



# Tenant Led Scrutiny Framework

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This document sets out Ayrshire Housing's approach to tenant led scrutiny. Tenant scrutiny is the term we use to explain the process whereby our tenants have the opportunity to independently review how well we are delivering our services.

Our Framework puts tenants in the driving seat to evaluate how well we are performing and to work with us to achieve change.

We are committed to involving tenants in shaping our services. We recognise that the best way to achieve this is to work in partnership with our tenants.

This document provides a guide for all the partners to work to. Our Framework sets out the role of tenants and Ayrshire Housing's staff and Board to work together to deliver self-assessment and service improvement.

## **2.0 Tenant Scrutiny Explained**

Tenant Scrutiny aims to give tenants more influence in holding Ayrshire Housing to account for its decisions, performance and conduct.

Section 31 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, through the establishment of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter), set the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The Charter therefore provides the legal framework, ensuring tenants input drives forward performance improvement.

Changes to regulation in Scotland following the introduction of the Charter and a new independent Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) requires us to be more proactive in self-assessment and to involve tenants in this process. We are responsible for meeting the Charter standards and outcomes and to report to the SHR and to tenants on the progress we are making each year.

Tenant scrutiny is the name given to tenants being involved in the self-assessment process where they independently scrutinise landlord performance against the Charter. Feedback from tenant scrutiny is reported to us to drive forward improvements.

## **3.0 Our Objectives**

The positive results that we are seeking to deliver are:

- Meeting tenants' needs by putting them at the centre of everything we do.
- Tenants taking ownership of the Scrutiny Framework and working with us to improve services and standards.
- Building the capacity of a group of tenants with the skills and knowledge to independently review how we are performing.
- Ensuring we have tenants involved in monitoring our services.
- Working in partnership with tenants to influence service delivery and improvements.
- Formally recognising the important and independent role of the Tenant Led Scrutiny Group (Scrutiny Group) and wider tenant involvement in our Scrutiny Framework.

This document outlines our Framework for tenant scrutiny. It complements and supports our other corporate strategies and frameworks such as those set out in:

- Our Business Plan;
- Our Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

#### **4.0 Our Approach**

Our Framework provides a range of ways that tenants can get involved in monitoring our services.

#### **5.0 Tenant Scrutiny Group**

The Scrutiny Group was launched in January 2017 and is at the core of our Scrutiny Framework. The Scrutiny Group is a group of tenants who meet to independently review how well we are performing against the Charter and to make recommendations for improvement.

**The role of the Scrutiny Group is to:**

- Develop an annual programme for scrutiny work at the beginning of each year. A minimum of four meetings should be scheduled over the year.
- Identify areas of Ayrshire Housing's services that need to be reviewed.
- Independently scrutinise services and performance in accordance with the Charter.
- Assist in the process of establishing performance indicators.
- Make recommendations to Ayrshire Housing's Management Team and Board.
- Report to tenants on progress being made.
- Review Ayrshire Housing's Annual Return on the Charter to the SHR. This report details how well Ayrshire Housing are performing against the Charter.
- Review and monitor its own performance.
- Promote the work of the Scrutiny Group and encourage tenants to get involved.
- Promote equality and diversity.

**The Scrutiny Group's role is based on the following core standards:**

- Being accountable to tenants.
- Being open and honest.
- Reflecting the needs and aspirations of tenants.
- Making recommendations based on evidence.
- Respecting the decision-making role of the Board.

#### **Membership**

Membership of the Scrutiny Group should ideally reflect and recognise the existence and importance of the different ages, races, genders, abilities and lifestyles within our communities to ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged as a consequence of its activities.

### **Make-up of the Scrutiny Group:**

- Any tenant is eligible to apply to join.
- Ayrshire Housing employees who live in an association property are not eligible to apply.
- Independent advisors and members of Ayrshire Housing staff will be invited to participate as and when required.

### **Competence of Membership**

Membership of the Scrutiny Group must be collectively competent. Measures to ensure this is the case must include:

- Mechanisms being adopted to reflect the geographical spread of Ayrshire Housing properties.
- Ensuring the Scrutiny Group reflects the diversity of Ayrshire Housing tenants.
- Establishing a mix of tenants who are new to being involved and others who have more experience.
- Giving due consideration to the inclusion of co-opted members to take part in the scrutiny of specific business areas.

The Scrutiny Group has a Terms of Reference which details its aims, membership and how it operates.

### **Safeguards**

Given the status, strategic importance, and profile of the Scrutiny Group its operations require a high degree of probity.

Safeguards will therefore be required and include:

- Adopting a Code of Conduct.
- A requirement for members to commit to training and development.
- Providing access to independent support to assist the Scrutiny Group.

The Scrutiny Group will develop an annual programme of scrutiny work. Priority areas for review will be decided upon from a wide range of information including:

- Ayrshire Housing's Business Plan.
- Annual Return on the Charter reports.
- Performance Reports.
- Mystery Shopping.
- Feedback from Focus Groups.
- Feedback from Tenant and Resident Groups.
- Surveys.
- Compliments and Complaints.
- Tenant led inspections.
- Feedback from Board meetings and reports.
- Consultation feedback exercises.
- Benchmarking.

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The Scrutiny Group will provide Ayrshire Housing's Board with a copy of its annual work programme. The Scrutiny Group will report annually to Ayrshire Housing's Board in October on the activities that it has been involved in during the year. The annual report will normally be a written report prepared and presented by the Scrutiny Group to the Board.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Scrutiny Group has a Code of Conduct which sets out the roles and responsibilities of being a group member. Members are required to sign this when they join.

