



# TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2021-2024



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Approved: 28.06.2017 (Approved at Board Meeting)

Reviewed: 26 August 2020 (Board Meeting), 25 August 2021 (Board Meeting)

Current to: 28 August 2024

## Background and Introduction

The Housing Scotland Act 2001 places a duty on Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to publish a strategy for involving tenants in the services they receive, or any decisions that will affect them.

In summary we must:

- Show how we will keep our tenants informed.
- Explain the issues that we will consult our tenants on.
- Explain how we will take into account our tenants' views.
- Provide information on the resources put in place to make the strategy work.
- Maintain and publish a register of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs).
- Respond to comments from tenants and RTOs.
- Have regard for the views expressed by tenants and RTOs in our decision making.

There are particular requirements as part of this legislation. For example, we are required to consult tenants on proposed changes to rents or service charges and we must take account of their views.

We must also consult our tenants when significant proposals are to be made in relation to:

- Repairs and Maintenance (including standards of service).
- Housing Management (including standards of service): this includes allocations and transfers, estate management and anti-social behaviour.
- Any possible change of landlord.
- Our Tenant Participation Strategy.

Our Tenant Participation Strategy has been developed and reviewed to meet the requirements of the legislation and to ensure that our tenants have a wide range of opportunities to participate and influence the quality of services provided.

## Scottish Social Housing Charter



The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 laid the foundations for the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) which came into being in 2012. The Charter sets 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. This Strategy relates specifically to Outcome 3 of the Charter - **Participation**:

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s

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decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. This outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and other customers to become more capable of involvement.” – The Scottish Government.

We recognise the importance of tenant participation and wider community engagement in the operation of the organisation. This is reflected in our Mission set out in the association’s Business Plan. It is also important that tenants and other service users find it easy to influence our decisions at a level that they feel comfortable with.

**Our Mission:** *“We aim to enhance the wellbeing of our tenants and the wider communities of Ayrshire through high quality housing and related services”.*

Our Mission is underpinned by the following core values:

- **We Listen** to everyone we work for and with.
- **We Engage** with our tenants, the community and our people in shaping our work.
- **We Show Respect** striving to provide equal and accessible services to all.
- **We Seek Challenge** to ensure best value to our tenants and benefits to the wider community.



This strategy aims to set out how we will engage with our tenants and the communities they live in, so that there are opportunities to actively take part in decisions to change or improve our services and to ensure we are meeting their needs and expectations.



## Current Position

Our current strengths relate to our focus on maintaining our estates to the highest standards and to have a Board and a staff team that takes pride in doing so. We listen to tenants' views and opinions, many of which are expressed on an informal and individual level. We place great value on the importance of personal contact with tenants and although we have increased the online and digital options for contacting us these have not been at the cost of reducing the face to face or personal approach.



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Weaknesses include the absence of local Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) for our tenants to become engaged with and for us to communicate with. Previous activity involving our staff working with groups of tenants in some estates created opportunities for the development of more group-based engagement. However, most of these have not been sustained beyond the resolution of the issues that led to their initial development. As such we rely on much more informal and individual contacts.

In general, historically we have had relatively low levels of formal tenant engagement and very low levels of engagement with local or national tenant organisations. Many of our estates are small in terms of the numbers of tenants living in our properties. This may partly account for the low interest in developing more group or formal channels of engagement and participation. Issues that arise or are brought to our attention are more commonly raised by individual tenants who often do reflect the general views of the other residents in the development. Despite the low levels of formal engagement structures, in our last tenant satisfaction survey carried out in 2019, 87% of tenants indicated they were satisfied with the opportunities they have to participate in the decisions the association makes. Also, 92% of tenants said they were satisfied with how we keep them informed.



We have been working closely with the Tenants Information Service (TIS) for a number of years with the focus of the partnership with them on establishing and supporting an active and effective tenant led Scrutiny Group. Areas of service addressed by the group have included our reactive repairs service and our estate management activities, both areas

highlighted as among the most important for our tenants when invited to comment during our 3 yearly comprehensive tenant satisfaction surveys. Training and support are provided by TIS to the Group to ensure that they have the appropriate and adequate resources, skills and knowledge to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. Outputs from the Group are reported to the association's Board and their recommendations are fully assessed and a number of service changes and improvements introduced as a result.

Our Board is comprised of 12 members split evenly between tenants and representatives from the wider community. This is a formal arrangement and ensures strong tenant representation and input into the direction of the association as well as scrutinising, monitoring and holding to account the work of the staff team. Board members serve a fixed term of office and are then required to either stand for re-election or retire from the Board. Elections for tenant places on the Board are a regular feature and demonstrate a healthy interest from the wider tenant body to participate in and contribute to the governance of the organisation. Additionally, tenants from the wider body can also be co-opted onto ad hoc, short-term working groups involving staff and Board members. The healthy interest in standing for Board membership and contributing positively to the association's growth and governance is something which we are very encouraged by and led to the increase in Board places for tenants a number of years ago. We have been very pleased to report that it has been a very long time since there were any vacancies for tenant Board members.

