

Tenant Participation Policy

Purpose:	To establish DPHA's Policy on tenant participation
Review Date:	20 February 2019
Guidance:	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001/2010 The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017 National Strategy for Participation "Partners in Participation" Scottish Government's Guide to Successful Tenant Participation
Regulatory Standards:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. 2. The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities. 3. The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being and economic effectiveness. 4. The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
Date reviewed by Policy Review Working Group (PRWG):	20 February 2019
Date approved by Management Committee (or PRWG if delegated):	19 June 2019
Amendments	PRWG 20/02/2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dalmuir Park Housing Association (DPHA) recognises the importance of effective tenant participation both for the organisation and for individual tenants. In developing our Tenant Participation Policy(TPP) the Association believes that the benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:

- Better service delivery and improved value for money
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills
- Better communication between staff and tenants
- Better links between the association and our community
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial limitations
- Breaking down misunderstandings, helping to remove any mistrust between the association and tenants, and building mutual respect and understanding
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood
- Increased job satisfaction for staff

1.2 The Association recognises that there is no single means or best method of consulting with its tenants and will attempt to use methods of participation which best suit the identified needs and aspirations of those occupying our properties.

1.3 The Association acknowledges that owners are not covered by the Tenant Participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 but we regard them as being an integral part of our approach.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

2.1 Our policy aims to:

- Give tenants real opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process of the Association
- Offer a range of options for becoming involved through long term and short-term methods on an individual and collective basis

- Comply fully with all legal, regulatory and good practice requirements with regard to tenant participation
- Ensure tenants groups are adequately resourced and supported in order to enable them to fully take part in the participation process and provide independent support if required
- Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information processes to meet the needs of all our tenants
- Ensure that tenant participation and consultation is subject to regular review and improvement

2.2 The key principles for effective tenant participation reflect those included within the National Strategy for Participation "Partners in Participation" is to:

- Enable a process of joint agenda setting involving tenants from the outset
- Ensure developing tenant participation is a continuous process
- Ensure adequate and appropriate timescales are in operation
- Recognise the independence of tenant's groups
- Ensure flexible working relationships between landlord and tenant
- Provide adequate resources for tenant's groups
- Provide equal opportunities to participate for all our tenants

3. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

3.1 This policy will comply with all legislative, regulatory and good practice requirements which includes the following:

3.1.1 Legislation:

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Section 53 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on landlords to develop a Tenant Participation Strategy. The Association is committed to continually developing and improving Tenant Participation practice throughout the Association and across the whole range of housing and housing related services.

3.1.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) Guide lines:

The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017

Outcome 1: Equalities

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

Outcome 2: 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.

Outcome 3: Participation

Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

3.2 In addition, this policy includes good practice guidance from the National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation and the Scottish Government's Guide to Successful Tenant Participation.

4. COMMUNICATION

4.1 The Association recognises that good communication is crucial to the effectiveness of our tenant participation policy. The Association is therefore committed to ensuring that:

- All literature and communication with residents should be clear, concise and easy to understand. Printed material must be in plain language, jargon free, clear and attractive in format
- A translation service will be provided where appropriate. Facilities will be made available on request for those who have either a visual or hearing impairment
- The person dealing with an issue or responsible for an area of service is clearly identified in all communications.

5. METHODS OF PARTICIPATION

5.1 This policy outlines a range of ways to enable effective participation to take place. This range of options will offer choice to tenants and the opportunity to participate at a time, level and method which suits them best.

5.2 Membership of the Association/Management Committee

- 5.2.1 Membership of the Association and election to the Management Committee represents the simplest and most direct way to participation in the Association. Membership costs £1 for life and is automatically open for all residents.
- 5.2.2 The Association wishes to encourage as many tenants as possible to join. This will be done in two ways:
- a) Existing Tenants - The Association will provide regular information within its newsletter and website promoting membership and encouraging tenants to join the Association.
 - b) New tenants - All new tenants will be given information on membership when signing their tenancy agreement. In addition, it will be further promoted at the "settling-in" visit.
- 5.2.3 Shareholders will be encouraged to stand for election to the Management Committee. The relevant newsletter issued prior to the Annual General meeting (AGM) will publicise when the AGM is taking place and will actively encourage members to stand for election.

5.2 Other Key Methods of Participation

Effective participation and consultation will depend on all tenants being made aware of relevant policies, service reviews and all relevant new initiatives and events. This will be achieved through:

- **Newsletters**

The Association uses its newsletters to give a summary of key issues/proposed changes and encourages feedback from tenants to promote greater involvement in the Association.

