

Tenant Futures Grant Programme 2014-15

External evaluation of the National Communities
Resource Centre's Tenant Futures Grant
Programme for the Financial Year 2014-2015

CASereport 92

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About LSE Housing and Communities

LSE Housing and Communities is a research unit within the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics led by Professor Anne Power. CASE is a multi-disciplinary research centre which focuses on the exploration of different dimensions of social disadvantage, particularly from longitudinal and neighbourhood perspectives, examining the impact of public policy. We aim to understand the social dynamics of disadvantaged neighbourhoods; promote models of housing and neighbourhood management; develop ways to support communities and resident self-help action, especially in social housing areas; and shape government policy.

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1. Summary

The National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) at Trafford Hall has commissioned the London School of Economics to carry out an external evaluation of the Tenant Futures Grant Programme for the financial year April 2014 to March 2015.

Between May and July 2015, LSE carried out secondary analysis of administrative data provided by Trafford Hall, in-depth interviews with key informants, and semi-structured interviews with 11 grant recipients. The aim was to uncover the personal, as well as the wider group and community benefits, of the Tenant Futures Grant Programme, and to identify what works and what does not work in its implementation.

The evaluation shows that:

- The majority of the interviewees are not new to Trafford Hall courses, and many of them have an impressive training track record, making up for a group of **committed, skilled and knowledgeable individuals**. All interviewees praise Trafford Hall courses and think they have benefitted their groups in one way or another, in particular because they have allowed them to make a **decisive step forward in the running of their organisation**. They would all recommend the Trafford Hall experience to other tenants.
- The majority of the applicants for the grant have been **awarded what they asked for**, and think the **grant money was enough**. The majority of the interviewees say that the grant has made a **huge difference**, and that they **would have not been able to implement their project** without it.
- Seven out of 11 interviewees did not know about the grant opportunity beforehand, and of those who knew it (4), only one says it influenced her decision to attend. The majority of those interviewed think the **application form was easy and straightforward to complete**, and that **the application process was quick and efficient**.
- The majority of those interviewed say their landlords were willing to **cover all or most costs incurred for the training**. Seven out of 11 maintain they felt encouraged and supported by their landlord, while the remaining four state the help they received was merely financial.
- All interviewees report that the grant, and the subsequent project they implemented, has had a beneficial impact on their groups, since they were able to either **establish themselves more or work more efficiently**. The majority of those interviewed report an **improved relationship with their landlord**. Seven out of 11 feel they now have **more influence on the decision-making process**.
- The 9 projects implemented by July 2014 **directly benefitted 725 tenants across England**, which means that an average of £8 was spent on each tenant. Anecdotal evidence is provided by all interviewees of **indirect benefits to wider tenant communities**, thanks to

more efficient scrutiny panels or stronger Tenants and Residents Associations. It has been estimated that **up to 112,500 households across England could potentially indirectly benefit from the grants** evaluated in this report. It has been extrapolated that the value for money of each scrutiny panel investigation, if landlords were to act upon tenants' recommendations, could be an **average savings of £13,340** for a housing provider of around 6,000 households.

- All interviewees mention that the Trafford Hall experience greatly **contributed to their personal development**, opening their eyes to **new things** (7), helping them to become more **confident and outspoken** (6), and changing their **attitudes** (2).

Based on the findings, the report concludes that:

- Overall, the Trafford Hall training and grant programmes **work well**. The evidence shows that the whole Trafford Hall 'experience' is **hugely beneficial**, both to tenant groups and individual participants, as well as landlords. The grant opportunity, although it does not have any substantial bearing on why they decide to attend, is regarded by tenants as a plus the Trafford Hall training.
- The funding application process is dealt with **quite efficiently**. The **application form is straightforward**, and Trafford Hall staff are easily accessible and supportive whenever applicants need clarifications.
- The Tenant Futures Grant Programme attached to the training is often the **only funding source available to tenants**, and it makes a **huge difference** to them. **A sum of up to £1,000 per group is enough** to allow tenants to be ambitious in the development of their ideas, and to properly put them into practice.
- The evidence shows that the money awarded is usually well managed and wisely spent. The funded projects have **massive direct and indirect benefits**, and can increase the potential **value for money for landlords**.
- Landlords are usually quite supportive of tenant groups, and in a few instances willing to financially contribute towards their projects. Four interviewees, however, stated that they **did not feel encouraged by their landlords**. More could be done to build the case for landlords to show **potential return on investment** of encouraging tenants to attend training, and to support the implementation of their projects. It would also be important to encourage landlords to start monitoring value for money with regard to tenant scrutiny.

In light of its potential value for money, and the personal and wider community benefits which result from the grants, it would be very advantageous to have a grant programme attached to any future Tenant Futures programme.

To conclude, the report recommends that landlords are brought into the learning curve which is the Trafford Hall experience by making them aware of the potential value for money of the scrutiny role

of tenants. It would be very useful if landlords could **pull their positive experience of tenant scrutiny together**, for example via a newsletter, which could be coordinated by Trafford Hall.

2. Introduction to Trafford Hall training

Tenant Futures training

Since 2000, the National Communities Resource Centre (NCRC) has been running a series of community training and tenant empowerment programmes at Trafford Hall, a residential training and conference centre in Wimbolds Trafford, near Chester. These programmes have been funded by different sources, included the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), for the benefit of council and housing association tenants across the UK.

The Tenant Futures programme has been delivered since October 2011, and it is fully funded by DCLG. The courses reach out to social housing tenants living in low income communities in England, and offer them low-cost residential training delivered by experienced trainers on different housing-related topics. Some of its courses are accredited up to Level 2 via Open College Network London.

The purpose of the Tenant Futures training programme is to allow members of community groups and tenant panels to build their confidence, learn new skills, and gain up-to-date knowledge. This empowers tenants to better understand housing, neighbourhood and policy issues, and to act upon them for the benefit of their communities and the wider society.

Grant programme

A grant programme is attached to the Tenant Futures programme. Tenant groups who attend Trafford Hall training are given the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £1,000 to capitalise on what they have learnt during the courses, and to put follow-on projects into practice. They could be anything from organising training days to purchasing IT equipment, as long as they are linked to the aims of tenant empowerment, and based on the topic covered in the course attended.

3. Methodology

Research framework

The Tenant Futures training and grant programme has been subject to three external evaluations, one carried out in 2011, a second one in 2013, and a third one in 2014. This research has drawn on these previous studies for background information.

LSE evaluation has a qualitative focus on the impacts of the Trafford Hall grant programme on personal development of individual participants, benefits for their groups, and wider impacts on their communities and the broader society (what we call 'ripple effect').

Research methods

The LSE research project involved the secondary analysis of quantitative administrative data provided by Trafford Hall.

Qualitative evidence came from:

- In-depth interviews with key informants (the Assistant Chief Executive and the Course & Grant Programme Co-ordinator at Trafford Hall, along with two trainers);
- 11 semi-structured interviews with grant recipients. Nine were face to face interviews, while two were phone interviews. The study included nine site visits.

Groups/interviewees were purposively selected to ensure a wide enough geographical and typological spread of the sample:

- Five were based in the North West;
- Two in South East and London;
- Two in Yorks & Humber;
- Two in the South West.

Of which:

- Four were scrutiny panels/boards;
- Three were Tenants and Residents Associations;
- Three were tenant involvement/participation groups within councils;
- One was an umbrella organisation bringing together various Tenants and Residents Associations.

The interviews were all between one and two hours long. They were all recorded with people's permission. Whenever possible, interview data was complemented with the analysis of groups' grant applications and monitoring forms provided by Trafford Hall. This was not possible for those groups that had not completed monitoring forms at that stage. All interviews were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for the analysis.

4. Findings & grant stories

Evidence of implementation

A total of 39 training courses were run in the financial year April 2014 to March 2015, of which 16 (41%) were accredited, and 23 (59%) were not accredited.

Table 1: Courses 2014-2015

Non accredited	23	59%
Accredited	16	41%
TOTAL	39	100%

Most courses were run by Engage Associates (14), followed by Burkitt Vernell (9), Choosing Change (8), Make it Happen (3), GOGY (2), TPAS (2), and Fresh Team (1).

Table 2: Trainers

Engage	14 courses
Burkitt Vernell	9 courses
Choosing Change	8 courses
Make it Happen	3 courses
GOGY	2 courses
TPAS	2 courses
Fresh Team	1 courses
TOTAL	39 courses

In Appendix 1 there is a full list of accredited and non-accredited courses run between April 2014 and March 2015, with dates and details of training providers. 11 out of 39 courses were run twice, while 17 were run once.

As Table 3 shows, a total of 750 tenants were trained between April 2014 and March 2015, an average of 19 per course. 269 (36%) of them undertook accreditation. 36% tenants were new to Trafford Hall, as opposed to 64% who had already been on Trafford Hall courses before.

