

# Camden Federation of Private Tenants

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



**April 2014 – March 2015**

*The Voice of Private Tenants in Camden*

## **Directors as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015:**

Susan Aykroyd (Treasurer to March 2015)  
Constantine Buhayer  
Melissa Fernandez  
Carolyn Harms  
Saoirse Keating  
Rita Legros (Secretary)  
John McMillan

Gordon Meenn  
Sarah Mitchell (Chair)  
John Morris  
Zoe Seager  
Vic Seedman (Treasurer from March 2015)  
Simone Stenfors

## **Staff team:**

Robert Taylor (Organiser, since April 2008)  
Meade McCloughan (Assistant Organiser, since April 2008)

## **Volunteers:**

Rita Brayshaw  
Philipp Bejol  
Marisa Marcos Martin  
Patrick van den Bos  
Michael Moynihan

## **Registered office:**

13 Malden Road  
London  
NW5 3HS

Camden Federation of Private Tenants is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 as the Camden Federation for Private Tenants, registration number 25086R (England & Wales).

Auditors: Simpson Wreford & Co, Wellesley House, Duke of Wellington Avenue, Royal Arsenal, London SE18 6SS.



*Sarah Mitchell, CFPT Chair, addressing a packed election hustings meeting at Swiss Cottage Library*

Thanks to our funder the London Borough of Camden for its financial support

Thanks also to the Trust for London for funding the Renters' Rights London project



## ***Chair's Report 2015***

As this year draws to a close we are in a much better position than we have been for several years. We have secured a commitment to funding from Camden Council for the next two years and have seen considerable impacts from both our local work and our new Renters' Rights London project.

This hard-won situation is important because it allows us the chance to take stock and check that we are doing all we can to respond to the ever changing needs of tenants. Whereas for many years the primary area of concern was housing conditions, in the last twelve months rent levels, rent increases and the threat of eviction has been the three main issues for tenants coming to us.

It is not only assured shorthold tenant who fear the rent rise but also older, regulated tenants, who have lived in the borough for decades but are now surviving on diminishing savings and modest pensions and who have to decide on a daily basis whether to pay for heat, light or food.

Like many tenants we moved home this year. Thanks to the support of Camden Council we now operate out of 13 Malden Road, an area with a very high number of renters and we have a shop front on the main road which is already helping us to reach out to new groups of people. We saw both old and new faces at our drop-in launch event in October where we welcomed and thanked the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Housing, the Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee and the Mayor.

Part of our role is to influence politicians from across the political spectrum to ensure that housing stays very much at the top of their and their colleagues' agendas, so we took full advantage of this year's general election and ran two very well-attended hustings meetings focused exclusively on renting, and all the main parties' candidates attended.

Locally we are delighted to see that the Council will be introducing licensing of landlords running what are known as Houses in Multiple Occupation or HMOs beginning on 8<sup>th</sup> December. While this won't tackle all the problems of the private rented sector, having a register of landlords and introducing the resources to pro-actively check their properties for decent standards is a huge step forward.

This year we have also worked with the council's Housing Scrutiny Committee to get a private tenant representative co-opted onto it. It is great to see that private tenants now have a voice on this important local committee, and interesting also to note that the Chair of the committee is himself a private tenant.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we will be re-visiting our strategic plan and undertaking further fundraising efforts to help ensure that we continue to be here for Camden tenants long into the future. We will also be undertaking some exciting new work supporting housing association tenants to come together and collectively dealing with a range of issues to do with their landlords.

I look forward to seeing you at our meetings and event throughout the year and I would also invite you to pop in and see us at our new office in Malden Road.

Sarah Mitchell

# Camden Federation of Private Tenant's year in numbers

Activity	Result
Newsletters we produced and distributed	1
Events we held	3
Outreach events/stalls we did	6
Unique website visitors	59.1% increase
Social media (Twitter followers)	12.9% increase
New members who joined	85
New supporters who signed-up	6
New projects we started	1
Information leaflets we produced and distributed	3950
Individual tenants we empowered and supported	84
Individual tenants we signposted to other services/organisations	30
Times when tenants views were obtained by us (see right hand box)	3
Direct project beneficiaries	498



A good example of the negative way tenants are often represented in the landlord press.

