

## **Rent Increase 2015/16 - Tenant Consultation**

Consultation with tenants about the proposed rent increase for 2015/16 has been undertaken through presentations to both the Rent and Welfare Reform Service Improvement Panel and the Tenant Panel.

The Rents and Welfare Reform Service Improvement Panel is a panel made up of twelve tenants. The group meet monthly together with service managers to develop and improve service delivery specifically in the areas of rent income and welfare reform.

The Tenant Panel was set up in 2012 when the Council started the housing options review. Consisting sixty tenant volunteers the Panel has been at the heart of the development of Northampton Partnership Homes. It will continue to work in partnership with the Council and NPH to further develop the housing service. Both panels are open to all tenants.

Each presentation covered the following:

- Why rents are reviewed each year
- How rents are set
- Government guidance on rent setting
- The end of rent restructuring and the changes to government guidance for 2015/16
- The proposed rent increase for 2015/16

The presentation to the Rents SIP was undertaken on the 14 November 2014. Nine of the twelve panel members were in attendance. The Panel raised no concerns about the proposed increase. Some panel members commented that they felt the increase to be fair and reasonable.

The presentation to the Tenant Panel was undertaken on the 2 December 2014. Thirty panel members were present. Again the Panel raised no concerns about the proposed increase. Those questions and concerns that were raised focused on matters surrounding Welfare Reform, levels of support available for tenants experiencing financial difficulty and the application of benefit sanctions by the DWP.