



Tell us what you want for the future



24th May 2010

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On Monday 24th May 2010 Cestria Community Housing hosted an event at the Bowes Offices to kick off the 'Big Say'.

The 'Big Say' is Cestria's branding of the National Standards and the development of Local Offers.

The event was attended by 17 tenants who all volunteered to help develop Cestria's plans around the 6 National Standards. All 17 tenants are members of the Cestria Reference Group.

Regulatory Framework



Christine Scott

Christine Scott opened the event and gave an over view of the new Regulatory framework and how Cestria would like to develop the Local Offers with residents at the heart of developing the offers.

Christine explained that there are 6 National Standards which we intend to build the Local Offers around:

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Value for Money
- Governance and Financial Viability

Supporting Residents

Christine advised that the consultation would be the largest since pre transfer and that Cestria wants to ensure that residents are knowledgeable and feel comfortable with the whole process. In addition Cestria wants our tenants to receive independent advice and support to develop the local offers, consequently, we are asking our tenants if they prefer the services of an Independent Tenants Advisor?



Christine introduced Blase Lambert who is an Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA) with an organisation called Open Communities. Christine explained Blase could be available to support tenants through this whole process.

Blase (pronounced blaze) explained the role of an ITA and outlined his experience of the housing sector and more particularly his knowledge of the Tenant Services Authority and the development of the Regulatory Framework. Blase then held a question and answer session with the group



Blase Lambert (ITA)



Blase was then asked to leave the room and the residents were then asked two questions;

1. What do residents think about working with an ITA to support them through this process? **Answer:** The group said that they thought it was a good idea to work with an ITA.
2. Residents were then asked would they want us to go through a tendering process to appoint an ITA? **Answer:** The group felt that they could work with Blase rather than look elsewhere.

Christine then explained that a report would now go to Board to seek approval to support the Local Offers process and appoint an ITA.

Steering Group?

Lisa Coverdale then asked residents if they would like to form a Local Offers Steering Group. The Steering Group would consist of 1 or 2 people from each of the groups looking at the 6 standards. Residents thought that this was a good idea and agreed to give their names to David Jones by the end of the week if they would like to represent their group.



Next Steps



Christine explained that this initial meeting was very early in the process and no plans had yet been agreed on moving forward with developing Local Offers. We need to discuss with the six working groups how they will develop and how staff can be involved too and also involve the ITA. It was agreed that a wider consultation should take place, out in communities on local estates to involve as many tenants as possible.

Initially dates will be agreed with tenants and the ITA to set up a meeting in each of the six areas.

Would you like to get involved in the 'Big Say'?

If you would like more information about how you can get involved in the 'Big Say' please contact David 0191 385 1930 email davidjones@cestria.org or **Mary 0191 385 1931** email marybrennan@cestria.org.