Table 3: Performance Indicators to March 2015

Performance Indicator	Actual to March 2015
No Courses run	39
No tenants to be trained	750
Proposed tenants new to TH	36%
Number of accredited courses	16
Number of tenants undertaking accreditation	269

Use of funds

In order to apply for a grant, there are a few conditions that groups must comply with:

- They must be a constituted group;
- They must have permission from the rest of the group;
- They understand that if the money is granted to them, then it is their responsibility to spend it on what they have applied for.

Grants are awarded upon completion of an application form, which is given to participants during each training course. A 'grant talk' is delivered by the Course & Grant Programme Co-ordinator to encourage delegates to apply for grants and explain to them the conditions attached. Once they have been received, the application forms are assessed by the Assistant Chief Executive and the Course & Grant Programme Co-ordinator at Trafford Hall based on the following considerations:

- How is it linked to tenant empowerment?
- How many tenants does it involve?
- What is the benefit of it to the wider community?
- Is it linked to the course they have been on?
- Has the group had a previous grant within the same round? If so, what was the amount?

As Table 4 shows, out of a total of 65 applications received, 13 were refused and 3 were discontinued by tenants.

Table 4: Ratio applied for grant/refused

Awarded	49
Refused	13
Discontinued	3
TOT applications received	65

Reasons for refusing the grant are usually:

- Project is not linked to tenant empowerment;
- Project is outside the scope of tenant participation or not linked to the course;
- Project has the potential to bring TH into disrepute or litigation;
- Project should already be funded by the landlord.

The running total available for grants in the financial year April 2014 to March 2015 was £32,118. The money was spent in full, with only £0.28 left.

49 grants were awarded to 46 different groups, with an average of £655 for each group. Three groups (Brighton & Hove Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Cheshire East Federation of Tenant and Resident Associations, and Chelford TARA) were given the opportunity to apply twice because they had applied for the first grant before the maximum award was increased up to £1,000. This increase was done halfway through the financial year 2014-15 to incentivise more groups to apply for the grant.

Last year they changed the amount groups could apply for half way through the year, we brought it up to £1,000, while before it was up to £500. So what we did - some groups that

perhaps hadn't had the entire £1,000 we allowed them to apply for two up to £500 within the year, to make it more fair and equitable for those who had already applied for a grant, so they could sort of like top it up (Trafford Hall Assistant Chief Executive).

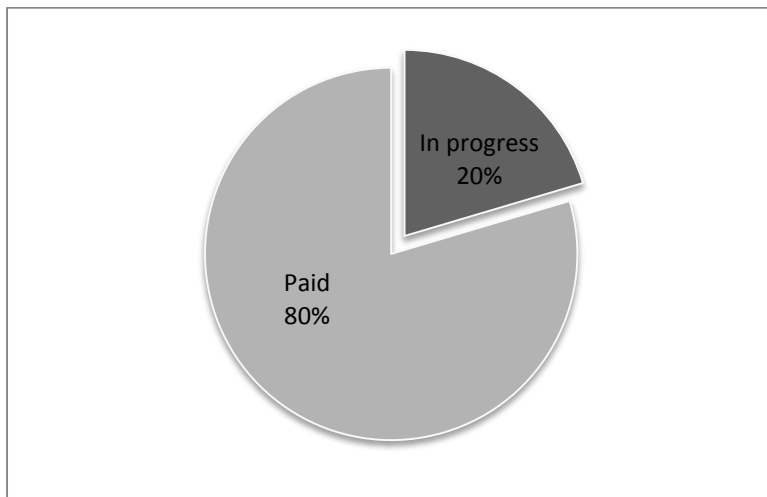
As Table 5 shows, the actual number of grants awarded is less than the Government target for the financial year. This is because the target was set taking into account a maximum of £500 per grant.

Table 5: Grant outputs against Government targets for 2014-2015

Performance Indicator	Target	Actual to March 2015	%
No. small grants awarded	68	49	72%

Table 6 shows that 10 out of 49 (20%) grants were still in progress (i.e. still going through administrative process) by June 2015. 39 out of 49 (80%) grants had already been paid.

Table 6: Grants paid or in progress by June 2015



As Table 7 shows, 47% of the grants were awarded to tenant groups in the North West, 12% to tenant groups in the South East and London, and 10% to tenant groups in Yorks and Humber, West Midlands, South West and East Midlands.

Table 7: Grants awarded by region (England)

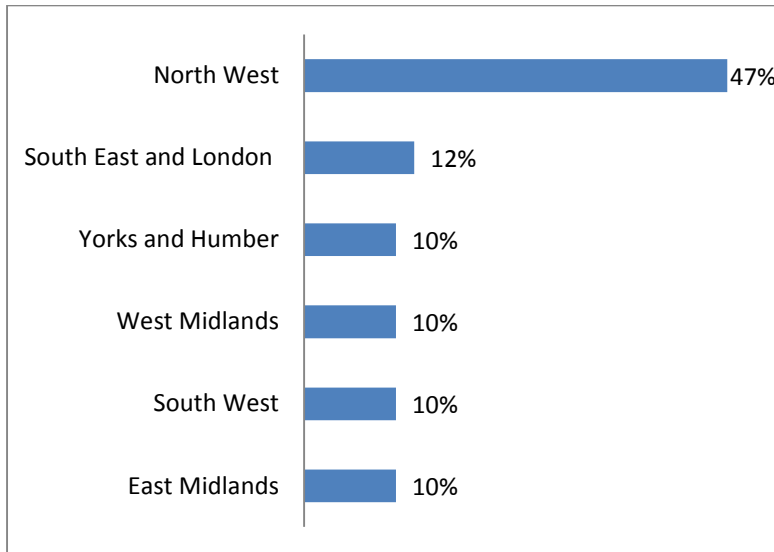
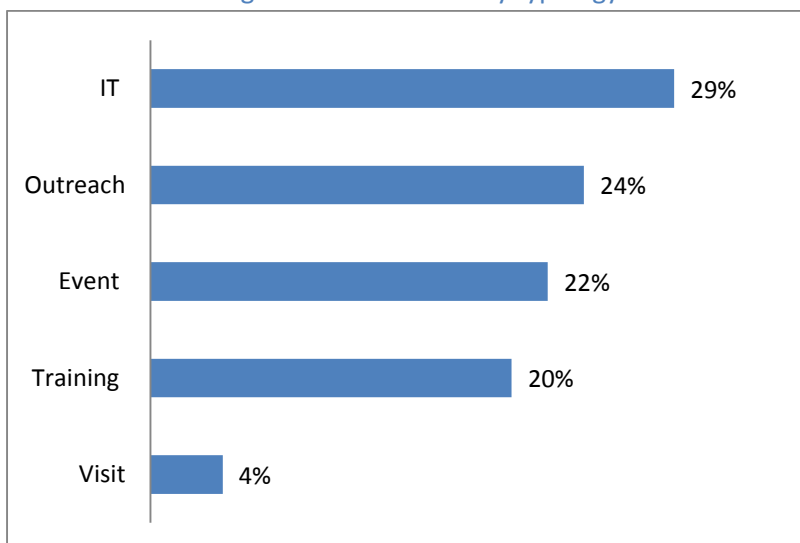


Table 8 shows the breakdown of grants by typology:

- 29% (14 out of 49) of grants were awarded towards the purchase of IT equipment, such as tablets, dictaphones or mobile phones to help the group to establish itself, and run its activities more efficiently;
- 24% (12 out of 49) of grants were awarded to aid outreach work to promote the group in the community (promotional material or events explicitly meant to promote the group within the community);
- 22% (11 out of 49) of grants were awarded for setting up events, such as conferences, open days or other social activities to engage the community, impart knowledge, or raise the group's profile with local partners, including the landlord;
- 20% (10 out of 49) of grants were awarded to sponsor further training for the group;
- 4% (2 out of 49) of grants were awarded towards the organisation of visits to other tenant groups to use as benchmark.

Table 8: How is the grant used? Grants by typology



In Appendix 2 there is the full list of grants awarded in the financial year April 2014 to March 2015, with specification of the amount given, type of grant, and project outline. The majority (32 out of 46, or 70%) of the groups who received the grant had already been on Trafford Hall courses.

Some groups now get it right straight away because some groups have now been coming on courses since Making Communities Work, which was the predecessor of Tenant Futures, so they know our process. Repeat grant recipients tend to get it right more often than get it wrong, it's generally when we get new groups that are applying for things. A lot of time it is about widening the scope of what they want to do, and most of the time what they want to do is really good (Trafford Hall Assistant Chief Executive).

Trafford Hall courses

Eight out of 11 interviewees had already been on Trafford Hall training, while three were new to it. Four were chairs of their groups, four secretaries, two panel or committee members, and one was a resident volunteer. Seven of those interviewed had an **impressive training track record dating back several years**. This included Trafford Hall training, as well as training provided by TPAS, and in-house training provided by their landlord.

Seven of those interviewed mentioned **that other members of their groups** had been on Trafford Hall courses.

Our TRA members have been on 15 courses altogether.

We've been on 34 courses altogether [as a panel].

