

TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

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LANARKSHIRE
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD



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(*Note Lanarkshire Housing Association, hereinafter referred to as LHA)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 LHA is committed to tenant participation as a process where we can share information and ideas with our tenant's on how to improve our housing stock and related services.
- 1.2 This strategy outlines how we will support tenants and the resources we will make available to them for effective tenant participation.
- 1.3 We see tenant participation as an evolving process, ensuring services are sensitive and responsive to customer needs and seek feedback on all aspects of service to inform future service delivery.
- 1.4 We provide services to tenants, sharing owners, owner occupiers and potential service users in the Lanarkshire area. The nature and location of our properties allows us to utilise a variety of participation methods, which are responsive to customer's needs.

2.0 LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

2.1 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the first legal tenant participation duties for social landlords. One of these duties is we must have a tenant participation strategy that sets out how we will engage with our tenants and involve them in the way we take decisions about housing services.

This legislation also requires us to set out how we will work with registered tenant organisations and to maintain a publicly available register of tenant organisations.

We must consult with tenants and registered tenant organisations when we make a change to housing services or policies that will have an impact on tenants.

We must provide information to tenants on the level of service they will receive.

2.2 Housing (Scotland) Acts 2010 & 2014

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 created the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, housing applicants, homeless people and other customers who use services of social landlords.

The Regulator measures how well social landlords are performing against outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and reports this on its website.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 brought in duties to consult tenants on changes to group structures and mergers, antisocial behaviour and housing allocations.

2.3 Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced in 2012 and reviewed in 2017. It is a series of outcomes and standards that all social landlords should achieve for their tenants.

Each year, we must complete a self-assessment called the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) that explains how we have performed. This allows our performance to be compared against other social landlords and against national averages. It also provides a framework for tenants to measure how well we are performing through our Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

There are three Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes that relate specifically to tenant participation:

- **Participation:** Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with
- **Communication:** Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides
- **Equalities:** Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services

- 2.4 We will consult tenants on the publication of annual performance standards. We will ensure that all tenants receive a copy of our Annual Performance Report along with the standard performance report issued by the SHR each year, in compliance with the requirements of the Charter.

3.0 AIMS

The Tenant Participation strategy aims to:

- Provide opportunities for tenants to influence services, neighbourhoods and decision-making, at a level which suits their needs
- Meet statutory duties of the Housing (Scotland) Acts and the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Achieve excellent performance of the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter by supporting independent tenant scrutiny
- Develop effective communication with service users, in an accessible format
- Assist with training and support for tenants
- Support the growth and development of established Tenant Engagement activities.

4.0 BENEFITS OF TENANT PARTICIPATION

There are clear benefits to involving tenants in the way we take decisions about housing services.

- Improved services that represent value for money
- Higher tenant satisfaction when we co-design our services with you
- Fewer complaints when we work together with tenants
- Better job satisfaction from staff if you're happy with the service you're receiving

5.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN TENANT PARTICIPATION

Here is a summary of some of our key achievements over the course of our previous three-year tenant participation strategy. Our new strategy will match or exceed our previous achievements.

5.1 The progress we have made to date in participation includes:

- Quarterly newsletters, which will be developed to include key performance areas
- Reviewed tenant information leaflets
- Published Customer Service Standards
- Introduced repairs satisfaction surveys

- Completed our annual rent review consultation process
- Carried out independent three yearly tenant and owner satisfaction survey
- Introduced post contract evaluation following all planned maintenance work
- Published our annual performance report
- Promoted membership, development, and support for the tenant focus group.
- Developed and supported the training of the newly formed Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
- Completed a Tenant Scrutiny review of our void standard.

5.2 Areas we need to do more work on:

Develop local events – hold a series of local events where you can come along, take part in engagement activities, complete surveys and let us know what the priorities are for the local area. We will promote these at the start of every summer on the website, in tenant newsletter and on social media.

Tenants' and residents' associations – we can help you set up groups to discuss local issues, plan events and improve your local area. We offer funding to cover your costs, provide places to meet and deliver training on how to run your group.

We will help you register your group as a registered tenants organisation RTO, so it has a formal right to be consulted when we are reviewing our policies and service.

Develop a consultation register – where you share your views from the comfort of your home. Let us know what you think about our proposed changes to policies and services. There's no requirement to come to meetings.

Get digital – develop a digital platform to help you get involved.

Communications panel - we will work towards the introduction of a communications panel will also decide whether publications can be badged as 'tenant approved'

Tenant Scrutiny – We work in partnership with our Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG) to measure how well we deliver housing services.

This is a group of tenants who give up their free time and work hard to influence our strategies and policies. Their role is to act independently in

the interests of tenants and assess how well we perform against service standards and Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes.

The Panel reports findings to senior managers and to Committee. These reports help demonstrate whether services provided represent value for money.

Recommendations for improvement are made that are based entirely on objective evidence gathered during the inspection process.

