

Engaging with tenants: don't wait for regulation

13 September 2019

MANY TENANTS are still waiting to be given a voice in the governance and safety of their homes more than two years after Grenfell, says NFA Managing Director Eamon McGoldrick.

In his [comment piece for this week's Inside Housing](#), Eamon writes: "As we know, having strong representation at board level does not automatically mean good governance follows, as Kensington and Chelsea Management Organisation showed."

He adds that though the government response to the Grenfell tragedy promised social housing tenants a louder voice, and recent consultation on new building safety has put the onus on landlords to prove they listen to high-rise block residents, little has actually changed.

"We have had lots of fine words from politicians, but many are no longer involved in formulating housing policy. It will be interesting to see whether the latest set of ministers at the MHCLG pick up from the last ones and set a clear framework that all social landlords will have to follow."

Co-operation and real communication between residents and landlords is the key to good tenant engagement.

"ALMOs have always had strong tenant representation on their boards – a government requirement when they were set up," says Eamon.

"I have seen excellent tenant involvement in governance, and some included tenants being on consumer or scrutiny panels, rather than just being in board meetings.

"But all the best examples I've seen have been co-designed between landlord and tenants."

He is, however, gloomy about whether significant change can happen without regulation.

"There has rightly been a period of reflection and most landlords have reviewed how they communicate with tenants. But landlords should not be waiting for the government to set up a framework for tenant engagement.

"However, my long experience in housing tells me that unless the government regulates, some landlords will coast or pay lip-service to tenant engagement."

[ends]

Note to editors: The National Federation of ALMOs Ltd (NFA) represents England's 31 arms-length management organisations (ALMOs). ALMOs are not-for-profit council-owned housing companies that **manage nearly 420,000 council homes across 34 local authorities.**

First established in 2002 as part of the Government's Decent Homes programme, ALMO companies now work with their parent councils to deliver diverse housing services. These range from new-build development to support for residents' employability, financial resilience and health and well-being.

**For further information, please contact NFA press and communications officer Cheryl Stonehouse:
07944 458294/cheryl.stonehouse@almos.org.uk**