They mentioned building the **habit of imparting to other group members the knowledge and skills** they gained on courses.

You only need one in a group to pass on information and enable others to get on with it.

We always share our experiences [...]. As a group we decide who is going on the course and then share with the rest of the group.

All interviewees unanimously said that attending Trafford Hall training had **benefitted their group in one way or another**. Six of those interviewed explicitly mentioned the **value of sharing ideas, experiences and best practices** with other groups as a plus of going on Trafford Hall courses. This is said to inspire and motivate them to try out new ways of doing things.

The ideas you could get from other people are fantastic; some people are blinkered but there is no such a word as impossible.

I find the biggest thing about these courses is that you're talking to other residents and finding out how they do things, they do things differently and if it works for them it might be worth trying for us - to me it's the biggest plus of going on these course, not the actual

course itself but actually getting together and talking to other tenants; there are ways to do things that we weren't doing

Trafford Hall is brilliant because you learn from what other people are doing; you think oh that's sounds easy enough.

All interviewees state that the knowledge and the skills they have gained from Trafford Hall training meant that they were able to make a **decisive step forward** in the running of their organisations.

It allowed me as chair to understand more what scrutiny is and for me to impart and to pass that on to other members of the group.

It helped the group to flourish - people before were scared, now confidence has blossomed.

Two of us went on the course - we learnt a lot about legislation and the way residents are expected to scrutinise their housing provider, [...] and we realised that we were a lot behind.

We got the Code of Conduct which we didn't have to start with, that is brilliant, meetings are much more efficient now.

[The training helped] to understand better how to deal with different people's behaviour and manage meetings better - we didn't know before how chairing was or how to run a TRA

All interviewees unanimously said that they **would recommend the Trafford Hall experience to others.**

Courses are excellent, within reach cost wise, you get so much from them; courses are fantastic and inspire people to do stuff.

It's a fantastic place, the trainers know their job [...] - I hope the TH training keeps going, it's quite unique and they do their best to help.

Projects

Out of the 11 grant recipients interviewed, three were awarded two grants each¹, - a total of 14 grants for 12 different projects. Two groups decided to join forces and applied for funding towards setting up two joint events. Two out of 12 projects were still in the pipeline and due to be implemented over summer 2015.

One grant went towards the purchase of IT equipment, eight towards setting up community events, and five towards organising training days for group members.

¹ Three groups were awarded two grants up to £1,000 in the financial year 2014-15, due to their first grant application being submitted before Trafford Hall increased the maximum amount to £1,000.

In 11 out of 14 instances, the applicants were awarded what they had asked for, while in three instances they received less than what they had applied for. **Ten out of 11 interviewees said that the grant they were awarded was enough**, although three added that they would have done with more. Only one interviewee said her group was quite disappointed about the small amount of money awarded compared to what they had asked for.

The majority (8) of the interviewees said they would have **not been able to implement their project if it had not been for the Trafford Hall grant**. Three out of 11 said they would have been able to raise funds through their landlord for instance, but it would have taken longer and it would have been more difficult. **All interviewees said that accessing the grant made a big difference**.

Without that I don't know how we would have paid for the hall to be honest; without it I don't think we could have gone on, 'cause trying to raise funds for things that people don't know about is difficult.

We would have not be able to host the information day, and we wouldn't have had the security to be able to set out monthly meetings knowing that they would go ahead.

I'm not saying we wouldn't have got the money, we would have had to go to the council but it would have been harder.

We could have done it but the council would have had to pay for it, it would have not taken off the ground.

Funding application and process

Seven out of 11 interviewees were not aware of the grant opportunity before they attended the course. Of those who knew it (4), only one said it influenced her decision to attend.

The majority (10 out of 11) of those interviewed said the **application form was easy and straightforward to complete**.

Seven out of 11 interviewees said they did not need help from Trafford Hall staff when filling in the form. Four said they needed advice from staff, and that **they were helpful**.

Yes - rang up over a couple of points, they clarified what was needed.

Yes - general advice because we didn't have a bank account so they had to go through the council

The majority (10 out of 11) interviewees said the **application process was quick and efficient**. Only one interviewee complained that it was too long.

Landlords

All interviewees said their **landlords paid for the training and for all or most expenses incurred**, such as travel expenses.

Seven out of 11 interviewees felt **encouraged and supported by their landlord**, while four felt the help they received from their landlord was merely financial.

Six interviewees said their landlords were prompted to contribute towards their project as a result of the course, and in some instances were even willing to match-fund the grant money.

Outcomes for the group

All interviewees felt that accessing the Trafford Hall grant was crucial for their groups to take a positive step forward to develop their work. Six out of 11 interviewees felt they were able to **promote themselves to the wider public**. Five mentioned they were able to **update their skills and/or gain new skills**, allowing them to **work more efficiently as a group**.

Nine out of 11 reported that **their relationship with their landlord had changed** through enhancing communication and mutual respect.

A lot of the council people I get on with - I think as you long as you know what you are talking about...and that has been a big problem in the tenant movement in Brighton, there is a lot of tenant reps who don't know what they are talking about and also they start shouting and that's where the bad feelings are but now as far as I'm concerned there seems to be respect both ways.

We've grown with them, now they are supportive, before it was quite confrontational, now people are less aggressive and we normally get everything we ask for.

Yes - it made me recognise what they need to provide, that residents have the right to challenge, and that we can say thank you when they do well - it's good for the staff to feel valued. Now we go and report to the Board, where we can have access to answers/info straight away, we can sit down with the Chief Executive and see him on the day if we need to - it makes us feel valued.

Yes - much better, now we know each other on a first name basis, they class me as one of them, there is much more respect.

Seven out of 11 said that, thanks to the Trafford Hall experience, they feel they can have **more influence on the decision-making process**.

Yes, definitely – we have a higher profile and credibility.

Yes, certainly. We were involved in the Strategic Plan being put together last summer; and we took part in the selection process for the Deputy Director of Housing and Asset Management.

Yes - we know much more what we are talking about now, before the council was leading us, now we can lead ourselves

Ripple effect

The 9 projects implemented (at July 2015) by the interviewees as a result of the Tenant Futures grant programme **directly benefitted approximately 725 tenants**, including both group members and community members. This is an average of £8 spent on each tenant (£655x9:725).

There are usually between 60-90 people in the first session, and 30-60 people in the second session - over 100 people each week on a Friday night. It benefits families, adults, kids and teenagers. Over 500 people have attended.

79 people attended (53 attendees, 14 speakers, 12 committee members/volunteers) - everyone felt they had some sort of benefits out of there

The event took place on the 7th of May 2014, it was a one-day training session on 'Meetings and Committee Skills'. It brought people together and helped them to manage their meetings - we had positive feedback and in particular the fact that the Code of Conduct was a godsend, they were very pleased with it.

Although there is no direct evidence to be able to extrapolate an overall number of tenants who had an indirect benefit from the grants, all interviewees provided anecdotal evidence of **indirect benefits to wider tenant communities**. This was through more efficient scrutiny panels or stronger Tenants and Residents Associations.

The work we do goes out to the wider tenant movement.

The whole community benefits - asking the right questions can make officers think differently, now nothing we say gets dismissed.

This is because:

- Grants that help scrutiny panels and tenant involvement groups within councils to become more efficient and assertive could potentially indirectly benefit all tenants of the landlord's housing stock by **increasing the standard of the services** that they receive.
- Grants that help Tenant and Resident Associations and Federations of TRAs to become more established have the potential to indirectly benefit all tenants of an estate or in a geographical area. This can be done by setting up events to **engage people in the community** and to **overcome social isolation**, or to **spread valuable knowledge and information** on different topics.

Based on the considerations above – that each social housing tenant could have the potential to indirectly benefit from a more efficient scrutiny panel or from a stronger TRA, it can be estimated

that **up to 112,500 households across England could *potentially* indirectly benefit from the grants** evaluated in this report.

The strongest evidence on value for money of the scrutiny role of tenants comes from the Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel, whose Chair states that:

Through our work all Cobalt Housing tenants benefit. Cobalt estimated that thanks to implementing our recommendations they have saved £66,700 up to April 2013. Cobalt Housing said this is what you've saved us, so there are wider community benefits thanks to the improvements made based on our reports.

Based on this figure, it can be extrapolated that the value for money of each scrutiny panel investigation, if the landlord was to act upon tenants' recommendations, could reach an **average savings of £13,340** for a housing provider of around 6,000 households.

All interviewees reported having **ambitious projects in their pipeline**. Five out of 11 said they are willing to seek further funding.

We've got another three years on that, we intend to look deeper into things that we do and we want to do quality not quantity, so if it takes 15 months to do a scrutiny that's what is takes!

We've still got some money left from the 2nd grant and would like to use them in recruitment of new members - drawing up questions, leaning how to conduct interviews and how to sit on an interview panel. We've got to get the recruitment done before we get anything else done, before we look at any other part of the housing and when that happens we'll be asking tenants what they want us to look at...but we want to make sure we have the right people on the panel first.