- **Annual Landlord Report on the Charter**

Each year the Association produces a Landlord Report on our performance to comply with the requirements of the SSHC. The Association is required to distribute this to all tenants by the end of October each year.

- **Resident Survey**

The Association carries out regular surveys of residents as a requirement of the SSHC. It will also carry out surveys to gain specific information to help the Association in planning future service provision e.g. new tenants' satisfaction with home, adaptations, delivery of services etc.

- **Tenants Handbook**

The tenant's handbook provides updated, comprehensive information on the Association's services and functions. It also provides specific information for new tenants on participation opportunities.

- **Leaflets**

Leaflets are used mainly to provide a summary of information from the Association's policies or to explain how procedures work e.g. making a complaint.

- **AGM**

The Association holds an AGM which is open to all our shareholders in September each year. At the AGM a will report on all activities during the year is provided, along with information about performance and annual accounts.

- **Tenant Panels**

Tenant panels provide an opportunity for small groups of tenants and local residents to meet to give their opinions on a range of subjects.

- **Public Meetings**

Such meetings may be held for a whole area or only for street/close meetings, where appropriate. The Association will to ensure, as far as possible, that feedback on issues raised at such meetings is provided to tenants.

- **Open Days/Evenings**

The Association appreciates that people have busy lives and that some people are often unable to attend a meeting with fixed times. The Association will therefore consider holding open days/evenings at times which allow people to drop in and talk to appropriate staff about any issues.

- **Digital Media**

The Association has a website as a means of two-way communication with our residents. This will be utilised as far as possible to encourage interaction with residents to report repairs, apply for houses or to make complaints and to provide feedback etc. The use of e-mail or texting will also be utilised, as well as social media or mobile apps as modern advances in technology becomes the norm for our residents.

- **Interviews**

Tenants frequently attend the Associations offices to meet with staff. Staff are encouraged to use these opportunities to obtain feedback from residents on our performance, policies or to highlight opportunities for tenant involvement.

- **Satisfaction Surveys**

Satisfaction questionnaires are also routinely used to gauge satisfaction in the delivery of services received by residents including close cleaning and grounds maintenance. Satisfaction questionnaires are also given to tenants when they receive a new kitchen, bathroom or heating systems/boilers.

6. ISSUES FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

6.1 The Association is committed to consulting with tenants, either individually or collectively through our Resident Panels on issues of housing service and strategy. Specific areas for consultation will include, but are not limited to:

- Allocations Policy
- Tenancy conditions and Agreements
- Rent levels, budgets and proposed rent increase
- Estate Management/regeneration works
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Satisfaction in services delivered to customers, i.e. close cleaning, grounds maintenance contracts
- Income Arrears & Debt Management policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy

7. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

7.1 The Association will ensure that adequate funds are available for tenant participation, which will cover the cost of:

- Printing and distributing newsletter
- Other information produced for residents
- Customer satisfaction survey(s) or to provide any other feedback mechanisms
- Any meetings held
- Support or training for groups or individuals
- Child care to attend sessions

- Translation support
- Transport support

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

8.1 The policy will be subject to continual review and is intended to grow and evolve over time as circumstances change.

8.2 A range of information and feedback will be collected to enable staff, tenants and residents to assess the success of the policy in meeting its aims and objectives. We will consider and review:

- How participation took place i.e. methods used and number of people who participated?
- What subjects and topics did consultation and participation take place?
- What arrangements were made to ensure there were equal opportunities to participate?
- What feedback was received from tenants?
- How were the results of participation reflected in the outcome?
- Satisfaction levels of participants about the opportunity for involvement and with the quality of information provided?
- How much did consultation and participation cost?
- What were the timescales for participation and consultation?

8.3 Internal Monitoring

Customer satisfaction levels will be reported to Management Committee quarterly as part of the Associations performance report. The level of consultation and responses on individual topics, for example the responses to our annual rent review consultation, will also be routinely report to Management Committee.

8.4 External monitoring

8.4.1 Scottish Housing Regulator:

Performance against the Charter is reported annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The four Charter outcomes directly relate to tenant participation, in the areas of communication, participation and rents/service charges.

8.5 This tenant participation policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle, unless there is regulation or legislative change that require this to happen prior.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

9.1 The Association committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. This is reflected in its Equality and Diversity Policy.

10.0 COMPLAINTS

10.1 Although the Association is committed to providing high levels of service, it accepts that there may be occasions where you may not be not satisfied with the service you have received. The Association values all complaints and uses this information to help improve our services. The Association's Complaints Policy describes the complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

11.0 GDPR

11.1 The Association will treat all personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how all data will be used and the basis for processing all data is provided in the Association's Customer Fair Processing Notice.