▶ Sent regular email updates to TRAs during 2023.
 - ▶ Provided insurance cover for 3 TRA led events.
 - ▶ Promoted and facilitated Treasurer training at the Dudley Federation office in October 2023.
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Dudley Federation Annual Report 2023 (cont.)

d) Development of DFTRA

"To develop and promote positive involvement on issues of collective interest which adds value to each TRA. To explore the development of DFTRA as an organisation and its offer to the wider community".

Dudley Federation have:

- ▶ Held an Away Day to focus Board member goals and produce a plan for the next 12 months.
- ▶ Completed 5 Continuing Professional Development Courses in 2023 to enhance skills, knowledge, and expertise.
- ▶ Completed a satisfaction survey of TRA members.
- ▶ Received 5 compliments throughout 2023 thanking us for what we do.
- ▶ Submitted 14 enquiries to the customer team for investigation on behalf of Tenants.

e) To promote and publicise the work of DFTRA

"To be transparent and accountable to member organisations, tenants and residents of the borough and Dudley MBC".

Dudley Federation continue to:

- ▶ Regularly update our website & social media accounts and have increased website traffic and social media followers
- ▶ Produce quarterly newsletters
- ▶ Provide summaries of general meetings online
- ▶ Send Dudley Federation information to members regularly to inform them of the support and assistance that can be provided
- ▶ Make board meeting minutes available via our website
- ▶ Make general meeting minutes available via our website
- ▶ Make financial updates and end of year accounts available via our website.

f) Develop partnership with Housing and Communities and key stakeholders

"To work closely and collaboratively with key stakeholders and forums/groups within the Community Involvement Framework such as the Housing Board and the Housing and Communities Teams to foster increased partnership working and to promote local and boroughwide solutions".

Dudley Federation have:

- ▶ Had regular liaison meetings with the Participation Development Team, providing quarterly Service Level Agreement reports in line with our agreement
- ▶ Held a joint Greencare meeting with Dudley MBC's Participation Development Team where the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services was invited to answer TRA questions
- ▶ Begun to send regular updates to Dudley's Housing Board to keep them up to date between meetings
- ▶ Worked with the Community Housing Team with a view to share our office space with a Housing Hub.



Our plan for 2024/25

A new Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2024/25 has been drafted for us to sign. The key outputs for this one are:

1. Work in partnership with Community Involvement and the Housing and Communities Directorate to improve services and ensure compliance with Consumer and Building Safety Standards

Required Outcome: To positively work in partnership with Housing and Communities to develop and co-produce an involvement strategy and tenants charter which provides everyone with clarity of expectations.

2. Work in partnership with Dudley Council and partners to ensure community safety and development

To work closely and collaboratively with Housing and Communities across the borough to increase partnership working to promote local and boroughwide solutions.

3. Effectively support DFTRA members

To demonstrate mentoring and continued support for new and existing Tenants and Residents Associations to enable them to provide a representative and effective voice for the communities they represent. To be transparent and accountable to member organisations, tenants and residents of the borough.

4. Meet DMBC requirements for funding

Ensure compliance with any requirements needed to secured funding

Under each output there are aims/targets for us to achieve (too many to include here) but this new SLA encompasses a lot more work for the volunteer board at Dudley Federation, particularly under item 3 above.

Should we receive our funding, we will be expected to effectively 'take over' in leading the support/running of Tenants and Residents Associations. This includes setting up new groups as well as their advertising campaigns and events, induction for prospective TRA members, finding venues for groups both old and new, completing TRA's running cost grant applications as well as producing aspirations with groups, invite stakeholders to TRA meetings, and then reporting back on the impact of all of this to Dudley MBC.

While we have been, and continue to be advocates for Tenants and Residents Associations, we are concerned that the work that we are being asked to do replaces the role of the Participation Development Team, but without providing us with any extra funding. We have been offered support, but without any solid guarantee that this will be provided, it is difficult to sign a document knowing that we may not be able to fulfil the targets. This wouldn't be so bad if it would only affect us, but it will be the groups that suffer if we are unable to provide the required manpower for the level of support required, and that doesn't sit right with us.

After we speak with our members, we hope to have a clear plan for the future, but at the moment we're afraid we can't make any promises.

Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations
1 St Giles Street, Netherton DY2 0PR

 Tel: 01384 868010  Website: www.dftra.org.uk  E-mail: info@dftra.org.uk

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