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# VOLUNTEER

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## Online (Desktop) Research



### What are we trying to do?

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We want to find and understand what is being done by local people about the state of the Private Renting market in every major town. We know that right across the country people have faced problems with the level of rents, deposits not returned, repairs not carried out and often excessive fees from managing agents for small items of administration and incidental overheads. We want to find groups and individuals that have come together to discuss or work together to improve matters. We need to know who is out there so we can work with them and we also need to know what has and has not worked when people have tried to solve problems for tenants in private

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

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rented accommodation. This means we need to find them.

## Why are we doing this?

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We need to know who is out there trying to improve things for tenants so we can work with them and we also need to know what has and has not worked when people and groups have tried to solve problems for tenants in private rented accommodation. This means we need to find these groups and individuals in order to understand what the problems are, particularly the local problems.

## What can you do to help?

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We have an initial list of towns and cities and for each of them we need people to 'go out' on to the Internet and Social Media and find any evidence of people on their own or in groups, organised or not - talking about and organising in some way to deal with a problem or set of problems associated with renting somewhere to live in the private sector. We need you to find these people, categorise what it is they are concerned about and are doing and then let the union know what you found and where.

## What are we looking for?

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Two things really, we want you to find the on-line material(s) that help you answer the questions set out below and we want you to send us the answers and a comprehensive list of the material you find on-line and that are relevant to the union - now and in the future.

## Answers to these Questions

- How and where do local people find a property to rent?
- Where do people look for help in recovering their deposits - Citizens advice, charities, solicitors etc?
- Do people have to pay agents fees in the locality and what are they?

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

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- Very important - we are looking for any groups or individuals who represent the interests of private rented tenants in their locality - it may be an organised group, a Facebook group or just a meeting. The best result would be a name or names, and a way of contacting them - telephone number, email, address for example?
- What sort of properties are available in the private rented sector in the locality?

#### And a List of resources

We would like you to send us a list of the places, web site addresses, social media accounts, twitter and Instagram feeds, whatever you find that could be useful for us to develop a database of the people, issues, groups, actions that are relevant to the National Union but occur locally.

#### 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 do anything before they are comfortable **that they know how and what to do.**

**To get started simply email us at [volunteers@tenantsunion.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@tenantsunion.co.uk) and use the term online volunteer as the subject line of your email. We will be in touch as soon as we can.**

