

# Camden Federation of Private Tenants

**ANNUAL REPORT**



**April 2016 – March 2017**

*The voice of private renters in Camden*

## **Directors as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017:**

Zoe Seager (Chair)  
Rita Legros (Secretary)  
Safder Ali (Treasurer from June 2016)  
Susan Aykroyd (to September 2016)  
Constantine Buhayer  
Carolyn Harms  
John McMillan  
Gordon Meenn  
Sarah Mitchell (to September 2016)  
Vic Seedman (Treasurer to June 2016)  
Simone Stenfors

## **Staff team:**

Robert Taylor (Organiser, since April 2008)  
Meade McCloughan (Assistant Organiser, since April 2008)  
Rosie Walker (Renters' Rights London, since August 2014; Maternity Leave from August 2016)  
Portia Msimang (Renters' Rights London, Maternity Leave cover from August 2016)

## **Volunteers:**

Rita Brayshaw  
Sarah Kuong

## **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.



**Andy Nazer speaking at our AGM about loneliness and isolation**

Thanks to our core funder Camden Council for its ongoing financial support

Thanks also to Trust for London for funding our Renters' Rights London (RRL) project, and to The Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust for financially supporting our tenants' newsletter.



## ***Chair's Report 2017***

2017 has been another successful year for us in working for positive changes to the private rented sector (PRS), which is a slow process that requires sustained commitment. A great example of this goes back to 2013, when we began the “Let Down” campaign with a number of other renter groups in order to bring an end to fees for tenants. We, along with our Renters’ Rights London project, heavily publicised the recent government consultation on banning letting agent fees for tenants and encouraged as many renters as possible to respond, and also submitting responses on behalf of renters. We believe that the Draft Tenants’ Fees Bill that is to now go before Parliament is the culmination of many years of hard work in publicising this issue, because to achieve even modest change in the PRS requires a marathon, not sprint approach.

This year we have also seen a 7% increase in our membership, despite the highest rates of churn yet seen in the PRS due to rising rents and retaliatory evictions forcing people out of the borough. We have directly supported and empowered over 100 tenants to resolve their own housing problems, and they have come from an ever growing range of nationalities and communities in Camden. We’ve also been putting a lot of work into our online presence, so that we can reach the largest number of people to inform them of their rights and responsibilities – which has resulted in a significant increase in website visitors and twitter followers.

We remain very proud of Vic Seedman, our management committee member who sits on the Council’s Housing Scrutiny Committee as a very articulate and effective advocate for private tenants’ issues, and were pleased to attend one of their investigatory meetings on housing for older people as an “expert witness”. We were also invited to attend the first meeting of the Camden Commission which focussed on strengthening community cohesion in the borough, and after much discussion, we along with others present managed to get the affordability of housing/the PRS chosen through a vote as the number one priority for the Council’s Camden Plan, which is great news for struggling renters out there.

As you might remember from last year, we set up the first ever borough wide group for housing association (HA) residents in response to a recommendation from the Housing Scrutiny Committee. It was originally intended that the group would meet every 6 months, but it has been meeting every 3 due to the enthusiasm of the members participating in it. Between meetings, there is ongoing engagement with housing associations on service delivery issues, and politicians and policymakers on accountability issues. We are currently working with Camden Citizens Advice to engage with HAs around improving the financial support available for their tenants who are unable to afford the cost of basic items e.g. white goods when moving home. There is clearly a need to increase the capacity of the HA group and the important work it does, and we are looking at this as part of our ongoing fundraising efforts.

Beyond Camden, our Renters’ Rights London project is in the last year in its current form, as we actively seek further funding for it to do more ground-breaking work, which was described by a councillor in Lewisham as “inspiring”.

As with everyone in these difficult times, CFPT is feeling the squeeze of ever rising costs, but we will continue to work as hard as possible to ensure we can remain as a constant presence in the lives of tenants and residents in Camden, providing as many opportunities as possible for people to come together, share ideas and have their voices heard.

Zoe Seager

# Our year in numbers

Newsletters we produced and distributed	1
Meetings and events we held	7
Outreach events/stalls we did	1
Unique website visitors per month on average	1099
Social media (Twitter followers)	11.5% increase
New members who joined	20
Information leaflets we produced and distributed	3000
Individual tenants we empowered and supported	111
Individual tenants we signposted to other services/organisations	25
Direct project beneficiaries	559



We invited Andy Nazer from the Campaign to End Loneliness to come and speak at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on a very important and emerging issue – loneliness and isolation.

## The campaign aims:

- To keep loneliness in the news and on the social policy agenda
- To promote higher quality & more effective support from service providers
- For local authorities to take a leadership role on reducing loneliness in later life

We will be doing everything we can to highlight these issues and how they impact on our members.

A BIG thanks to Osbornes Solicitors, who have offices in Camden Town and Hampstead, for the free use of their ground floor meeting room for our Camden Housing Association Residents Group meetings.



## Improving the relationship between Camden's housing associations and their residents

In 2016, we set up the first ever borough wide group for housing association (HA) tenants.



The purpose of the group is to:

- Improve engagement between HAs and their residents
- Make HAs more responsive to the needs of their residents
- Give politicians and policymakers the residents' perspective of HAs with a view to bringing about change and improvements in how they operate

The group has now met four times and Tom Copley (Greater London Assembly member) and Councillor Pat Callaghan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing) attended one of these.

