

# The Good ITA Guide

What to expect from an  
Independent Tenant Advisor

If your organisation is involved in regeneration, stock transfers, mergers and demergers, structural or governance changes this guide will tell you what you should expect from a good Independent Tenant Advice service.

The social housing regulatory requirements as set out in the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard expectations state that:

“Registered providers shall consult with tenants, setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant options, if they are proposing to change their landlord or when proposing a significant change in their management arrangements”.

Tpas has been offering an Independent Tenant Advice service for over 29 years so we're sharing our best practice principles of how a good Independent Tenant Advisor should operate to raise the standard of the advice on offer and help make the process of change as straightforward and transparent as possible.

**Don't accept anything less.**

# With a good Independent Tenant Advisor, you can expect...

1

...a clearly defined project plan so you know exactly what service you'll be receiving.

1. The scope and role of the Independent Tenant Advisor should be agreed with you and determined by the community and regeneration partners and should be set out in an initial work programme to ensure clarity of their role and their independence.
2. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always be open and transparent about contact they have with the council, landlord or other professional bodies involved in the project and provide documented evidence of this.
3. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should provide clear and transparent information monthly (at least) on the use of funding and resources in relation to the project so that representatives can ensure good value for money on behalf of the wider community.
4. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should be expected to be included in any project steering meeting or be provided unfettered access to relevant information concerning the project. They will need to be kept up to date with project developments.

## 2

### ...excellent communication and multiple ways tenants can get in touch.

1. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should provide a free telephone service and email response service - details of which should be regularly published and communicated to all residents. A dedicated project webpage is also desirable.
2. Your Independent Tenant Advisor will ensure they engage across all social media platforms, i.e. facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. to ensure they reach as wide a demographic as possible with information, pictures and comments.
3. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always provide direct contact details for Community representatives.

## 3

### ...approachable, recognisable and knowledgeable advisors.

1. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should wear branded clothing and identification badges when engaging with the community.
2. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should provide good quality materials to help representatives build up a 'Bank of Knowledge' and reference documents.
3. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always be sensitive to individual needs in the provision of information and in the delivery of meetings and activities.
4. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always ensure that any statutory and regulatory requirements are followed in addition to provision of good practice examples and alternative approaches and should advise any landlord on these.
5. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always ensure that differences are valued and will promote inclusive involvement from all areas of the community. They should do this by highlighting potential areas of discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion.
6. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should ideally provide representative groups with monthly updates (at least) on the outcomes of consultations, discuss any changes that are required and highlight any areas that require targeting.
7. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should empower and support the development of strong representative frameworks that are accountable, accessible and transparent.
8. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should validate and check that all processes and guidelines are being adhered to, with routine feedback given to key tenants and residents.
9. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should offer strategic direction on community engagement when working with partners and providing good quality advice on how to ensure an inclusive process.

# 4

**...a focus on raising the capacity of those involved in the project so all are informed and able to participate fairly.**

1. Your Independent Tenant Advisor will need to identify training and development needs and offer a training programme to ensure increased fairness for all and to ensure tenants increased confidence in their involvement.
2. Your Independent Advisor should make sure those involved in the project have awareness of wider national policies that impact on your project and create opportunities for networking across other similar projects and exploit opportunities to share and learn from best practice.

# 5

**...any support in decision making to be thorough, robust and impartial.**

1. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should always take decisions with representatives, thoroughly advising on the pro's and con's of different approaches and decisions.
2. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should provide factual analysis of information ensuring that it is published for communities and is factually correct, fair and unbiased in its' content.
3. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should support the development of productive community and professional relationships by building and helping to manage these relationships with partners to bring deliverable and sustainable community-led processes.
4. Ensuring that decision-making frameworks are effective in making good use of any feedback given by the community in a model that suits the parties involved.

# 6

**...never make promises they cannot deliver and act with integrity at all times.**

1. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should never make promises they cannot deliver and should act with integrity at all times.
2. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should never attend, or be part of, any meetings or discussions without community representatives unless the content of these can be shared openly ensuring transparency.
3. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should never offer their own personal opinions and will always ensure that the advice they provide is independent, unbiased, open and transparent.
4. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should never enter into gossip, criticism or other personal conversations about any involved party and will challenge miss information.
5. Your Independent Tenant Advisor should not accept gifts or other benefits as a result of their association or relationship with involved parties or professional bodies.
6. Where difficulties may arise, the Advisors should seek to resolve problems quickly and amicably and ensure the project stakeholders are kept informed at all times.
7. Where difficulties emerge that cannot be quickly and satisfactorily resolved the Advisors should always ensure that stakeholders are informed, who may intervene if necessary.

# Don't accept anything less

**Tpas can work to improve your engagement and consultation with your tenants and communities through our Independent Tenant Advice Service.**

We deliver all of the services within this guide, many of which are unique to our organisation. If you feel you're getting anything less than this kind of service, get in touch.

**We specialise in:**

Regeneration, stock transfers, mergers and demergers, structural or governance changes to organisations and communities.

## How to contact us

Call us on **0161 868 3500**

Email us at: **[info@tpas.org.uk](mailto:info@tpas.org.uk)**

Look at our website: **[www.tpas.org.uk/independent-tenant-advice-service](http://www.tpas.org.uk/independent-tenant-advice-service)**



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TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

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