We would like to set up some exercise activities for people to get together.

We are setting up a half-day conference on the Wider World with Tim Morton (Engage) on 28th of July; and we want to organise another conference by the end of the year with round table discussions.

We want to organise a holiday camp - some people in the community have children who have never been away. We've already applied for funding.

We are writing an in-house volunteering course (still in the process of researching it); we want to set up a skills bank; we want to continue with scrutiny and catch up with the time we've wasted; we want to continue to do a minimum of 3 projects a year to present to the Board; we want to continue to recruit up to 15 members.

Personal development

All interviewees were **exceptionally committed and skilled individuals**, determined to make a difference in their communities, and to make a positive impact on the public realm.

All interviewees mentioned that participating in Trafford Hall courses and accessing the grant greatly **contributed to their personal development**. They all said that going on courses at Trafford Hall changed their way of thinking in one way or another.

Seven out of 11 interviewees mentioned that **they learnt things they did not know**, while six said they **became more confident and outspoken**. Two mentioned that thanks to the Trafford Hall experience **their attitude changed** as they learnt the value of patience and tolerance.

It showed me that I have a tendency to put myself down...I suddenly realised hang on you're not as dumb as you think, you can learn something even if you are in your late 60s, it's never too late, you can be useful - and it has built my confidence up, it really has.

It made me more confident – I was shy and timid. It [the Trafford Hall experience] made me become more confident to apply for grants and ask for things, I'm hell of a lot more confident.

I felt empowered. It increased my confidence level; it gave me the opportunity to become a leader and have a purpose again.

I feel more confident in myself, can talk now, can do speeches.

I'm normally the quieter person, it made me open up. I feel more confident to speak [in a group setting].

I think over the three years I've calmed down a lot, I don't react to things that annoy me, I think I get on quite well with most of the council people we work with, I'm not trying to prove anything, I'm polite...; the Secretary told me [...] that I've changed, I've learnt not to react on things and to let things go- I think I've grown up a bit personally.

Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (CEFTRA)

The group

The Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (CEFTRA) is an umbrella organisation which brings together different TRAs within the Cheshire East area. CEFTRA evolved from a Steering Group, with its first minuted meeting dated December 2013. It has 12 active members. Quite a few Housing Associations are represented amongst its ranks such as Peak and Planes Housing Trust, Regenda, and Great Places. The Federation's aim is to get tenant representatives from each housing association in the Cheshire East area, and is working towards this.

CEFTRA's main aims are to promote tenants' rights and to act as an intermediary to advocate on people's behalf:

Those of us who were involved had become more and more aware that there is a lot of people who don't know what they are entitled to, one way or another whether it's in benefits or in housing - because we are in the community you hear people's likes and dislikes, the problems they are having which might not get to the people who have the responsibility, so basically [we set up the Federation] to be an intermediary and take people's concerns on board. [...] There are a lot of people who are neglected who fall through the net - it's those people who are afraid to ask, it was really a concern about that. And some had already been on Trafford Hall training so we thought surely there is something that we can do.

Applicant on behalf of the group

The application came from Barbara, Membership Secretary of CEFTRA. She applied for the grant following the Wider World course held on 19-21 March 2014.

She has been on several training courses at Trafford Hall and she thinks they have all been eye opening experiences. She says has gained a lot of confidence, and her self-esteem has increased considerably. Before she would not even dare to speak in public, while now she feels confident and knowledgeable enough to speak up at conferences. She strongly believes that 'information is power'. Since she has been on Trafford Hall courses she has started to write to housing managers and to DCLG to express her views about things which she thinks are wrong.

I suddenly realised hang on you're not as dumb as you think, you can learn something even if you are in your late 60s, it's never too late, you can be useful and it has built my confidence up, it really has.

Project

CEFTRA wanted to set up a one-day conference to promote the Federation in partnership with Chelford TARA, one of its most active members. The conference was intended as a launch event

to make the Federation known to the Cheshire East community, and impart the things learnt on the *Wider World* and *You and Your Community Rights* courses, onto as many people as possible.

CEFTRA applied for £437 and was awarded £437 to hire the hall, buy refreshment, print conference packs, and purchase insurance public liability and laminating pouches for outdoor posters. Chelford TARA applied for £399 and was awarded £399 to buy roller banners, staging, lectern, microphone and mixer. They also received monetary and in-kind support from a couple of sponsors. They say that the event could not go ahead without the Trafford Hall grant.

Without that I don't know how we would have paid for the hall to be honest; Without it I don't think we could have gone on, 'cause trying to raise funds for things that people don't know about...if it's already a charity which is in existence then they know what they are contributing to, but if you say that you are fundraising for a federation or for a conference, then what's the point? They want to know what it is for. And talking won't do anything, you've got to show. But having the grant, getting that conference off the ground [...] that grant made all the difference.

Outcomes



The conference, entitled “Your Home, Your Voice, Your Rights”, took place on 25th September 2014 at the Hall at Marthall, near Knutsford. It lasted from 11am until 4pm and it involved an introductory talk about CEFTRA, a series of snapshot sessions delivered by various organisations (such as TrustLink, Silk Like Food Bank, Trafford Hall, Age UK Cheshire, TAROE), and information sessions on Community Cashback, community recycling projects and other relevant topics. It was attended by 79 people, of which 53 tenants, 14 speakers, and 12 committee members/volunteers. Barbara was invited to give a talk on *Anti-Social Behaviour from a Tenants View*, for which she drew on the knowledge and experience she gained at Trafford Hall.



It took months of preparation but at the end it was a success. CEFTRA feels they achieved what their aim was, which was to make them known to the Cheshire East community. They received very positive feedback from the majority of attendees who completed the evaluation forms, which assessed the content of the day, the speakers/sessions and the overall set up as either good or excellent.

The conference put the name of the federation out there. At least now a lot of people know about us, they know that we just want to be an informative group - well that's my aim, information is power, it's having control over your own circumstances [...]; It was a good effort all around, it was a good combined effort really. If it's only people coming back and saying oh I didn't know that, that's a good outcome. And it did have a motivational effect I think because like the recycle furniture someone said we could do that! And it sort of learning what other people are doing, and they are only people like you, so therefore if they can, we can, and I think that's happened over a few things I think.

Both CEFTRA and Chelford TARA applied for another Trafford Hall grant to organise a half-day conference on the Wider World with Engage Associates on 28th of July. They are also planning to host another conference by the end of 2015. They want to carry on with what they are doing, look for new opportunities/ideas, and try to recruit more volunteers.

Commentary

This is a good example of how the grant money can help groups to establish themselves more in the community and to get projects off the ground. The first Federation conference was important to promote the newly formed group in the Cheshire East area. This enables them to organise more events through local fundraising opportunities.

Ellergreen TARA

The group

Ellergreen Tenant and Resident Association (TARA) represent around 600 households within an estate located in the deprived Norris Green area of Liverpool, which is owned and managed by Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH). Over the last decade, the area has undergone substantial redevelopment, with hundreds of houses being demolished and new ones being built. Ellergreen TARA evolved from the previous Winskill Road TARA, which had originally been set up 23 years ago. It was constituted in 2014 when residents drew a new constitution and opened a new bank account.

Ellergreen TARA's main aim is to organise social activities for residents to get together and to create a community spirit now that new families have moved in. The TARA is made up of 10 committee members and 15 volunteers. They are supported by the Norris Green Community Alliance, which is a charity set up in 2006 as an umbrella organisation bringing together eight TRAs in the Norris Green area. Its main aim is to reach out to people across the community and help TRAs with project development.

Applicant on behalf of the group

The application came from Claire, who is a resident in Norris Green and started volunteering for the Ellergreen TRA last year. She applied for the grant following the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating course held on 16-17 October 2014. She was encouraged to go on Trafford Hall courses by Denise, the Community Development Officer for the Norris Green Community Alliance. Denise did a course at Trafford Hall in 2007, and since then has been encouraging TRA members and volunteers to attend.

Claire is now in charge of the roller skating project, and also works part time for the Norris Green Community Alliance. Until a couple years ago she had been out of work for a long time. She says she used to be very shy and timid, but thanks to the training at Trafford Hall and her most recent volunteering and work experience, she has grown in confidence and developed fundraising expertise.

[Going on the course] made me become more confident to apply for grants and ask for things, I'm hell of a lot more confident, which is good for me as well as for the community.

Project

Ellergreen TARA wanted to buy skates to ensure that the community roller-skating sessions, originally piloted in December 2014 in the Lifestyles Ellergreen Leisure Centre, could be sustainable in the long term. The sessions proved to be extremely popular and Claire thought about raising money to buy the skates and ensure the continuity of the project. At the time there was only one session every fortnight, due to the high costs of hiring the skates and getting someone to put the music on and supervise the sessions.