In between these meetings it has engaged with Origin, Genesis, One Housing Group, Peabody and Innisfree housing associations and is also supporting a number of local residents groups.

## Renters' Rights London (RRL) project – the year in numbers

RRL which we created in 2014 is the first ever city wide information, education and engagement project for the capital's 2.7 million private renters.



The RRL information stall out and about at the Lewisham Peoples Day free festival

The project continues to engage with a wide variety of renters in different locations to teach them about their rights, where to get help and hear about their experiences of renting and what they think needs to change.

### Organise or play active role in face-to-face events/activities for private renters:

6

### Attend other meetings and events:

11

### Involve renters online:

6,723 people

### Renters e-newsletters produced:

13

### Information packs produced and distributed:

500

### Encourage and support the setting up of local private renter groups:

2

For more information about the project:  
[www.rentersrightslondon.org](http://www.rentersrightslondon.org)

## Working with Age UK London and Renters' Rights London to hear the voices of older renters

In association with Age UK London and our Renters' Right London project, we organised a consultation meeting for older (50+) private renters in the local church hall to hear their often shocking experiences and stories of living in the private rented sector.

It was also a chance for this neglected but rapidly growing group of renters to share their thoughts and ideas with us as to what they thought needs to happen to bring about improvements and change.



The meeting was attended by over thirty renters, and the feedback that was received from this and the other consultation meetings that were held in different parts of London, formed the basis of the "Living in Fear" report that was subsequently produced by Age UK London.



The report can be found at: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) in the Campaign Reports and Policy Documents section.



## ***Treasurer's Report 2017***

I am pleased to be able to report on another good year for CFPT. This has been the second full year in which our core activities, funded by the London Borough of Camden, have been complemented by the work of the Renters' Rights London project, funded by the Trust for London.

As with last year, the accounts show the income and expenditure split into two funds, the 'General Fund' covering CFPT's core work and the 'Restricted Fund' covering the Renters' Rights London project. The 'General Fund' ended the year with a deficit of nearly £2,000, indicating the increasing pressure of costs of running the organization, while the Renters' Rights London ended with a surplus, which will be spend on the project as it comes to an end – or, we hope, a temporary pause – in the financial year 2017-2018.

With the 'General Fund', we have again been successful, though somewhat less so than in previous years, in attracting additional funds (£4,786 in 'donations and other income'). This is all the more necessary given the increasing costs we face, notably as a result of the incremental removal of our rent subsidy over the three years from January 2017.

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. We are currently still benefitting from a two year funding arrangement, which will take us through to the end of September 2017.

The Balance Sheet shows overall reserves of £15,641. This figure includes two designated reserve funds instituted by the Management Committee eight years ago. These are (i) a redundancy fund, currently standing at £3,987, and (ii) a premises fund, currently standing at £5,243. There has been some call on our designated reserve funds during the year, which both demonstrates the wisdom of making such provision and also the need to ensure these funds are topped up in order to cover the organisation's potential future liabilities.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to thank once again our main funders, the London Borough of Camden and the Trust for London, for their continuing support of the organisation, and also thank the Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust for funding our tenants' newsletter.

Safder Ali

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

# Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2017

	2017		2016	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	3,430		4,675	
Cash at bank and in hand	25,963		23,240	
Creditors:				
- amounts falling due within one year	-13,752		-6,098	
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>15,641</b>		<b>21,817</b>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>				
Called up share capital		373		382
Designed Funds		9,230		14,996
Renters Rights London fund		5,579		2,519
Income and expenditure reserve		459		3,920
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>15,641</b>		<b>21,817</b>

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2017

	General Fund	Restricted Grant	Total 2017	Total 2016
	£	£	£	£
	CFPT	Renters' Rights London		
<b>Income</b>				
- Grant: London Borough of Camden	54,230	0	54,230	54,400
- Grant: Trust for London	0	23,667	23,667	23,00
- Donations & other income	4,786	3,480	8,266	11,282
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>59,016</b>	<b>27,147</b>	<b>86,163</b>	<b>88,682</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
- Salaries	40,360	14,950	55,310	52,400
- Staff training and recruitment costs	449	386	835	0
- Rent & services	6,477	4,908	11,385	13,831
- Management charges & overheads	0	3,080	3,080	3,046
- Insurance	1,467	0	1,467	1,193
- Repairs & maintenance	1,954	0	1,954	2,486
- Stationery	3,758	71	3,829	2,660
- Projects & events	1,505	0	1,505	1,519
- Telephone	1,959	0	1,959	2,588
- Equipment & IT costs	476	163	639	558
- Website costs	0	0	0	108
- Travelling expenses	161	324	485	258
- Accountancy & payroll	389	0	389	234
- Audit	1,680	0	1,680	1,620
- Sundry expenses	77	205	282	407
- Subscriptions	265	0	265	254
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>60,977</b>	<b>24,087</b>	<b>85,064</b>	<b>83,162</b>
<b>Income less expenditure</b>	<b>-1,961</b>	<b>3,060</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>5,520</b>

Approved by the Management Committee on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and signed on its behalf by Zoe Seager and Rita Legros. This summary has been extracted from the full accounts, copies of which are available from CFPT's office.

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**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CamdenFPT](https://www.facebook.com/CamdenFPT)**



Funded by Camden Council