

TENANT PARTICIPATION POLICY



September 2016

Getting involved

It is your knowledge and experience of our services that is our most valuable tool in learning how we can improve. We want you to be able to provide this knowledge and experience without any barriers and participate in a way that suits you.

Tenant participation policy

GETTING INVOLVED

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INTRODUCTION

Glen Housing Association is committed to community and tenant participation and information sharing with our tenants. We use the term “tenant participation” to cover a whole range of activities aimed to give tenants real influence in the decision making process and provide opportunities for them to monitor and review the key aspects of the services we provide that are important to them.

We believe tenant participation is a two-way process, involving the sharing of information and ideas, with tenants able to influence decisions, monitor levels of service and take part in matters which affect the quality of their lives. Successful tenant participation delivers benefits for staff, landlords and tenants creating a culture of trust, respect and partnership.

We recognise that the wish of a tenant to participate, and the extent of that participation, may vary with changing circumstances and that the needs of the Association must be balanced by the needs of our tenants and the communities that we serve. Tenant participation is about sharing knowledge, decision making and working with staff, managers and our Board to ensure the services we provide meet your needs.

BACKGROUND

Tenant participation is about you influencing the decisions made about the service and management of your homes and neighbourhood.

It is a legal requirement for all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to do this as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. You have the right to be consulted on:

- Glen Housing Association’s tenant participation policy and practice
- Any changes to rents and service charges
- Changes to policies and service standards relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the requirement for a Scottish Social Housing Charter which came into effect in 2013.

The Charter sets out the 14 outcomes that all landlords are measured against on an annual basis – this is called the Annual Return on the Charter. The emphasis of the Charter is on tenants scrutinising the performance of our services and governance.

Glen Housing Association’s Tenant Participation Policy describes how tenant scrutiny relates to other types of tenant participation at Glen Housing Association. Scrutiny is using tenants

Tenant participation policy

experience to improve services (with a focus on evaluating and reporting on performance) and is considered different from other tenant participation activities such as Registered Tenants Organisations, consultations, focus groups, tenant satisfaction surveys and events.

The aims of a scrutiny panel are:

- To work on behalf of tenants, and in partnership with Glen Housing Association, to achieve improvements to services provided.
- The Panel shall strive, through investigation, analysis and discussion, in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, to achieve the best service performance and value possible.
- To increase tenant influence in decision making and the strategic and operational development of services.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As a long-term goal, we aim to develop tenant participation in all areas of policy and standards of service, particularly in relation to any areas which tenants have identified as priorities and in relation to proposals that are likely to affect tenants significantly.

To date the Association has performed reasonably well on Tenant Participation, with informal day to day participation remaining a key element to the services we provide. The more formal consultations and participation activities carried out in the past have also been relatively successful. The Aims and Action Points will look to build upon our current practices and seek new ways to consult with and provide more opportunities for participation for our tenants.

To this end, a number of aims are set out with the intention of informing tenants that we are committed to seeking more formal feedback as well as maintaining our traditional informal approach.

The Association's goal in the long term is to empower tenants to take more decisions collectively about the services that are provided for their benefit and also to monitor the provision of such services.