The group applied for the Trafford Hall grant and was awarded £921 towards buying skates. They were able to raise another £116 by local fundraising, and partnered with a Leisure Centre to continue lending them roller skates whilst they were trying to buy their own. They also received a generous grant from their landlord, Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH), to allow them to buy more skates, for a total of 100 boots. The grant money, together with the other sources of funding, allowed them to cover the total cost of the project (£1757.24) which on top of buying the skates involved buying disco lights, a live/dj controller, and room hire for 10 weeks. They think the grant was enough and they would not carry on without it.

Outcomes



The Roller Disco project now runs two sessions per week (on Fridays from 6 till 8.15pm), and is very popular and well attended. It involves all age groups, families, adults and teenagers. There are usually between 60-90 people in the first session, and 30-60 people in the second session, for a total over 100-150 people each week. Over 500 people in the Norris Green community have attended so far, and they are always attracting new people. They are now asking people to contribute £1 each, which goes towards hiring the hall for the session.



Feedback from local authorities is positive that a residents' group has been able to set this up. Even the local police – they popped in because obviously people are there on a Friday night, they are not outside on the streets. I think a community benefit is less anti-social behaviour, because in the second session you tend to get teenage boys and girls, they bring their own skates and they don't need supervising, so they all come along without the parents when they would normally be walking around the streets, hang around in gangs...now they've got something to do on a Friday night instead. As well as all the other aspects of it being healthy and fun and active. And it's also good for the community to meet up because I've lived here for 30 odd years but there are still people in the community I don't know – since I've been in there I know everybody! So it's good to bring the community together. People who wouldn't normally mix with each other are mixing 'cause they see each other in there.

Ellergreen TRA has recently applied with a charity for holiday grants for children. Some people in the community have children who have never been away, so they want to organise a holiday camp in the summer.

Commentary

This is a shining example of personal development and of a successful community project led and run by volunteers.

Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel



The group

The Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel was set up in 2011 to scrutinise and improve landlord's services, making recommendations and demanding that they are acted upon. They represent 6,000 households in Liverpool. The panel has grown considerably over the past years. There are 13 panel members altogether, and they are looking to recruit two more.

They have completed four reports (Block Cleaning Service, Property Pool Plus, Complaints and Recycling) and they now manage their own budget of £10,000. The Panel has won two CSI awards in 2014: the *Most Inspiring Scrutiny Panel – North of England Award*, and the *Most Inspiring Communicators Award*. The latter is in recognition of the panel's effective use of social media, blogs and website, as well as customer newsletters, which inform other tenants about the work they do and the results they achieve.

Applicant on behalf of the group

The application came from Lerry, Chair of Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel since 2011. He is very proud of what they have achieved as a group and says they are a 'fantastic, outstanding team' of highly committed, skilled and experienced people. He has done extensive training with TPAS, CSI and Trafford Hall. He was awarded the TPAS *Tenant of the Year Award* in March 2015. He has been invited by Rachel Vernell to give presentations at Trafford Hall to inspire other scrutiny panels.

Project

Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel wanted to apply for the grant to buy tablets to go paperless (they believe that 'waste is a sin'), and facilitate communication and information sharing between group members. The idea came out of a visit to a neighbouring Tenant Panel where all members had tablets, which was part of a benchmarking exercise.

They were awarded £500, which allowed them to buy four tablets. The Trafford Hall grant prompted Cobalt to buy them another nine, which means that each panel member now has got a tablet.

Getting the grant was very important, within 3 months we all had tablets – it showed them the benefits and persuaded them to purchase others.

Outcomes

The panel is now working more efficiently thanks to better communication between members and better use of technology (i.e. coveilance system and social media). This means that tenants get better value for money services, thanks to their recommendations being acted upon by their landlord.

Cobalt has estimated savings over £700 a year from going paperless, and that they have saved an impressive £66,700 up to April 2013 thanks to implementing the panel recommendations.

Now there is no postage, everything is online, all is paperless. Cobalt Housing estimated that we are saving them £700 a year because of no postage, no paper, no ink. So the money they contributed were paid off! Our scrutiny panel is now very much up to speed with technological advances - we have just implemented a Coveilance computer tool to monitor performance of staff and hold managers accountable. Now there is better communication with each other and with Cobalt, and we are on social media to promote our work (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). Some panel members still find it difficult to use the tablets, my grandchild has done a couple of sessions with them. We also work more efficiently – we are in constant communication with each other, and it's good because we don't live close. We can talk to each other via Skype and people can apply online.

Commentary

This is a very interesting example of the exceptional value for money of outstanding tenant scrutiny.

Resident Scrutiny Panel – Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust

The group

The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) Residents Scrutiny Panel was set up in 2013. It covers 2,700 properties in York. They have completed three reports so far, with the fourth in the process of being written up. It is made up of 9 people. They have a committee structure comprised of a Secretary, a Chair, and a Treasurer. As a group they decide who is going on training courses and then share with the rest of the group. They have done 34 training courses altogether.

Applicant on behalf of the group

The application came from Zena, Acting Secretary of the Residents Scrutiny Panel. She applied for the grant following the Practical Skills For Scrutiny course held on 17-19 February 2014, and

joined the Resident Scrutiny Panel when she moved into one of the JRHT properties in late 2013. Around five years ago she completed the Resident Inspector Training, organised in house by the Housing Trust.

When she joined the Scrutiny Panel they were not doing things properly. Over the last year and a half the panel have made huge steps forward – they now meet once a month, deliver three reports a year, and report directly to the Board. She is very proud of what they have achieved so far. She thinks the Trafford Hall experience has increased her confidence level, and made her feel empowered.

It certainly has increased my confidence level, I've never been a shrinking violet but I need to know that what I'm saying is the truth, so it's given me the information to give to others. [...] It's given me the opportunity to become a leader again. [When I had to give up my job as manager for personal reasons] I was getting quite down...it just meant that I had a purpose again.

Project

The idea was to hire a hall to hold an Information Day to publicise the Scrutiny Panel and attract new members, given that the panel is short of 6 members. The plan was also to hire a meeting room in the Folk Hall for 12 consecutive months to take control over the arrangement of meetings.

They were awarded £500 towards printing out 1,000 promotional flyers, hiring the hall for the Information Day, hiring a meeting room for 12 monthly meetings, and refreshments.

Accessing the grant made a big difference - they would not have been able to host the information day or have had the security to be able to schedule monthly meetings knowing that they would go ahead.

Outcomes

The Information Day was held on Thursday 4th of December 2014 at the Folk Hall in New Earswick. Around 25 residents attended and were told about the Scrutiny Panel, how it works and how it can benefit residents. Flyers were delivered to 1000 JRHT residents.

Hiring the meeting room in the hall for 12 months meant they were able to establish themselves as a fully independent group. Today they are well established and receive £3,000 a year by JRHT to help towards transport costs for members or to purchase in-house training.

We had a very positive Residents and Tenants First group, up to 20 members used to attend those meetings, and then the lead resident suddenly got cancer and left it as a legacy, but then we were told we don't need this group anymore, we are going to do something different, and the group was virtually pulled from under us, there was no refreshment, there was no more meeting room – and the grant that we've got just meant that they can't do this to us, and that was what my main aim was, so we paid for the room for 12 meetings, and JRHT can't stop it because we've paid for it. It may sound really silly but I was adamant

that if I was going to put the work in that I wasn't gonna get it taken away from me. [...] That gave me a total focus to the commitment of a scrutiny pane and it proved to the Trust that they couldn't take it away even if they wanted to. If they didn't like what we are doing they've got no control over it, because we were there as an independent group looking at the services they were providing.

On the Information Day significant effort was made to promote the panel, and they were able to recruit one new member through this.



Commentary

This is another illustrative example of how the Trafford Hall grant can help groups to better establish themselves and take projects off the ground.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

- Overall, the Trafford Hall training and grant programmes **work well**. The evidence shows that the whole Trafford Hall ‘experience’ is **hugely beneficial** to tenant groups, to individual participants, and based on previous evaluation, to landlords as well. The grant opportunity is regarded by tenants as a plus of the Trafford Hall training.
- The funding application process is dealt with **quite efficiently**. The **application form is straightforward**, and Trafford Hall staff are easily accessible and supportive whenever applicants need clarifications.
- The Tenant Futures grant programme attached to the training is often the **only funding source available to tenants**, and it makes a **huge difference** to them. **A sum of up to £1,000 per group is enough** to allow tenants to be ambitious enough in the development of their ideas, and to properly put them into practice. It is particularly valuable the fact that the programme is government funded because it reaches out to social housing tenants nationwide and it fits into government proprieties, as much as helping informing government policy. It also helps to demonstrate to landlords the value of their involvement.
- The evidence shows that the money awarded is usually well managed and wisely spent. The funded projects have **massive direct and indirect benefits** and can result in considerable **value for money for landlords**.
- Landlords are usually quite supportive of tenant groups, and in a few instances willing to financially contribute towards their projects. Four interviewees, however, stated that they **did not feel encouraged by their landlords**. More could be done to build the case for landlords to show **potential return on investment** of encouraging tenants to attend training, and to support the implementation of their projects. This should be done taking into account that it is important for the autonomy of groups to secure funding independently from landlords. It would also be important to encourage landlords to start monitoring value for money with regard to tenant scrutiny.

