

## 1) WHAT IS TAROE?

***TAROE is a democratically run, accountable, national organisation which unites tenant and resident groups from social housing across England.***

***TAROE is run by tenants for tenants to represent and campaign for their interests and to ensure that all have the rights of access to well maintained, safe and secure homes.***

***We believe that all Tenants should be protected from unfair or unreasonable eviction. Tenants must have equal status to home owners and an equal partnership with their landlords, based on full participation, in all matters affecting their homes and surrounding environments***

## 2) TAROE's AIMS

TAROE aims to secure equal rights for all tenants. We aim to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of social housing, and to improve and protect the quality of life, social and environmental conditions, for everyone in our local communities

We will achieve these aims by;

- Uniting tenants groups across England, from all types of social Housing.
- Campaigning to enhance and protect tenants rights
- Raising awareness amongst policy makers of the concerns and issues which affect tenants wherever they live
- Providing leadership for the “tenants movement” to empower tenants at all levels
- Providing practical help, advice and information to support the development of representative tenant organisations
- Representing and promoting the interests of tenants to policy makers and the government
- Influencing the development and implementation of housing provision, policy and practice at local, regional and national levels, to promote good quality, accessible housing that will meet tenants needs and aspirations

## 3) BACKGROUND

### The History of TAROE

TAROE brings together the former National Tenants Organisation (NTO) and the former National Tenants and Residents Federation (NTRF) into one body to represent tenants from social housing across England

#### NTO (National Tenants Organisation)

The NTO was set up in 1976 to campaign for tenants rights in the public housing sector. NTO with the help of the National Consumer Council successfully campaigned for a “Tenants Charter” and much of what NTO called for was included in the legislation included in the 1980 Housing Act. NTO continued to promote the development of tenants’ rights at a local and national level and through its membership pioneered much good practice in relation to involvement and equality of opportunity for all tenants.

#### NTRF (National Tenants and Residents Federation)

NTRF was set up in 1988 by federations who were campaigning for greater investment in public housing. NTRF had much of the focus of its activities on council housing but also included housing association tenants in its membership. NTRF focused on the need for more good quality public sector housing, especially for elderly people and people with disabilities or special needs. Many of the leading members of NTRF represented authorities were federations had developed best practice in working in partnership with their landlords.

NTO and NTRF existed for many years as two separate bodies, although most of their aims and objectives were the same. They worked together on many projects including the possibility of developing a separate organisation to work in partnership with NTO and NTRF to represent the interests of housing association tenants

In 1992 NTO and NTRF developed a “Tenant Participation Charter” and in 1993 they campaigned together to try and protect tenants rights to be consulted as the government introduced proposals for Compulsory Competitive Tendering of housing management services. They joined forces many times to make representations to civil servants and the government about tenants’ rights and succeeded in getting meetings with Government Ministers and senior civil servants.

The main difference between the two groups were structural, with NTRF mainly being a “federation of Federations” and NTO including many individual tenants and residents organisations in its membership

#### Formation of TAROE

The NTO and NTRF met together to discuss the development of one organisation to provide information, help and support to all tenants, to campaign for full tenant consultation and involvement and for safe, secure and affordable homes, and to represent tenants’ views to government. After much detailed consultation with members, proposals were finally agreed to create one united body. This body TAROE, the Tenants And Residents Organisations Of England, a company limited by guarantee, was launched in the autumn of 1997.

## 4) THE WORK OF TAROE TO DATE

TAROE has over the past three years:

- Rewritten the Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- Rewritten the Policies and procedures.
- Restructured our Governance structure, introducing a smaller board of twelve with a robust selection and assessment criteria.
- Established an office and training centre in Runcorn.
- We have developed our membership base and our members now represent over 3.7 million tenants and residents.
- We have carried out major consultation exercises and will continue to develop this as a major driver for our future direction.
- We have developed a training package for tenants and housing professionals.
- Secured sponsorship from the private sector.
- Launched our “Friends of TAROE” scheme
- Appointed an Executive Director, Office Manager and Receptionist.
- Secured the assistance of Associates to help us deliver the developing agenda
- Developed our web site, [www.taroe.org](http://www.taroe.org).
- Created a data base of TAROE members and tenants who attend TAROE Conferences.
- Centralised all out business functions and introduced new financial controls.
- Established a video conferencing network linking Runcorn, Huddersfield, Derby and Camden..
- Held the first two “tenant only” National Conference and five Regional conferences.
- Sent out regular newsletters to our membership and contact database.