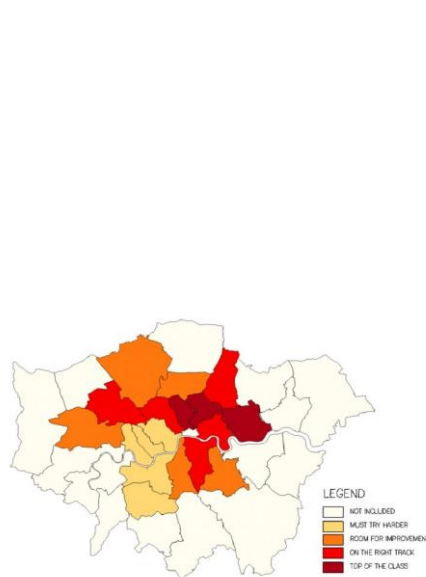
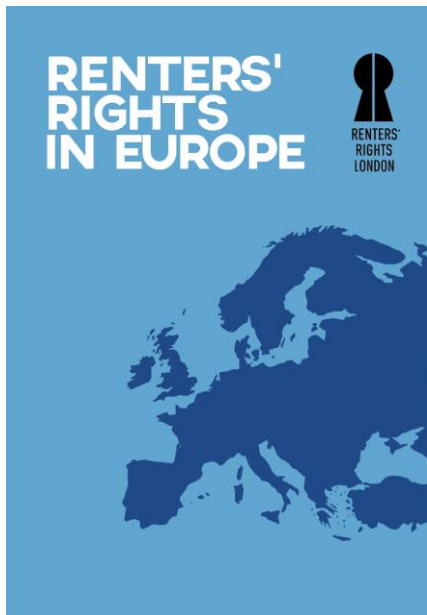


One of the leaflets produced by Camden Council to promote it's consultation on whether to introduce the licensing of private landlords. Over 1,400 people responded with their views, and more than 70% of respondents were in favour of it.

# Renters' Rights London (RRL)

While we work very hard to improve conditions for private renters here in Camden, we know that the unfair renting system is not confined to the borough's borders. There are two and a half million private renters in the capital, living on short-term, insecure tenancies, facing low standards and unaffordable rents.

So that's why we asked Trust for London to help us take the message beyond Camden and they agreed to fund a small, three year project that teaches London's private renters about their rights and campaigns for a fairer renting system – and it's called Renters' Rights London.



**Renters don't always know their rights. Here are some common misunderstandings:**

**"It's not allowed to have a pet in the rental property?"**  
 Having a pet is not automatically prohibited. It depends on the tenancy agreement and the landlord's consent. Many landlords are happy to allow pets, especially if they are well-behaved and kept on a lead.

**"I can't get a dog because my landlord won't let me have one."**  
 If your landlord refuses to allow a pet, you should first check if there are any restrictions in your tenancy agreement. If not, you can discuss the matter with your landlord. In some cases, you may be able to negotiate a pet-friendly tenancy.

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(Left) extract from a report that compares renters' rights in six different European countries, to give renters in the UK an idea of how different life could be. (Middle) extract from the Renters' Index, a comparison of London councils and what each one is doing for private renters, so that local campaigners know what to ask their councils for. (Right) the inside of a 'Know Your Rights' foldout leaflet, given out at festivals and community events

The project sends out a fortnightly newsletter to any private renter in London who wants to receive it. Every newsletter contains practical tips and advice on renting law, an update from one of London's borough-based renters' groups and a briefing about something renting-related happening in Parliament, so that local campaigners know when to lobby their MP. The newsletter also puts London's renters in touch with social researchers and journalists.

