

A guide explaining your opportunities to get involved and Unity's responsibilities to you as a Tenant Panel Member.

Tenant Panel



Tenant Panel

Terms of Reference

What is Tenant Panel?

Our Tenant Panel is a fun, friendly group of Unity residents that meets up monthly to discuss issues affecting the business, our homes and our tenants. Joining the Tenant Panel is a great opportunity for you to put across your views, share your ideas and help us shape the service delivery that Unity tenants receive.

In addition to the monthly meetings, members can take part in:

- ✓ Practical on-site inspections
- ✓ Joint inspections with tenants from other housing associations
- ✓ Interviewing and assessing contractors
- ✓ Community consultations with staff and residents
- ✓ Editing the quarterly newsletter and annual report to tenants
- ✓ Influencing the planned maintenance programme

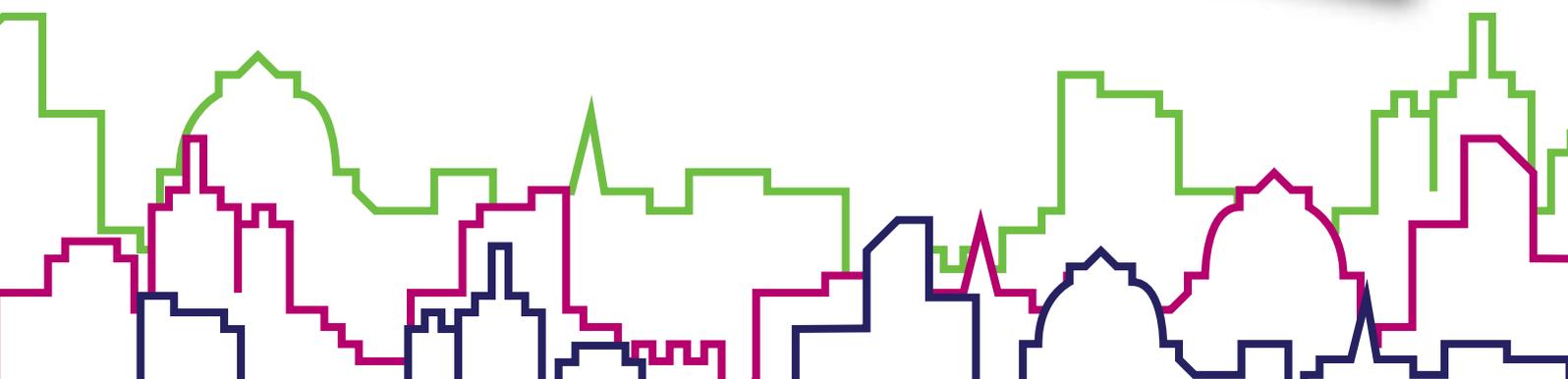
You do not need to have had experience to be on our Tenant Panel and you do not have to attend every meeting, or activity - you give as much of your time as you can afford.

We also hold Tenant Panel meetings in the evenings for those that are unavailable in the daytime, and if you have to pay for public transport so that you can attend the meetings we will reimburse the cost.

It gives you a voice - If you're in private rented accommodation you've got nothing.

We get to see what's happening and what we say matters

It's a good cultural mix. We're all from different backgrounds but with similar aims



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Unity's Tenant Panel is a flexible method of involvement for residents, enabling them to influence how Unity's services are run. We expect the Panel to consist of up to 15 people, whose backgrounds will reflect the wide diversity of our tenants.

Unity offers the following powers to Tenant Panel members:

- ✓ **Challenging staff:** You have the right to make suggestions for improvements, or to ask about what Unity does about certain issues (e.g. energy efficiency). You will be given an official response and the issues you raise will be seen by Unity's Chief Executive and our Board of Management.
- ✓ **Scrutinising services:** You have the right to take part in behind-the-scenes exercises that enable you to take an in-depth look at services.
- ✓ **Progression to Board membership:** You can build up your skills and apply for full Board membership if you want to.
- ✓ **Appointing new contractors:** You may play an active part in interviewing contractors, and we will train you in interviewing skills.
- ✓ **Contractor progress meetings:** You may take part in monthly progress meetings with contractors, where Unity staff meet with them and discuss any problems. This is to discuss general issues, not personal ones, unless they show a general problem.
- ✓ **Sounding board:** Unity staff may ask what you think about a new idea.
- ✓ **Specifications:** Unity staff may ask for your opinions about our specifications for fixtures and fittings (the standards for new items like kitchens, boilers, etc.).

✓ **Regular contact with managers:** You can ask for any Unity manager to attend the Tenant Panel meetings, to discuss any issues you want to.

✓ **Monitoring:** We will give you regular reports showing you how well Unity is performing. If you want different information, we will do our best to provide you with it.

✓ **Training:** We will offer you regular training to help to build up your skills and to enable you to make informed decisions.



Unity promises to obey the following conditions:

- ✓ **Taking you seriously:** To take your involvement seriously and make sure that your time is not wasted.
- ✓ **Variety of involvement:** To offer a variety of methods of involvement so that participation is not limited to tenants who can attend meetings at a certain time. We will ask you what your preferences are, so that we can use your time efficiently.
- ✓ **Feedback:** To regularly feed information back to Tenant Panel members, letting you know what their involvement has achieved.
- ✓ **Notice:** To give you reasonable notice of meetings and events; we appreciate you have busy lives too.
- ✓ **Information:** To make sure that you have enough information and training to enable you to make informed decisions.
- ✓ **Publicity:** To publicise issues that the Tenant Panel has raised in Unity News and to give members the opportunity to write for the newsletter.
- ✓ **Expenses:** To pay all reasonable expenses, so nobody is left out of pocket.

Tenant Panel members must agree to keep to the following conditions:

- ✓ **Being objective:** To use the Panel to make improvements to Unity's services, not to resolve personal issues.
- ✓ **Respect:** To treat other Panel members, Unity staff and contractors with respect.
- ✓ **Reliability:** To turn up to events when you say you will, or to give your apologies in good time.
- ✓ **Being active:** If you do not play an active part, you may be asked to leave the panel so that someone else can take your place.
- ✓ **Training:** To take part in training where needed.
- ✓ **Publicity:** Unity may publicise personal details (e.g. name, area they live in) and a photograph in Unity News. If you have a good reason for your details not being published (e.g. you're fleeing violence), please let us know.

To find out more about joining the panel, please contact Unity's Tenant Neighbourhood & Involvement Officer, Lewis Holloway on 0113 200 7751 or at lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk. Thank you.