In light of its value for money and the personal and wider community benefits which result from the grant programme, it would be very advantageous to have a grant programme attached to any future Tenant Futures programme.

To conclude, the report recommends that landlords are brought into the learning curve which is the Trafford Hall experience by making them aware of the potential value for money of the scrutiny role of tenants. It would be very useful if landlords could **pull their positive experience of tenant scrutiny**, for example via a newsletter which could be coordinated by Trafford Hall.

Annexes

1. Full list of accredited and non-accredited courses 2014-2015

Course Name	Date	Accredited	No of attendees	Trainer
Consulting the Community	28-29 April	Y	17	Engage
Scrutiny - A Deeper Involvement	12-14 May	Y	20	Burkitt Vernelle
You and Your Community Rights	21-23 May	N	20	Engage
Working with Your Landlord to Engage Young People	28-30 May	N	12	GOGY
Representing Your Community	4-5 June	N	22	Choosing Change
Practical Skills for Scrutiny Panels	10-12 June	N	24	Burkitt Vernelle
Getting Your Message Out There: Effective Marketing	16-17 June	N	23	Engage
Local Resolution of Complaints	23-35 June	Y	14	Engage
Effective Fundraising Strategies	1-3 July	Y	23	Make It Happen
Tenant Panels - Robust Frameworks	7-9 July	Y	19	Engage
All on Board - Board Membership	21-23 July	N	25	Engage
Inspiring Tenant Leaders	24-25 July	N	23	Choosing Change
Constitutions	11-13 August	N	18	Engage
Understanding Performance Information	18-20 August	Y	17	TPAS
Being an Effective Chairperson	4-5 Sept	Y	20	Choosing Change
Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour	8-10 Sept	Y	19	Engage
Community Engagement	15-16 Sept	N	15	Fresh Team
Does your Panel Reflect Your Community?	22-23 Sept	N	14	Engage Associates
Tenant Control	6-8 October	N	22	Engage and TMO
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating	16-17 October	N	18	Choosing Change
An Inspector Calls - The Role of Tenant Inspectors	20-22 October	Y	16	Burkitt Vernelle
Working with Your Landlord	28-30 October	N	13	GOGY CIC
Pride Not Prejudice - Changing the Image of Social Housing	6-7 November	N	17	Engage

Course Name	Date	Accredited	No of attendees	Trainer
The Wider World	1-2 December	N	22	Engage
The Wider World	14-15 January	N	23	Engage
Does Value for Money Matter?	28-29 January	N	26	Burkitt Vernelle
Committee Skills	2-4 February	Y	19	Make It Happen
Understanding Group Dynamics	3-4 February	N	22	Choosing Change
Being an Effective Chairperson	5-6 February	Y	20	Choosing Change
Effective Fundraising	9-11 February	Y	16	Make it Happen
Negotiating and Influencing Skills	16-17 February	N	24	Choosing Change
Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour	18-20 February	Y	20	Engage
Tenant Scrutiny Deeper Involvement	23-25 February	Y	17	Burkitt Vernelle
Understanding Performance Information	24-26 February	Y	13	TPAS
Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	2-4 March	Y	19	Burkitt Vernelle
Representing Your Community	3-4 March	N	23	Choosing Change
Why Does Value for Money Matter	16-17 March	N	14	Burkitt Vernelle
Effective Marketing	23-24 March	N	23	Burkitt Vernelle
Practical Skills for Scrutiny	25-27 March	N	25	Burkitt Vernelle

2. Full list of grants awarded 2014-2015

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
North West					
Magneta Living Scrutiny Group	No	Scrutiny - Deeper Involvement	£346.53	IT	Purchase an iPad and Dictaphone to help with minute taking on meetings.
Bideford Community Centre	No	Scrutiny - Deeper Involvement	£491.86	IT	Purchase a presentation system, which will give them the independence to hold their own meetings in their centre
Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Association	No	The Wider World	£437.00	Event	Room hire and refreshments for a conference bringing together a variety of community agencies
Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Association	No	The Wider World	£551	Event	Event in partnership with Chelford TARA facilitated by Engage to cover topics learnt on the Wider World course
Chelford Tenants and Residents Association	No	The Wider World	£566	Event	Event in partnership with Chelford TARA facilitated by Engage to cover topics learnt on the Wider World course
Chelford Tenants and Residents Association	No	You and Your Community Rights	£399.99	Event	Roller banner and equipment for event bringing a variety of agencies together
Butcher Lane Tenants and Residents Association	No	Consulting Your Community	£329.99	IT	Buy a video camera so they can do video surveys and consultation on things happening in the area

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
ECHO	No	Tenant Panels - Robust Frameworks	£300.00	Outreach	Flyers and leaflets to advertise their group
Affinity Sutton Regional Scrutiny Board (North Region)	No	Practical Skills for Scrutiny	£720.00	Training	Research and Development of a Resident Scrutiny E-learning Module on an unlimited licence
ETHOS	No	Practical Skills for Scrutiny	£558.00	IT	Purchase 2 tablets to help with communication in their group
Roe Lee Area Residents Association	Yes	Consulting Your Community	£500.00	IT	Purchase an iPad so they can go out to visit tenants and get them to fill in surveys and questionnaires
Independent Tenant Panel/Designated Persons	No	Local Resolution of Complaints	£428.54	IT	Purchase a laptop and relevant software so that customers on the panel to consider complaints at the final stage of the process.
Eden Community Homes and Organisations	Yes	Scrutiny - Deeper Involvement	£500.00	Outreach	Promotion of their scrutiny panel using a number of different formats
Wythenshawe in Bloom	No	Inspiring Tenant Leaders	£1,000.00	Outreach	Advertising of planting days to introduce their group to residents and try and get more people to come to their meetings
Poynton TARA	No	Constitutions	£900.00	IT	Set up a computer club and provide training to residents; purchase a camera to take photos of problem areas in properties
Ellergreen TARA	No	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating	£921	Event	Purchase equipment so they can hold roller skating sessions

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
Seacombe Community Association	Yes	Constitutions	£1,000	IT	Purchase a PC and printer to help write their constitution and keep it up to date
Arcon Tenants Scrutiny Group	No	Representing Your community	£235	Training	Further training for the rest of the group to develop a leaflet to publicise the Tenants Scrutiny Group.
South Lakes Housing Tenants Committee	No	Negotiating and Influencing Skills	£860	Event	Room hire, refreshments and leaflets for meeting between young tenants and the landlord
Muir Group Regional Residents Forum	Yes	Committee Skills	£1,000	Visit	Study visits to two other Housing Associations to learn from their good practice
Cinnamon Brow Residents Association	Yes	Committee Skills	£850	IT	The group would like to purchase some equipment so that they can provide their own training sessions
Northern Moor Tenants and Residents Association	No	Committee Skills	£654	IT	Purchase IT equipment that will help them move forward and develop as a group
Warrington Housing Association Scrutiny Panel	No	Effective Chairperson	£870	Training	Further training for the rest of the group from Roger Saunders
South East and London					
Alden and Broadway TARA	Yes	Effective Chairperson	£261.38	Event	Tables for open day event, printer and ink packs to produce leaflets
Tenant and Residents Scrutiny Panel - Brighton and Hove	No	Practical Skills for Scrutiny	500	Training	Training for report writing and social media skills
Tenant and Residents Scrutiny Panel - Brighton and Hove	Yes	Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	£650.00	Training	Mediation for the group as they were struggling to work together

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
Sylvan Hall Residents Association	Yes	Working With Your Landlord to Engage Young People	£404	Outreach	Print fliers to help promote their group. They also want to purchase a tablet to enable them to engage with younger tenants.
Cambridge Road Estate Residents Association	No	Community Engagement	£923	IT	Purchase some tablet computers; pay for an architect to help with a feasibility study for taking over their community hall
Tenant Inspectors of Soha	No	Pride not Prejudice	£1,087	Training	Further training for those that can't travel, the training will be held by Engage Associates
Yorks & Humber					
JRHT Residents Scrutiny Panel	No	Practical Skills for Scrutiny	500	Outreach	Room hire and flyers for an event to engage with all residents
Accent Resident Scrutiny	Yes	Practical Skills for Scrutiny	580	Training	Further training and support for the group off Rachel Vernelle
Residents Scrutiny Group	Yes	Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	£300.00	Outreach	Travel around villages holding drop in sessions to promote resident involvement
East Riding of Yorkshire Tenants Forum	No	The Wider World	£1,000	Event	Hire a mini bus and travel to rural communities to pass on what they have learnt on the course to as many people as possible
North Drive Tenants	No	Value For Money	£760	Training	Further training from Eileen Adams on <i>Why Does Value for Money Matter?</i>
West Midlands					
Complaints Panel (Nuneaton and Bedworth)	No	Local Resolution of Complaints	£492.99	Outreach	Purchase promotional materials to raise awareness to residents for how

