

TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

JUNE 2021



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 tenants 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, REGULATION & PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 This strategy has been developed to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, including the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) details outcome and standards that all social landlords should aim to achieve. There is also a requirement for all RSL's to report these outcomes in an annual return to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 2.3 The Charter advises tenants on how they can help shape their landlord's services and how well they deliver them.

In this respect we aim to:

- ensure tenants and customers are aware of what they can expect from LHA and help them hold us to account
 - focus our efforts on achieving outcomes that matter to tenants and customers
 - provide the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well landlords are performing and enable the Regulator, tenants, customers and social landlords to identify areas of strong performance and areas where improvement is needed
- 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 AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 LHA's Tenant Participation Strategy, endorses the principles of the National Strategy for Tenant Participation (**Appendix 1**).

3.2 This strategy confirms our aims to:

- provide a range of options to enable tenants to become involved, at a level which suits their needs
- ensure our decision making process is open and accountable
- develop effective communication with service users, in an accessible format
- assist with training and support for tenants
- promote and support the already established Tenant Focus Group and look at training to develop tenant scrutiny

2021-2024 Objectives - for the period of this strategy we will continue to develop engagement opportunities for our tenants.

4.0 ACHIEVEMENTS IN TENANT PARTICIPATION

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

- quarterly newsletters, which will be developed to include key performance areas
- quality information leaflets
- tenant focus group consultation events
- tenant consultation events
- estate walkabouts
- published Customer Service Standards
- customer satisfaction surveys
- annual rent review consultation process
- annual tenant conference
- independent three yearly tenant satisfaction survey
- tenant consultation linked to our cyclic & planned maintenance programme
- post contract evaluation following all planned maintenance work
- annual publication of our performance report together the Scottish Housing Regulator's Landlord Report
- suggestion box located at our reception area
- promotion of membership of the tenant focus group and develop training on tenant scrutiny
- owners satisfaction surveys undertaken every three years in compliance with the ARC

4.2 Areas we need to do more work on:

- consult with tenants and applicants on the proposed changes to our Allocation policy
- progress our tenant portal and social media options
- review the format of our annual tenant conference

5.0 FUNDING AND SUPPORT

- 5.1 We will provide training and development opportunities for staff, tenants and groups to promote successful participation.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 We will assist with designing, printing, copying and delivery of authorised literature and we will facilitate independent advice from Tenant Advisory Groups when required.

6.0 REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS (RTOs)

- 6.1 We will assist groups to become Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs), helping them build their capacity as independent organisations and a focus for consultation and participation.
- 6.2 Registration criteria for RTOs will comply with Scottish Government guidance as detailed in **Appendix 2**. A register will be maintained of all RTOs which will be publically available and an annual return on these details submitted to the SHR.
- 6.3 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.

7.0 TENANT FOCUS GROUP

- 7.1 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 3** details focus group information.
- 7.2 The group meetings are fairly 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.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 8.1 We are committed to equal opportunities and ensuring equal access to our services. We address equality and diversity, responding to different needs and service requirements of customers, regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, nationality, marital status, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.
- 8.2 In addressing equality and diversity, we will engage with customers to ensure there are no barriers to participation and that service users are not excluded from participation.
- 8.3 We will promote engagement with harder to reach groups to ensure equality of opportunity for service users to influence our policies and access to our services.
- 8.4 We aim to gather information from service users to assess ethnicity and disabilities aiming to prevent discrimination in any form.

9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 This strategy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

APPENDIX 1

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION: KEY PRINCIPLES

Tenant Participation to meet legal requirements of equal opportunities.

A culture of trust, respect and partnership should be developed between tenants, members and staff to aim for better housing conditions and services.

Tenant Participation is a continuous process where information, ideas, and power are shared.

Good Tenant Participation allows all parties to contribute to the agenda.

Information must be clear, timely and accessible.

Processes of decision making to be open, clear and accountable.

Adequate time to be given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly before meetings.

Tenants' organisations to be recognised as independent by the landlord.

Working relationships to be flexible and dependent on local circumstances, for example, Tenant Participation in rural areas.

Adequate resources to be provided for organisation, training, and support.

APPENDIX 2

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.

APPENDIX 3

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.

They 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.