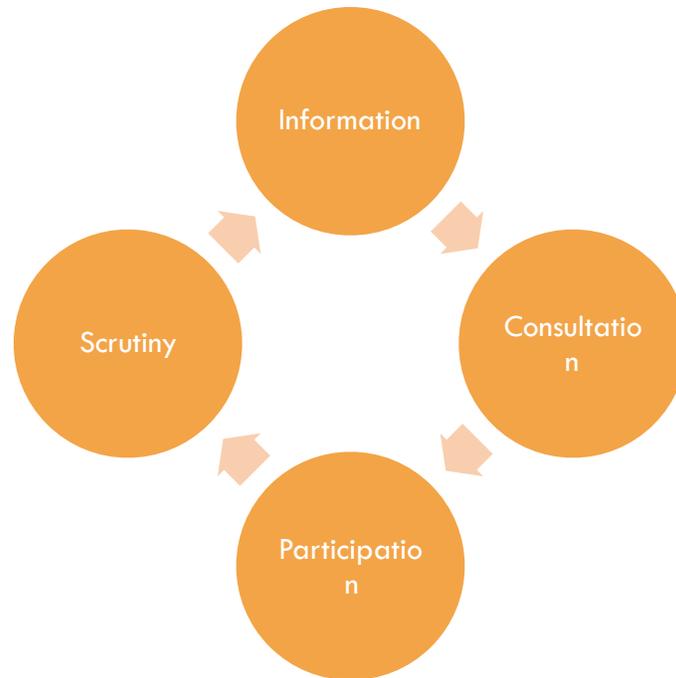
Our Tenant Participation Outcomes

1. Tenants participate and influence discussions and decision making processes on service delivery and service development.
2. Tenants scrutinise performance and governance to ensure best practice and to influence service improvement and strategic decision making.
3. There will be a range of opportunities and methods developed for tenants to equip them to participate effectively.
4. Information and communication material will be accurate, timely and accessible.
5. We will have informed, supported and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence and challenge decisions.
6. Tenants will review and evaluate how we support and develop tenant participation

We have a separate Action Plan which details how we will meet these outcomes.

Our approach to tenant involvement is based on four inter-related principles - information, consultation, participation and scrutiny.

Information



All written information provided by the Association will be easily read, relevant, and accessible. The Association will do its best to ensure that the method of communication will be tailored to the needs of individual tenants, taking into account tenant preferences.

The majority of written information will be in the form of a personally addressed letter signed by a named individual. Leaflets will be used to provide less formal information and Newsletters to provide more general information. These will be made available in a range of accessible formats as required.

Public meetings, information sessions and open days will be held when appropriate. The purpose is to keep tenants informed on a variety of topics relating to the management and maintenance of their homes, the Associations new building developments and community regeneration.

Consultation

The Association intends to consult tenants on many aspects of housing management policy and practice, particularly in relation to policy or procedural changes which are likely to directly affect them or their homes.

Consultation can take place at both an individual or group level and can take a variety of formats. The purpose of consultative exercises will be:

- to obtain a clear picture of tenant priorities
- to gain tenants views on particular subject areas

- to encourage tenants to play a part in future activities
- to develop the relationship between the Association and its tenants generally

The results of the consultation exercises will inform decision making.

Participation

We would encourage tenants to become involved in the running of the Association by:

- attending events such as fun days and charity days
- participating in Focus group meetings
- helping with the formation of tenants' groups and Registered Tenants Organisations. [See Tenant Association Start-up Pack]
- participating in consultations
- becoming members of the Association
- standing for election to the Board of Management

Scrutiny

We will give tenants opportunities to review the Association's performance on the services provided to them and to hold us to account on the provision of those services.

We will do this by agreeing the priorities with tenants and agreeing the framework on how tenants can monitor service provision and provide recommendations and feedback aimed to improve services for all.

Our scrutiny arrangements will be led by tenants and allow them to set out which services they want to scrutinise and how they will do this with appropriate support from staff and external agencies as required.

The overall aim of scrutiny activities is to monitor services and to improve services by identifying gaps and building on strengths.

Our Tenant Participation Strategy will set out aims and action points on how we will engage with tenants in relation to the inter-related principles described above.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

We will encourage the formation of Tenants' groups and provide support through funding, training, equipment, meeting facilities and staff support particularly in the early stages as detailed in our Tenant Association Start-up Pack. Where the Association does support a Tenants' group and the group folds we will attempt to ensure proper dissolution of the group as per its Constitution.

We will provide assistance in terms of travel, childcare and other incidental costs which may act as a barrier or deterrent to tenants wishing to get involved. We will offer training, development and support opportunities for those tenants who have expressed a desire to get involved and feel that this would be beneficial.

Each aim and action point will give an indication of the resources necessary for achieving the stated aim. Financial and other resources will be monitored via the monthly Board of Management Meetings Reports and monthly accounts.

We have a Community Worker who leads on the development and delivery of the Tenant Participation Policy and Action Plan. Staff across Glen Housing Association can also help you get involved and we have a dedicated community work and tenant participation budget which can help you:

- arrange local meetings within your community
- organise and fund activities for your area
- access advice and training

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Getting involved doesn't always mean attending meetings – there are a number of ways to do this including fun days, estate walkabouts, and online surveys. It is up to you how much or how little you want to participate.

