

Forth Housing Association Ltd

Tenant Participation Policy

Code: HM 22

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Cross reference: HR20 Dealing With the
Public – Risk Assessments
HR 21 Customer Service
HM 19 Start of Tenancy
M10 Reactive Repairs
GOV09 Equalities
GOV05 Complaints



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Management Committee wish to ensure that tenants are at the centre of our business. This policy establishes the principles by which Forth Housing Association will seek to ensure that this is the case.

2.0 Our Aims and Objectives

2.1 We aim to:

- Improve housing services by involving tenants, and tenants & residents groups, in decisions about housing services.
- Promote tenant participation as an integral part of the housing service.
- Provide good quality, accurate and easily understood information to tenants, and tenants and residents groups.
- Improve communication & feedback to tenants and tenants & residents groups.
- Encourage and support tenants and tenants & residents groups who express an interest in being involved.
- Provide appropriate training on the tenant participation process.
- Ensure that appropriate resources are in place to meet these objectives.

3.0 What do we mean by Tenant Participation?

3.1 “Tenant participation is about tenants and tenants & residents groups taking part in the decision-making processes and influencing decisions about;

- housing policies
- housing conditions
- housing and related services

Tenant Participation is a two-way process, which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve housing conditions and services.” Scottish Executive 1999

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

Tenants have the right to:

- access information on policies about housing and related services.
- be consulted on issues that affect their homes.

- participate in decisions that affect the services they receive and have enough time to consider draft proposals and put forward their views.
- form independent representative organisations and apply for registration from their landlord.

To this end we will:

- develop a tenant participation strategy and put it into practice.
- provide resources and support to make sure tenant participation is effective.
- regularly review how well tenant participation is working.
- set up arrangements for registering tenants groups.
- consult tenants and tenants & residents groups about proposals for housing management and the standard of service we provide.
- consult tenants and tenants & residents groups on the tenant participation strategy and ensure that it complies with equal opportunity requirements.
- consult tenants and tenants & residents groups on proposals to sell, transfer or demolish our housing.
- take on board tenants' views before decisions are taken.
- provide a statement of the amount of resources which it proposes to commit to tenant participation.
- maintain a register of residents groups.

4.0 TENANT PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

4.1 In delivering tenant participation we will apply the following standards;

- Provide support and information within 10 working days of the request on setting up and running a tenants and residents group.
- Provide information which is in Plain English & jargon free.
- Attend meetings as appropriate when requested by tenants, or tenants & residents groups, where reasonable notice is given.
- Provide information, support and advice on housing related issues to tenants and tenants groups, within 10 working days of the request.
- Undertake an annual review of information provided to ensure we provide information in an easy to understand way and in accessible formats.
- Facilitate and arrange training to meet the joint needs of tenants and staff where a need is identified.
- Undertake an annual review of the register of tenants groups.
- Provide advice and support to groups on achieving registration status within 2 working weeks of their request.

- Provide a minimum of 4 working weeks consultation period for seeking views from tenants and tenant & residents groups.
- Take on board views given by tenants, and tenants & resident groups, and provide feedback within 4 working weeks following consultation exercises.

Where either tenants or tenants & residents groups feel that we are not applying the standards detailed above they should use our Complaints Leaflet. (Copies available from the office).

5.0 Information, Consultation and Participation

5.1 To maximise tenants opportunities to raise issues and be able to influence decisions we will use a wide range of participation and consultation methods.

5.2 Information

We will provide tenants and tenants & resident groups with information through the following;

- Letters/ Fliers
- Newsletters and Information Leaflets
- New tenant packs
- Tenants Handbook
- Information sheets
- Annual report
- Website
- E Mail updates to E Group
- Annual Statement of Rent Account

5.3 Consultation

We will consult with tenants through the following:

- Surgeries/ meetings
- Surveys & questionnaires
- Residents events
- Focus and working groups
- House visits
- Conferences
- Armchair monitor
- Tenants Groups
- Website
- Newsletter
- Suggestion Box/Card
- Letters

5.4 Participation

We will encourage participation through the following:

- Promoting membership to the Association and appointment to our management committee
- Information & support to tenants & residents groups
- Grant funding and support for new tenants & residents groups
- Arrange tenant participation training for staff, Committee Members and tenants as required.
- Provide assistance and training to tenants who wish to establish a tenants group.

6.0 TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

6.1 A detailed strategy for tenant participation and community engagement will be incorporated annually into the Internal Management Plan (IMP).

7.0. RESOURCES

7.1 Resources and Support

To support and encourage the development of tenant participation all tenants will have access to the following resources:

- Administrative and organisational support to tenants and residents groups.
- Meeting room available in our offices.
- Tenants and residents group grants.
- Free use of photocopier.
- Use of our Newsletter & Website to promote organisation /events and available minutes.
- Opportunities to attend other tenant and tenants & residents groups events.
- Advice and assistance on setting up and running a tenants & residents group including accessing funding.
- Training events and information including joint training with housing staff.
- Support of our staff including attendance at meetings, where appropriate.
- Access to independent advice and assistance.
- Guidance and support to all groups to assist them to become Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) although we are more than willing to work with tenants at whatever level of participation they wish. We recognise that not all groups may wish to become RTOs, our resources and support are available to all tenants who wish to work with us to improve services.

To support and encourage the development of tenant participation within we will:

- Include tenant participation within staff job descriptions, where appropriate.
- Provide staff and management committee training, where appropriate.
- Include tenant participation feedback within Staff meetings.
- Encourage communication between staff members to bring tenant issues to the attention of Managers.
- Provide a positive working environment for staff to encourage Tenant Participation.
- Report performance in Tenant Participation to the Management Committee in an annual Committee Report. This will include feedback and follow up on surveys, reviewing minutes from tenants and residents meetings to monitor progress, progress with the annual Action Plan, the numbers of events held and the numbers attending.

7.2 Tenant Participation Funding

We will set an annual dedicated budget for tenant participation and will consider:

- Hosting Tenants Conferences.
- Providing publicity material to raise the profile of tenant participation.
- Hosting consultation events such as surgeries, focus groups and policy review groups.
- Providing grant support to tenants & residents groups.
- Booking meeting accommodation.
- Prizes for any events/competitions.
- Undertaking training needs assessment & training for tenants and tenant & resident.
- Tenants Newsletter
- Joint Tenants Satisfaction Surveys.

8.0. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Management Committee and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.