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
					they can make complaints; purchase mobile phone
Sevenside Residents Inspectors	Yes	An Inspector Calls	£455.00	Visit	Hire a mini bus to go and visit other tenant groups to use as a benchmark when carrying out inspections
Grove Farm Family Committee	No	Committee Skills	£500.00	Event	Room hire, stationary and promotional materials
Matson and Robinswood Residents Group	Yes	Working With Your Landlord to Engage Young People	£453.18	Event	Set up a play area for kids as they want to allow young single parents to attend meetings
Warwick West Neighbourhood Association	No	Community Engagement	£510	Outreach	Equipment to produce a local newsletter to help engage with more tenants
East Midlands					
North West Leicestershire District Council Tenant Scrutiny Panel	No	Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	£750.00	Event	Hold a community event to try and get more people involved
Wrekin Housing Trust Tenants Panel	No	Does Your Panel Reflect Your Community	£693	Outreach	Purchase a printed gazebo with their logo to be more visible in the community
Together for Tenants	No	Tenant Control	£1,080	Outreach	Set up a CIC to manage their own handy man service
Service Improvement Panel - Voids	No	Effective Chairperson	£1,000	Training	Further training for the panel
Meadows Community Group	No	Understanding Performance Information	£650	IT	Purchase video equipment and editing software to make short videos showing the good work that tenants do
South West					

Grant Group	New to Trafford Hall?	Course	£	Type of grant	Project Outline
Bournemouth Housing Landlord Services	No	Effective Chairperson	£660.00	Training	Further training with Choosing Change
Housing Scrutiny Panel (BrunelCare)	Yes	Tenant Scrutiny - Getting Involved	£989.99	IT	Purchase a laptop to help them with record keeping; training for new members
Westward Housing Group - Leads Group	No	Dealing with ASB	£1,000	Outreach	Hold a clean-up project
Penwerris Tenants and Residents Association	No	Effective Fundraising Strategies	£869	IT	Purchase a video camera and editing equipment so that they can make videos to advertise their group but also to provide evidence to funders on how their money has been used
Cornwall Housing Tenants Forum	Yes	Effective Fundraising Strategies	£629	Outreach	Produce a magazine which will be circulated to 10,500 tenants

3. List of interviewees

	Role	Group
1	Member	Northern Regional Scrutiny Board – Affinity Sutton Homes
2	Chair	Tenant Scrutiny Panel – Brighton & Hove
3	Chair	Alden & Broadway TARA
4	Membership Secretary	Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations
5	Secretary	Chelford TARA
6	Volunteer	Ellergreen Tenants and Residents Association
7	Chair	Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel
8	Secretary	East Riding of Yorkshire Tenants Forum
9	Acting Secretary	Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust Residents Scrutiny Panel (RSP)
10	Member	Tenant Resource Group – Southampton City Council
11	Chair	Neighbourhoods and Communities Standards Group – Bournemouth City Council

4. Questionnaire

Grants Programme evaluation - Interview schedule

Community group

1. How would you describe your group? (Prompt: what are the people your group works with? What are the main aims of your group?)
2. When established?
3. How many members? How many people are actively involved in running your group (committee members, volunteers, paid staff)?
4. Involvement in community

TH Course

5. What course did you attend? Comment
6. How did you hear about it?
7. Why did you choose to attend?
8. How did it benefit your group?
9. What was in your action plan? How far have you been able to carry it out?

Personal development

10. How did the TH course benefit you personally?
11. Have it changed the way you think?
12. What about your relationship with your neighbours – have they changed at all?
13. And what about your relationship with your landlord? How has it changed?

Funding application

14. Did you know about the grant opportunity before you attended the course? If yes, has this influenced you in attending the course?
15. How easy is the grant application form to complete?

Did you get any help from TH staff?
16. How did you find the grant application process?
17. How much difference did access to a grant make?

18. What would you have done without a grant?

Project

19. What was your project/idea? Comment

20. What did you ask money for?

21. How important was getting a grant?

22. Have you raised any money towards this project yourself or your group by local fundraising?
Did you get any other financial or in-kind support from other sources?

23. What did you do with the grant? Was the grant enough?

24. Did your project change in the course of implementation?

Outcomes

25. What community benefits do you think came as a result of the grant?

26. How many people in the community benefited from the grant you received and the whole project?

27. What are your plans now? Are you willing to seek further funding to expand your work?

28. The fact of having to be accountable for how you spent the grant – did it have any impact on your group?

29. Do you feel you and your group have become more involved in the local decision making process as a result of the training and the grant/project?

Landlords

30. What role did your landlord play in the application and in the training? (e.g. travel)

31. What help did you receive from your landlord? Prompt: financial, in kind, support, encouragement?

Finally

32. Would you recommend the TH training and grant to others?

5. Grant stories

a. NORTHERN REGIONAL SCRUTINY BOARD – AFFINITY SUTTON HOMES

Members of this group attended the *Practical Skills for Scrutiny* training in February 2014. Given Affinity Sutton Homes' wide remit and high number of properties managed (58,000), the housing association has set-up three resident-led Regional Scrutiny Boards. The Scrutiny Boards examine performance on a regional level and scrutinize key areas of service provision.

The group decided to apply for a grant towards the development of an e-Learning course on scrutiny to the benefit of current and perspective members, which would be designed by an experienced trainer. An e-Learning course was thought as desirable as people could learn at their own pace, and it would be more cost effective and flexible for participants, as scheduling conventional training is usually difficult.

The group was awarded £720 towards the research and development of a resident scrutiny e-Learning module on an unlimited licence. Affinity Sutton contributed £125 to set up new host for e-learning platform.

Thirty-two (32) tenants and independents accessed the course and were given a greater insight into scrutiny. The module provided an introduction to scrutiny, covering the following topics: 1) An understanding of the basis for resident scrutiny including the role of co-regulation and the requirements under the regulatory framework; 2) The development of good practice on resident scrutiny elsewhere; 3) How to challenge constructively; 4) How to use performance data to select and scrutinise services; 4) An understanding of Service Reviews.

b. TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL – BRIGHTON & HOVE

Brighton & Hove

Members of this group attended the *Tenant Scrutiny – Getting Started* and the *Practical Skills for Scrutiny* courses in March 2014 and June 2014 respectively.

The panel was set up three years ago to scrutinize areas of service provision, and make recommendations for improvements to the Board. They represent tenants from across 11,500 properties which comprise Brighton & Hove City Council's social housing stock.

They applied for the grant twice in the 2014-15 financial year. Their initial application (in March 2014) was for promotional material (i.e. banner, business cards, and fliers) to be used for information and recruitment events, as well as to receive mentoring to grow as a group. They applied for £1,000 but were awarded £650. Priorities changed when a bureaucratic issue meant they could not use the grant to buy promotional material, and an argument sparked between one member and the rest of the group. They therefore decided to use the money for mediation aimed at resolving the conflict.

The second application (in June 2014) was to receive training to build report writing and social media, as well as gather recruitment advice. They were awarded £500, resulting in a total of £1,150 received in the financial year 2014-15. £300 was spent in mediation, £280 on report and social media writing training, and £80 on recruitment advice, all delivered by an experienced trainer. This has left £490 to be used towards recruitment advice.

The council's resident involvement paid £397.80 for promotional material, while the council's scrutiny team contributed £300 towards writing the terms of reference and Code of Conduct.

Although the mediation did not resolve the conflict and a few panel members left as a result, it actually helped the group rethink their recruitment strategies. Before there was not enough team work, and character clashes were taking over efficient output delivery. Going through bad times have strengthened the group - the 'core' is still there and they are determined to move things forward.

The report writing and social media training equipped the group with new skills to write tenant reports, articles and blogs. Recruitment advice will prove vital to make sure they get the right people on board.

c. ALDEN & BROADWAY TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Hackney, London

Members of this group attended *Being an Effective Chairperson* in March 2014.

They are a Tenants and Residents Association made up of committed individuals who want to make a difference in their community made up of 135 households, and increase resident involvement in social activities and community events.

They wanted to hire a bouncy castle, 14 tables and 35 chairs, to set up a Fun Day to bring people together and promote the TRA.

They applied for £500 and were given only £261, which was quite disappointing for them. The grant was not enough but they were able to manage on a tight budget. Hackney Homes contributed £500 Big Lunch money towards food, hiring of the bouncy castle, and face painting.

The event took place in August 2014 and was well attended. Tenants enjoyed the day, and were able to get to know each other and the Tenants and Residents Association better.

d. CHESHIRE EAST FEDERATION OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS and CHELFORD TARA

Cheshire East, Cheshire

Members of this group attended *The Wider World* in March 2014, and *You and Your Community Rights* in May 2014.

The Cheshire East Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (CEFTRA) is an umbrella organisation bringing together different TRAs within the Cheshire East area. They were set up in 2013 as an information and advocacy group, to promote tenants' rights and to act as an intermediary on people's behalf.