TAROE has played an important role in social housing since 1997 with members being representative on Government and other bodies such as

- The Sounding Board to develop Best Value and the Tenant Participation Compact
- DETR Best Value in Housing panel
- Several Government Task forces
- Giving evidence to House of Commons Select Committees
- Housing committee of the Local Government Association
- Housing Corporation’s Customer Panel
- Housing Sounding Board
- The digital TV group
- CLG TMO working party
- Law Commission group on the new national tenancy

There are currently;

- Members of the National Tenant Voice project Group
- Taking part in the Housing Revenue account review
- Taking part in the development of the Tenant Services Authority
- Taking part in the development of the Homes and Communities Agency

TAROE has provided responses to the Government’s consultation papers on housing issues, and has provided its responses to consultation on policy changes.

TAROE has campaigned on issues that concern tenants and has members on several campaign groups.

TAROE has spent the last four years developing as an organisation, this work will help us to fully engage in the developing housing agenda and to deliver excellent services to our members.

## 5) THE MARKET FOR TAROE'S SERVICES

### Government Policy

The government is placing great emphasis on tenant and resident empowerment. With the development of the Tenant Services Authority, the National Tenant Voice and the Homes and Communications Agency TAROE have achieved a greater recognition within the government's agenda. Local authorities and registered social landlords are now expected to create opportunities for collective involvement of tenants in all aspects of the delivery of their housing services. The best value in housing, regime and tenant participation compacts have created opportunities and challenges for both landlords and tenants. Tenants will need help and support to develop representative organisations and both landlords and tenants will need help in developing best practice.

### What TAROE has to offer!

TAROE has an enormous wealth of direct experience and expertise to offer to landlords and tenants and to other bodies and organisations. There are some significant differences about TAROE and the services which it can offer, which place it in a unique position in the market.

1. TAROE is the only recognised representative and national organisation of its kind in England run by tenants for tenants. Open to all tenants in the social housing sector, our members represent over 3.7 million people, bringing together the direct knowledge, experience and expertise of tenants themselves. TAROE therefore has unique knowledge and understanding of tenants' needs, of what works and what is likely to be of most help to tenants.
2. TAROE is able to introduce best practice and service improvement directly from the perspective of the service users and to share this understanding with other bodies, including landlords, who are working to improve services. By providing a mutual support network for tenants and tenants' organisations, TAROE can help tenants themselves to develop their own knowledge, skills and expertise.
3. From its direct experience, TAROE can provide information, advice, practical help, training, seminars and other services for tenants' and residents' groups and federations from both local authorities and registered social landlords. TAROE could also provide similar services for staff, councillors and committee members from across the social housing sector.
4. After building national awareness of TAROE, new relationships are being forged with the private sector mainly the major contractors and service providers to the social housing sector. New markets for TAROE in providing training and advice are now becoming a reality and the private sector has already shown a commitment to TAROE by buying services from us and providing sponsorship and support in kind
5. TAROE already has vast experience of working with the government, with Ministers and civil servants and with statutory and non-statutory bodies and with professional and

other bodies. The value which TAROE is able to offer to these bodies comes from the nature of its organisation and its ability to provide first hand experience to inform policy and practice development. With TAROE's data base a new and exciting consultation mechanism is being developed that will benefit all.

6. TAROE is a voluntary non profit making organisation, able to deliver value for money by working in partnership with other national and regional organisations and by using its own team of associates.