The TSG consists of up to six tenants, meets quarterly and is supported by the Housing Team and an independent tenant engagement specialist (Tenants Information Service).

If you are interested in any of the options listed above, please contact 01698 269119 or email enquiries@lanarkshireha.com.

6.0 FUNDING AND SUPPORT

- 6.1 We will provide training and development opportunities for staff, tenants and groups to promote successful participation.
- 6.2 We will assist with accommodation costs for meetings or offer the use of our meeting facilities. We will also provide transport to our office and refreshments.
- 6.3 We will assist with designing, printing, copying and delivery of authorised literature and we will facilitate independent advice from Tenant Advisory Groups when required.

7.0 WORKING WITH REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS (RTOS)

An RTO is an independent organisation set up to represent tenants' interests on housing and related issues. We will work with our RTOs when we are reviewing policies, making changes to services or introducing new ones.

Publicly available register of tenant organisations shows which areas have RTOs in operation.

We will provide support to help tenants set up new groups and become registered. All tenant organisations registered must meet the criteria set out in our registration scheme.

RTOs must hold an annual general meeting each year. They must elect a committee with office bearers, including at least a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer.

They must open a bank account and have their accounts independently audited annually.

In addition, RTOs must develop a constitution that states the name of the group, the area it covers and contain an equal opportunities agreement.

We understand this might seem like a lot of work, but we can help you set up your group, assist you to draft your constitution and hold your first general meeting.

Once your group is registered as an RTO, you can ask us for funding to cover your costs.

We will also find you somewhere suitable to hold your meetings and offer you training on committee skills.

Registration criteria for RTOs will comply with Scottish Government guidance as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

7.1 Grant Assistance is available to RTO's and is based on the number of properties represented. Applications for grant will also be based on meeting RTO registration criteria.

Grant Funding will be awarded in the following bands:

Number of Properties	Annual Grant
Less than 50	£100
50 – 100	£200
Over 100	£300

Registration will be effective for 3 years, with RTOs required to submit an annual return compliant with registration criteria.

8.0 TENANT FOCUS GROUP

The Tenant Focus Group was established in 2015 to promote tenant and resident involvement. Membership also allows residents to be involved and help improve our services in mixed tenure areas. **Appendix 2** details focus group information.

The group meetings are informal and a good way of getting to know other residents, association staff and governing body members. This group assesses policy reviews and legislative changes as well as providing input on publications such as the annual performance report.

9.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We will engage with our tenants openly, inclusively and diversely. Our tenant participation activities will be delivered with consideration of the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

9.1 Equalities Scottish Social Charter outcome

“Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

9.2 How we help you get involved

We want to provide activities which are easy to access and will provide support for tenants who want to get involved in a way that suits them.

Tenants told us location and travel to meetings is the biggest barrier, so we are committed to increasing opportunities at a local level. Our housing team will work with tenant participation staff to prioritise areas for local tenant participation.

We will advertise opportunities in the tenant newsletter, on social media and our website. We are always looking for new people to become involved and want to challenge the perception that tenant participation is only for a select few. Housing and other frontline staff will promote and encourage tenants to become involved.

10.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

10.1 We will monitor the effectiveness of our tenant participation through customer feedback and report to the Housing Services Sub Committee on development of this Strategy and achieving objectives.

10.2 This strategy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

Appendix 1

CRITERIA FOR REGISTERING AND DEREGISTERING REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS

The Criteria for registration of tenant organisations is set out within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Registration of Tenant Organisations) Order 2002. In accordance with this legislation, LHA will maintain a Tenants Group Register, which will hold details of the name of the group, contact address of the group, area of operation, website address and patterns of meeting dates.

The criterion for registration of Tenant Organisations is as follows:

The organisation must have a publicly available written constitution that sets out:

- its objectives and area of operation
- how people can become members of the organisation
- the way the committee will operate
- how the business of the organisation will be conducted
- how decisions will be reached democratically
- how funds will be managed
- arrangements for public meetings
- arrangements for an annual general meeting (AGM) and
- how changes can be made to the constitution

The organisation must have a committee that:

- (after the first year) is elected at an AGM
- has at least five members
- can co-opt others onto the committee during the course of the year
- has elected office bearers
- holds meetings that are open to any member of the organisation
- can demonstrate that decisions are reached democratically and
- Promotes equal opportunities.

The organisation must operate within:

- A defined geographical area, which consists of housing stock owned and managed by the Association, or landlord with whom it is seeking to register
- Membership of the group and participation in its activities must be open to all tenants and residents within that community or defined area of operation

Membership of the organisation and participation in its activities must be open to all eligible tenants within its defined area of operation.

The organisation must have appropriate accounting records and present an annual financial statement to the AGM.

The group must clearly demonstrate that it is committed to equal opportunities, representing the interests of its members and that, when consulted by the registering landlord; it can represent the views of the tenants of the registering landlord in its defined area of operation.

