
VOLUNTEER

In person Canvassing



What are we trying to do?

To start with we need to understand the Private Sector stock of rented accommodation in every major town. What sort of properties exist, where are they located, who owns the properties, who rents them and how much do people pay in fees and rent. So for example we want to know where the multiple occupation houses are, where families rent houses from private landlords and all types of tenant in-between. At the same time we need to know what problems tenants face and which of these - loss of deposit, unfair agents' fees etc. are the most important problem they face.

There were 4.7 million private rented dwellings in the UK in 2015 according to the Office of National Statistics.

Why are we doing this?

Because much of this information is not readily available from government and local authority sources. In order to represent our members in their dealings with local authorities, landlords and letting agents we need to know about property conditions, rents, fees and the type of properties that are in a particular area. It will give more power to the tenants when landlords and agents know less than we do about the market and available options for tenants. Right now everyone renting accommodation is on their own and all of the information about the law, markets, rents and fees is in the hands of the landlords and agents.

What can you do to help?

We have an initial list of locations in towns and cities and for each of them we need people to go out and gather the information we require and at the same time let people know that not only is the union interested in representing all tenants but we are also looking for members and volunteers.

How to get started

We have a list of towns for you to choose from and for each of these we need people to go out and canvass particular localities and record the location and condition of private rented housing.

On the basis of the research we have already completed, the following issues need to be addressed:

Landlords & Agents

Landlords names & addresses (where known) Agents names & addresses (where known)

Deposit Protection

Awareness of the DPS scheme

So for example do tenants have a formal note to say their Landlord has protected their deposit?
Have they experienced difficulties in recovering a deposit from their present or a previous landlord?

Repairs and maintenance

Level of satisfaction with manager/landlord and the level of maintenance and quality of repairs carried out.

Agents Fees

We need to understand the range of things that the fees cover and how much they are and how many people have to pay them in multi-occupancy lets.

Rent

Photographs where possible and obviously with the tenants permission

There were 4.0 million social and affordable rented dwellings in this country in 2015 according to the ONS.

Exterior shot of the property and a Photograph of a rental agreement where possible.

Preparation for Canvassing

We will provide every member of the union who goes out canvassing with a form of ID and a briefing. Outlining how they should represent themselves and explain the purpose of the visit and the significance and value of the information collected. Because wherever possible and appropriate the canvasser should also explain the Union and its work with view to recruiting new members.

Next Step

If you think this is something you would like to take part in please get in touch with us. Remember we never have volunteers go canvassing alone so it may take a while before we start in your area.

To get started simply email us at

volunteers@tenantsunion.co.uk and use the term canvassing volunteer as the subject line of your email. We be in touch as soon as we can.