Chelford TARA is a member of CEFTRA, as well as an award-winning Tenants and Residents Association. It was established in 2005 with the aim of creating a vibrant local community and combatting social isolation. They run a community gardening club and a series of social activities to engage the community, which is made up mainly of elderly people.

CEFTRA and Chelford TARA decided to join forces to set up a one-day conference to promote the Federation. The conference was intended as a launch event to make the Federation known to the Cheshire East community, and impart knowledge gained on courses to as many people as possible.

CEFTRA was awarded £437 to hire the hall, buy refreshment, print conference packs, and purchase public liability insurance and laminate pouches for outdoor posters. Chelford TARA was awarded £399 to buy roller banners, staging, lectern, mikes and mixer. They also got some money from a couple of sponsors as well as in-kind support.

The conference, entitled "Your Home, Your Voice, Your Rights", took place on 25th September 2014 at the Hall at Marthall, near Knutsford. It lasted from 11am until 4pm and it involved an introductory talk about CEFTRA, a series of snapshot sessions delivered by different organisations (such as TrustLink, Silk Like Food Bank, Trafford Hall, Age UK Cheshire, TAROE), and information sessions on Community Cashback, community recycling projects and other relevant topics. It was attended by 79 people, of which 53 tenants, 14 speakers, and 12 committee members/volunteers.

CEFTRA and Chelford TARA feel they achieved what they wanted to achieve, which was to make them known to the Cheshire East community. They received positive feedback, with the majority of attendees who completed the evaluation forms rating the content of the day, the speakers/sessions and the overall set up as either good or excellent.

Both CEFTRA and Chelford TARA have applied for another Trafford Hall grant in the 2014-15 financial year for a total of £1,117, which will be used to set up a half-day conference on the Wider World with Engage Associates on 28th of July. They are also planning to host another conference by the end of the year.

f. ELLERGREEN TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Norris Green, Liverpool

Ellergreen Tenant and Resident Association (TARA) represent around 600 households within an estate located in the deprived Norris Green area of Liverpool, which is owned and managed by Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH). This area has undergone substantial redevelopment over the last decade.

Ellergreen TARA's main aim is to organise social activities for older and newer residents to mix and create a community spirit. The TARA is made up of 10 committee members and 15 volunteers. They

are supported by the Norris Green Community Alliance, a charity set up in 2006 as an umbrella organisation bringing together eight TRAs in the Norris Green area. Its main aim is to reach out to people across the community and help TRAs with project development.

Ellergreen TARA wanted to buy skates to ensure that the community roller-skating sessions, which were originally piloted in December 2014 in the Lifestyles Ellergreen Leisure Centre, could be sustained in the long term. The sessions proved to be extremely popular and the group thought about raising money to buy the skates and ensure the continuity of the project. At the time there was only one session every fortnight, due to the high costs of renting the skates and getting someone to put the music on and supervise the sessions.

The group applied for the Trafford Hall grant and was awarded £921 towards buying skates. They were able to raise another £116 by local fundraising, and partnered with Leisure Centre to continue renting roller skates whilst they were trying to buy their own. They also received a generous grant from their landlord, Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH), to allow them to buy more skates, resulting in a total of 100 boots. The grant money, together with the other sources of funding, allowed them to cover the total cost of the project (£1757.24) which on top of buying the skates included the purchase of disco lights, a live/dj controller, and room hire for 10 weeks.

The Roller Disco project is now on two sessions a week (on Fridays from 6 till 8.15pm) and is very popular and well attended, involving all age groups including families, adults and teenagers. There is usually a total of 100-150 people attending each week. Over 500 people in the Norris Green community have attended so far, with new people coming every week. They are now asking people to contribute £1 each towards hiring the hall for the session.

g. COBALT HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

Liverpool

The Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel was set up in 2011 to scrutinise and improve landlord's services, making recommendations and demanding that they are acted upon. They represent 6,000 households in Liverpool. The panel has grown considerably over the past years. There are 13 panel members altogether, and they are looking to recruit two more.

Cobalt Tenant Scrutiny Panel wanted to apply for the grant to buy tablets, in order to reduce paper waste (they believe that 'waste is a sin'), and facilitate communication and information sharing between group members. The idea came out of a visit to a neighbouring Tenant Panel where all members had tablets, which was part of a benchmarking exercise.

They were awarded £500, which allowed them to buy four tablets. Getting the Trafford Hall grant prompted Cobalt to buy them another nine, which means that panel member are now equipped with one tablet each.

The panel is now working more efficiently thanks to better communication between members and better use of technology (i.e. coveilance system and social media). This means tenants get better value for money thanks to their landlord acting upon their recommendations. Cobalt has estimated

savings over £700 a year from going paperless, and that they have saved an impressive £66,700 up to April 2013 due to implementing the panel's recommendations.

h. EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE TENANTS FORUM

East Yorkshire

Members of this group attended *The Wider World* course in January 2015.

The East Riding of Yorkshire Tenants Forum is an umbrella organisation bringing together 40 tenant and resident associations and groups. It was set up in 1997 under a different name, and it is open to every East Riding council tenant. Its membership spreads over rural towns, around 11,300 properties within 1000 square miles. It is intended to be an informative group which keeps residents informed about their rights in light of welfare reforms.

They decided to hire a Publicity Bus to reach out to tenants who live too far to attend meetings, and share learnings from *The Wider World* course with as many people as possible.

They have been awarded £1,000 towards the cost of hiring the bus for three days, for refreshments and for printing of 6,000 leaflets publicising the event. East Riding council said they would match-fund it up to another £1,000.

The event, called the East Riding Tenant's Roadshow, will take place on 2nd, 3rd and 4th of September. The plan is to travel around 12 villages over three days, doing four stops each day. The group expect to raise its profile and to increase attendance to forum meetings, which can be poorly attended. They also expect to disseminate knowledge and to encourage people to take on services by increasing knowledge of the Right to Manage, to Bid, to Challenge, and the Community Cashback.

i. JOSEPH ROWNTREE HOUSING TRUST SCRUTINY PANEL (RSP)

York

The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) Residents Scrutiny Panel was set up in 2013. It covers 2,700 properties in York. They have done four reports so far, with the fourth in the process of being written up. It is made up of 9 people. They have a committee structure with a Secretary, a Chair, and a Treasurer. As a group they decide who is going on training courses, and then share what they have learnt with the rest of the group. They have done 34 training courses altogether.

The idea was to hire a hall to hold an Information Day to publicise the Scrutiny Panel and attract new members, given that the panel is short of 6 members. The plan was also to hire a meeting room in the Folk Hall for 12 consecutive months to take control over the arrangement of meetings.

They were awarded £500 towards printing out 1,000 promotional flyers, hiring the hall for the Information Day, hiring a meeting room for 12 monthly meetings, and refreshment.

The Information Day was held on Thursday 4th of December 2014 at the Folk Hall in New Earswick. Around 25 residents attended and were told about the Scrutiny Panel, how it works and how it can

benefit residents. Flyers were delivered to 1000 JRHT residents. On the Information Day significant effort was made to promote the panel, and they were able to recruit one new member through this.

Hiring the meeting room in the hall for 12 months meant they were able to establish themselves as a fully independent group. Now they are well established and have secured £3,000 a year to put towards transport costs for members and in-house training if desired.

I. TENANT RESOURCE GROUP – SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

Southampton

The Tenant Resource Group was set up in 1995, although under a different name. They are in charge of working with the council's housing department to ensure that decisions regarding capital and revenue expenditure reflect the priorities that were agreed with tenants. They meet twice a month, because they hold a preliminary meeting in which they decide which questions to raise at the monthly meetings with council office.

The group wanted to set up one-day training with Trafford Hall trainer Roger Saunders from Choosing Change on 'Asking the Right Questions'.

They were awarded £500 towards the cost of the training. The council contributed with £220. The event took place in November 2013, and was attended by around 15 people.

Members of the group are now better equipped to ask the right questions and get the most out of the meetings.

m. NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES STANDARDS GROUP – BOURNEMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Bournemouth

Members of this group attended the *Being an Effective Chairperson* training in March 2014.

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Standards group is in charge of monitoring inspections, and determining the ways in which anti-social behaviour is dealt with. They represent all residents of Bournemouth council's housing stock, which comprises of approximately 20,000 properties.

They wanted to organise a one-day training session delivered by Trafford Hall trainer Roger Saunders from Choosing Change, to share the knowledge gained on the *Being and Effective Chairperson* course with other standard group members and committee members.

They were awarded £660 towards the training session, while the council paid £352.80 as well as printed handouts. The training event on 'Meeting and Committee Skills' took place on 7th of May 2014. The training benefited around 10 people from different community groups and associations across Bournemouth. The training equipped them with the skills to become effective chairpersons, and with the tools to enhance effectiveness of meetings, such as implementing the Code of Conduct which sets out meeting ground rules, and give Chairs a means to enforce discipline and order.