### **Role of the Board**

The Board are committed to using the information provided by the Scrutiny Group to improve service delivery and standards. The Scrutiny Group will decide the areas to be reviewed to ensure that tenants' priorities and views are being taken into account.

Whenever the Scrutiny Group provides a report with recommendations to the Board, the Board will take account of their views before making a decision. The Board will provide feedback to the Scrutiny Group on how its views have influenced their decisions.

## **6.0 Getting local tenants Involved**

Ayrshire Housing has a Tenant Participation Strategy which outlines how tenants can get involved.

There is a range of ways that tenants and customers can get involved and give their views including:

- **Estate Walkabouts**  
This provides an opportunity for tenants and Ayrshire Housing staff members to jointly inspect local housing areas. Estate walkabouts are a useful way to jointly identify an issue or problem and agree action to resolve this.
- **Setting up Tenants and Residents Groups**  
Support and funding are available if there is interest to set up a local tenant and resident group. If you are interested in setting up a local group, please contact your Housing Officer.
- **Focus Groups**  
Ayrshire Housing will organise Focus Groups to seek tenants and customers' views on how well we are performing and to consult on any policy changes.

All these consultation methods provide an opportunity for tenants to meet with Ayrshire Housing staff and to give their views. It is essential that the staff who are responsible for the day-to-day delivery, as well as policy and strategy get to hear what works and what needs to be changed.

Ayrshire Housing are committed to working closely with the Scrutiny Group to agree annually how we involve tenants in scrutiny. Feedback and outcomes of these scrutiny activities are reported to our Management Team as well as on our website.

## You Speak .... We Listen

In addition to the range of community involvement and scrutiny opportunities there will be a number of ways that tenants can give their views.

These include:

- **Complaints and Compliments** - are encouraged and can be received by phone, through My Home (our online Tenant Portal), in person, by e-mail and through our website.
- **Customer Satisfaction Surveys** – we will listen to tenant views about our performance and what requires to be changed.
- **Newsletters** – we will keep tenants and customers updated on what we do in our newsletters. Tenants can also feedback their views in a range of ways by telephone, through My Home, in writing or on-line through our website.

## 8.0 Commitment and Support

We are committed to supporting tenants to be at the heart of our self-assessment process.

We will continue to provide training and support for staff and the Board to improve how we work and communicate with our tenants where required.

Developing the capacity of tenants to scrutinise effectively and challenge what we do is critical to achieving our objectives. A range of commitments are in place to support the empowerment of our tenants. Our Housing Management team are working closely to support the Scrutiny Group to agree its training and support programme.

### Tenant Scrutiny Group

Training needs will be identified at the start of each scrutiny activity, or annually, whichever comes first.

Training will include:

- The Code of Conduct.
- The Charter indicators and regulatory requirements.
- Effective scrutiny and performance management.
- Understanding Ayrshire Housing's services and policies.
- Equality and Diversity awareness.

The Scrutiny Group have the support of an independent adviser to provide advice and information as required.

Ayrshire Housing's Performance and Quality Manager and a representative from the Housing Management team will act as the Link Officers between the Scrutiny Group and Ayrshire Housing. The Link Officers will ensure that the Scrutiny Group has access to relevant information and the Ayrshire Housing staff it needs to carry out its scrutiny work. The Link Officers will be responsible for keeping Ayrshire Housing's staff up-to-date with the Scrutiny Group's work.

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The Scrutiny Group will receive administrative and operational support from the Performance and Quality Team.

The Management Team and Board are committed to listening to the views of the Scrutiny Group and taking their recommendations into account before decisions are reached.

Ayrshire Housing will work closely with the Scrutiny Group to ensure that all our written materials and publications are clear, useful and jargon free.

### **Local Tenant Involvement**

Our Housing Management team will work closely with the Scrutiny Group to provide a range of opportunities for tenants to give their views about our performance.

## **9.0 Measuring our Success**

The impact of the Scrutiny Framework will be monitored by the Scrutiny Group to ensure it is working well. Each year the Scrutiny Group will include an assessment of the impact of the Scrutiny Framework.

The Scrutiny Group will carry out an annual review to look at what has worked for them and what needs to be developed and agree its annual work programme. The work and impact of the Scrutiny Group will be reported in Ayrshire Housing's newsletters, Annual Report and on our website.

Ayrshire Housing will review the Scrutiny Framework every three years to measure its effectiveness. Tenants will be involved in this process to identify the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of Ayrshire Housing's services.

We will keep up to date with scrutiny best practice. Our Scrutiny Group members will be provided with information on how we are progressing to meet the Charter and how other landlords are progressing with self-assessment. Regular benchmarking information will be provided to the Scrutiny Group to compare our performance against similar local and national organisations.

### **Contact Ayrshire Housing:**

If you have any questions or would like to get involved, you can contact Caroline Donald:

Tel: (01292) 880120

Email: [c.donald@ayrshirehousing.org.uk](mailto:c.donald@ayrshirehousing.org.uk)

### **Accessibility**

We can supply this document in a print size to suit. It is also available in Braille, audio and other formats, and in other languages. Our website also has several accessibility features which you may find useful.

### **Equalities and Human Rights**

Ayrshire Housing is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this Policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or

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sexual orientation. In delivering this Policy, Ayrshire Housing's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the association's Equalities and Human Rights Policy.