RRL has also worked with young filmmakers at the BFI and Doc Next Network to produce a short film about renting in London, which was screened at the BFI in May, and the project's coordinator spoke on the panel at the GLA's recent inquiry into rent stabilisation. For more information go to: [www.rentersrightslondon.org](http://www.rentersrightslondon.org)





## ***Treasurer's Report 2015***

Please see on the next page the following extracts from the audited accounts: the Balance Sheet at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2015.

CFPT is growing! Our income is up by over 20% on last year, putting us the best financial position for over a decade. As you can see from the figures on the next page, this increase is due to the new funding we have received from the Trust for London coming on top of continued support from the London Borough of Camden.

As reported elsewhere in this report, the grant from the Trust for London is to fund the Renters' Rights London project, the finances for which need to be shown separately in our accounts. This is why, over the page, you will see a division of income and expenditure into two funds, the 'General Fund' covering CFPT's core work and the 'Restricted Fund' covering the Renters' Rights London project. Having this project is doubly good for CFPT: it helps to promote private tenants' rights on a London-wide basis and it contributes towards our running costs.

Of course, the great bulk of our funding continues to come from London Borough of Camden, specifically the Housing and Adult Social Care Department. The stability and reliability of the Council's support has been crucial not just in enabling CFPT to keep going over the recent years, but also to expand. I am particularly pleased to be able to report that the Council has recently confirmed a two year funding arrangement taking us through to the end of September 2017.

The Balance Sheet shows overall reserves of £16,300. This figure includes two designated reserve funds instituted by the Management Committee six years ago. These are (i) a redundancy fund, currently standing at £8,896, and (ii) a premises fund, currently standing at £3,813. The intention is to increase these funds each year in line with the organisation's potential future liabilities. That said, we may need to dip into the premises fund in order to cover some of the costs of our recent relocation to Malden Road.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to thank once again our funders, the London Borough of Camden and the Trust for London, for their continuing support of the organisation.

Vic Seedman

Copies of the full certified accounts are available on request from the staff.

# Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	207		402	
Cash at bank and in hand	27,149		16,488	
Creditors:				
- amounts falling due within one year	-11,056		-2,351	
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>16,300</b>		<b>14,539</b>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>				
Called up share capital		385		388
Designed Funds		12,709		10,787
Income and expenditure reserve		3,206		3,364
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>16,300</b>		<b>14,539</b>

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2015

	General Fund	Restricted Grant	Total 2015	Total 2015
	£	£	£	£
	CFPT	Renters' Rights London		
<b>Income</b>				
- Grant: London Borough of Camden	56,033	0	56,033	59,300
- Grant: Trust for London	0	15,333	15,333	0
- Donations & other income	3,743	2,222	5,965	3,759
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>59,776</b>	<b>17,555</b>	<b>77,331</b>	<b>63,059</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
- Salaries	36,899	9,267	46,166	37,088
- Recruitment costs	0	1,134	1,134	0
- Rent & services	10,811	3,267	14,078	13,442
- Management charges & overheads	0	2,016	2,016	0
- Insurance	1,183	0	1,183	1,140
- Repairs & maintenance	1,189	0	1,189	1,086
- Stationery	2,413	170	2,583	2,455
- Projects & events	657	0	657	2,334
- Telephone	1,124	0	1,124	1,263
- Equipment & IT costs	890	634	1,524	26
- Website costs	0	1,679	1,679	0
- Travelling expenses	18	68	86	82
- Accountancy & payroll	216	0	216	201
- Audit	1,440	0	1,440	1,380
- Sundry expenses	116	56	172	257
- Subscriptions	320	0	320	498
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>57,276</b>	<b>18,291</b>	<b>75,567</b>	<b>61,252</b>
<b>Income less expenditure</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>-736</b>	<b>1,764</b>	<b>1,807</b>
- Transfer surplus costs	-736	736	0	0
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>1,764</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,764</b>	<b>1,807</b>

Approved by the Management Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and signed on its behalf by Sarah Mitchell and Rita Legros. This summary has been extracted from the full accounts, copies of which are available from CFPT's offices.

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Funded by Camden Council