In assessing application for registration, the group must submit the undernoted information in order that their registration may be approved: -

- The written constitution
- Names and contact addresses of committee members (identifying the office bearers)
- A map/ and or description of the area of operation and
- A statement setting out how the organisation plans to engage with its members and how it will represent their views

Removal from Register

A Registered Tenants Organisation can be removed from the Register in any of the following circumstances:

- The tenants organisation no longer meets the registration criteria or
- The tenants organisation ceases to exist or does not operate or
- There is mutual agreement between the landlord and tenants organisation

Removal from the register will take place only after a period of notice of 3 months is provided.

Appeals

A tenant organisation may appeal against a landlord's decision to:

- not register the organisation or

- remove the organisation from the Register or
- Not remove the organisation from the Register

The Housing Services Sub Committee will consider the appeals process in the first instance, thereafter the second appeals process will be considered by the Regulation & Inspection Division of Communities Scotland, on behalf of Scottish Ministers. An appeal should be presented to the Scottish Housing Regulator after the Associations internal appeal procedures have been exhausted.

FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION

Resident involvement – Tenant Focus Group

Becoming a **Tenant Focus Group** member will allow you to be involved and help improve our services.

Seeking the views of tenants, owners and service users is important to Lanarkshire Housing Association (LHA). Your views assist us to improve our services and meet customers' needs. Focus groups give tenants and residents an opportunity to put forward ideas and propose changes.

One way to do this is becoming involved in a **Tenant Focus Group**, which will allow members of the panel to discuss various topics and consider possible changes to how we do things.

The group meeting will be informal and a good way of getting to know other residents and Association staff.

Being a Member of the Tenant Focus Group Panel

Tenants and residents will have a say on our policies and procedures. . Effective tenant participation will lead to improved empowerment, allowing customers to be more involved and inform decisions about how we could improve services and provide better value for money.

Becoming a member of our new Tenant Focus Group is the next step to putting residents and tenants at the heart of everything that we do.

Members of the Tenant Focus Group will meet members of our Governing Body (Management Committee) and can also act as critical voice for tenants to scrutinise our performance, highlight what is good and what could be better and make recommendations for improvements.

An example of areas which could be considered by a Focus Group are:

- Looking at our performance reports
- Anti-social behaviour target times
- Reviewing our website and tenant participation
- Tenants Handbook
- Information Leaflets
- LHA self-assessment
- Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Rent Review

- Repair response times
- Energy Efficiency
- Void property Standards
- Communication with tenants

(This list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed by the group or identified areas for consultation)

Become a Tenant Focus Group member.

You can join our **Tenant Focus Group** by completing the application form enclosed and giving us details of your particular areas of interest.

Once you are 'signed up' we will contact you and ask you to come along to a meeting. Other ways to be involved include, from time to time we will contact you on areas of interest using one of the following methods: phone or email, a personal visit, a postal survey, or inviting you to a Focus Group meeting.

Tenant Focus group meetings

Tenant Focus groups meetings will be held in our office and likely to be held every couple of months.

Focus group meetings are not open to the general public

Focus Group meetings may be called in response to matters arising which require discussion and feedback from residents.

Being a member of the group brings customers and staff together to improve services. We wish to listen to tenant views of particular aspects of services they have used.

Apply now to be a member of the group.

We are actively looking for tenants now who are interested in becoming a member of the Tenant Focus Group Panel. Please let us know if you want to be involved by completing the enclosed application form.

Training

Members of our Tenant Focus Group panel will receive an induction and training programme

If you are interested in being involved in our Customer Panel, please complete the enclosed application form, email us at enquiries@lanarkshireha.com or telephone us at 01698 269119.

**Lanarkshire Housing Association
Equality Impact Assessment Tool**



Name of the policy / proposal to be assessed	Tenant Participation Strategy	Is this a new policy / proposal or a revision?	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment			
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / proposal	The aim of this strategy is to outline how we will support tenants and make resources available for effective tenant participation.		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? (e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)	Tenants, owners and any customers contacting LHA. It also provides staff with a clear guide on how the organisation views tenant participation.		

<p>3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy / proposal ? (e.g. the benefits to customers)</p>	<p>To provide tenants with the opportunity to influence services and decision making at a local level.</p> <p>To meet the statutory duties of the Housing (Scotland) Acts and the Charter.</p> <p>To improve communication, performance and develop our tenant engagement activities.</p>
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<p>4. Which protected characteristics could be affected by the proposal? (tick all that apply)</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation </p>

<p>5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the protected characteristics listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.</p> <p>n/a</p>

	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)
<p>6. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4</p>	<p>These groups were identified as potentially benefiting through our commitment to make reasonable adjustments to the way in which we communicate in cases where customers have a specific need e.g translating from English to another language, braille etc</p>	

7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (*This might include collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts*).

Arrangements require to be in place e.g if we need to translate documents (we are already members of Happy to Translate)

Signed:



Housing Services Director 28.05.24

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed:

Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report