## Strategic Aims and Objectives

Through this strategy we will aim to:

- 🏠 Fully comply with statutory and regulatory requirements relating to tenant participation.
- 🏠 Achieve effective outcomes for our tenants as outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 🏠 Make sure that our tenants continue to have opportunities to influence, inform, scrutinise and feedback on the services we provide.
- 🏠 Offer options for tenants to be involved in a way that suits them whether through formal or informal channels.

## Strategic Priorities for 2021 – 2024

Our priorities for the 3 years covered by this Strategy are to:

- 🏠 Continue to develop and promote a wide range of methods of communication with tenants including the increased use of online and digital technology. This will help ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to express their opinion and have their voice heard. Such communication choices will be designed to be engaging and reflect the varied circumstances of our tenants and their households.
- 🏠 Promote engagement activities with tenants including informal and individual engagement so that opportunities are available to all tenants to get involved at a level with which they are comfortable.
- 🏠 Provide appropriate training for staff and tenants including Board members and tenants who wish to contribute as members of the Scrutiny Group.
- 🏠 Continue providing the tenant led Scrutiny Group with the support and resources required to facilitate their work in scrutinising performance and service delivery across the association's activities.
- 🏠 Encourage tenants to come forward with suggestions for local estate management projects which will enhance the attractiveness of their environment or improve the security of their homes and neighbourhoods.
- 🏠 Make greater use of the learning opportunities that arise through our Complaints Handling Procedures.
- 🏠 Continue to expand our tenant Feedback and Satisfaction Framework including increased reporting on outcomes to our Board.

- Establish and develop the community use of the Hub facilities (The Local) in our expanded office premises.

**The Local**



- Support use of Community Grants for groups or individuals who meet relevant criteria



## How We Will Deliver the Strategic Objectives

- Newsletters
- Website
- Facebook and Twitter

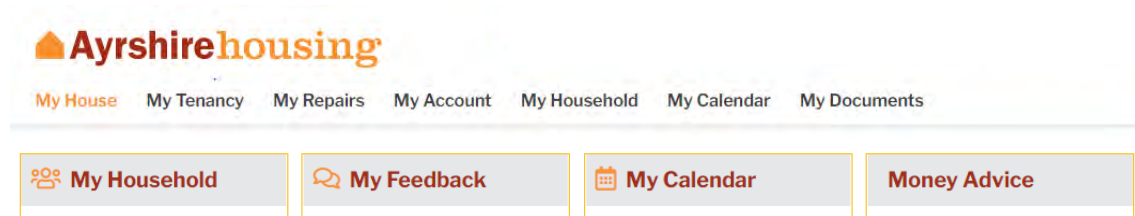
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## 🏠 My Home – Online Surveys and Feedback opportunities



- 🏠 Messaging apps and other instant feedback opportunities e.g., WhatsApp
- 🏠 Video calls e.g., WhatsApp, Facetime, Teams
- 🏠 Complaints Handling – monitoring, review and learning outcomes from complaints
- 🏠 Enhanced Reporting to Board on Tenant Satisfaction across a wider range of activities
- 🏠 Increase engagement with local organisations and promote use of The Local
- 🏠 Speak and communicate with individual tenants and record outcomes where possible
- 🏠 Comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2022)
- 🏠 Budget facility for tenant led estate management projects
- 🏠 Estate Walkabouts
- 🏠 Continue engagement with TIS to support scrutiny including training for participants
- 🏠 Provide support and training for tenant Board members
- 🏠 Funding by Community Grants

## Monitoring of Performance

An annual report will be submitted to the Board detailing actions taken to support delivery of the strategic objectives.

## Resources

We set an annual budget for tenant participation activities, and we will ensure that resources are continually reviewed to ensure that they are adequately addressing the requirements of the Strategy.

Resources will include staff time as well as the expenses such as stationary, hiring of venues, catering, travelling, childminding and other reasonable expenses incurred.

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Resources will also cover consultants' costs such as those associated with our comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey and the appointment of external support organisations e.g., TIS or TPAS (the Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

Resources will be available for tenants' publications and newsletters. This will include the costs of typing, copying and posting.

Where relevant training or development needs are identified resources will be made available for all participants, including tenants, staff and Board members.

Funding will be made available for tenants and residents organisations. Where a Registered Tenants' Organisation is established, discussions will take place with the RTO about the level of resources required and the arrangements for monitoring and controlling expenditure.

## **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 and 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.