Involving

others

This policy focuses service outcomes,

Membership of Glen Housing Association

on

Board Membership

improving influence

Estate Walkabouts

Tenant-Led Inspections

e-Panel and Armchair Group of

decisions and consultation issues

that relate to

However, as part activities, Glen Association likes to whole community,

Residents' Associations

of its

Registered Tenant Organisations

tenants. Wider Role Housing involve the social

other

Consultation Register

Focus Groups

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

landlords' tenants, home owners,

local businesses and charities, as well as its own tenants.

The whole can be involved development and communication meetings, consultation events, questionnaires, landlord forums and newsletters.

Events and Family Fun Days

in

Tenants Conference

community service public

through

All Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) can also decide if they want to include other interested parties in their membership and will be encouraged by Glen Housing Association to adopt an inclusive approach, if appropriate, in dealing with neighbourhood issues that affect all residents.

Support for other interested parties to be involved in local groups is provided for both tenants and owners. Both can also become Board members to play an active role in the governance of the organisation.

Glen Housing Association takes a view that all residents are equally important and part of the same community, and the principles and ethos of tenant participation is extended to all residents. Some issues affect tenants only but many issues involve the wider community.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We recognise the rights of all individuals and groups within the community to be given the opportunity to be involved in tenant participation, in line with our Equality & Diversity Policy.

We will take all necessary steps to ensure that they are afforded this opportunity, e.g. through provision of transport if requested, using easily accessible buildings for meetings, providing for child care and arranging language interpreters and literature translations where required.

We will actively encourage under-represented groups to become involved with the Association and will engage with community stakeholders to specifically target such parts of the community.

TENANT PARTICIPATION AND THE ASSOCIATION'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

One of Glen Housing Association's aims is to improve the lives of more people. We will do this by providing homes that people want to live in and by delivering high quality services that are affordable to people on limited incomes.

Providing Homes

We will build new rented homes that meet people's needs over the next five years and we will ensure that our homes are well maintained, affordable to heat and are adaptable as people's needs change.



- Tenant participation will help us achieve this by involving and consulting tenants in our strategies and plans for development and asset management, energy, affordable warmth and sustainability. This will ensure tenants priorities and views inform our plans for meeting future and current needs.
- Tenants in new developments will be encouraged to feedback their views via satisfaction surveys and are offered support to establish local tenants/residents groups or other participation opportunities.

Building communities

We will support communities and encourage residents to influence decisions in their local area and work with other organisations which operate and invest in their communities.

- Tenant participation will help us achieve this by encouraging local tenants and residents groups to identify local issues and solutions to ensure our services meet their needs and expectations as well as improving service and satisfaction levels.
- We will develop local partnerships in which tenants and residents groups can influence improvement and development of services to their neighbourhood

- We will support digital communication to meet the needs of tenants



Valuing People

We will:

- Find out from tenants what they want from us, work with them to improve our services, and their lives.
- Support and encourage our employees and Board members to give of their best at all times.
- Share our knowledge and experience to help others and promote the impact of our work.
- Treat people as individuals and with respect at all times.

Tenant participation will help us achieve this by identifying ways to improve services and customer satisfaction. Tenants will be involved in service and policy reviews including action planning from the customer satisfaction survey and performance improvement planning.

We value the time, skills, knowledge and experience that tenants give by volunteering as part of tenant participation activities and we will commit resources to providing training, support and personal development opportunities for tenants.

We want tenants and other tenants to find it easy to participate, so that there are no barriers to getting involved. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out for the Tenant Participation Strategy and all consultations and participation activities will consider impact.



Working Together

We will help more people improve their chances of getting and sustaining employment, grow our business according to social enterprise principles, to increase the extent of our work and ensure we take care of our resources and use them to best effect.

- Tenant participation can help us achieve this by developing a framework to measure value for money and efficiency of services. Tenant participation will help us deliver better more efficient and responsive services. Tenant scrutiny of services and governance is a key part of this strategy and will build on the culture of collaboration and partnership between tenants, staff and Boards. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will work to ensure that Glen Housing

Association's Annual Return on the Charter matches tenants reality of the service by using evidence they gather independently.

- Tenant employability can be assisted by tenant participation skills development and opportunities advertised via tenant participation communications such as newsletter and tenants organisations. We shall encourage tenants and residents groups to work in partnership with other local organisations to set up or expand community facilities, and to attract employers to recruit locally and set up or expand local employment.

