

# **Forth Housing Association 3 year Tenant Engagement Strategy – 2023 to 2026**

## **1. Background - Legislation**

### **1.1 Housing Scotland Acts 2001/2010**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provides a legal framework for tenant participation to take place in Scotland. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 refocused but does not supersede the Tenant Participation obligations of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the standards that are included in the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2012(SSHC) updated November 2022, that all landlords should achieve when performing housing activities.

#### **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.

### **1.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) - Participation – Standard 3**

The SSHC states that...*tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in and influence their landlord's 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, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants and, other customers to become more capable of involvement – this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.

## **2. Introduction**

At Forth Housing Association we are committed to community and tenant participation. We believe that tenant participation is a two-way process, involving the sharing of information and ideas and providing feedback on those ideas. Tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in matters which

affect the quality of their lives. By being involved our tenants help us to deliver an excellent service that meets their needs.

The Tenant Participation Policy was recently reviewed by our Tenants View and subsequently approved by our Management Committee and this strategy underpins this policy.

Our Business Plan states that our values have a tenant first focus with every decision taken with integrity and fairness ensuring that we are looking after tenants' interests in a caring and collaborative way. Therefore, our Tenant Engagement strategy is a key area for Forth, with the ambition of achieving Gold Standard for Participation with TPAS (Tenants Participation Advisory Service)

Our tenant engagement results are amongst the highest compared to all Scottish housing associations and are above the RSL (registered social landlord) average. The results from our recent independent tenant satisfaction survey in 2023 were that:

**98%** of our tenants feel that we are **good at keeping them informed** about services and decisions.

**98%** of our tenants of our tenants are **happy with the opportunities given to participate** in the decision-making process.

However, we do not want to be complacent. Therefore, this document sets out our current activities and new ways of engaging. It considers that individuals want to participate at different levels, from one-to-one discussion to formal appointment on to the Management Committee as a Committee member.

### **3. Purpose – What We Want to Achieve?**

The purpose of this three-year Strategy is to ensure that we have mechanisms in place to facilitate effective tenant engagement. This will empower tenants, improve services and create accountability within a framework of service improvement.

Our aim is to build upon our existing Tenant Engagement Strategy that puts customers at the heart of shaping our services by creating more opportunities for them to support or challenge our performance, and to work with us to achieve our vision.

#### **3.1 Benefits of participation**

Getting involved can bring positive benefits to tenants & residents, as well as our staff and the Association. The Scottish Government's Guide to successful participation lists these benefits as follows:

- Better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants which brings value for money
- Working together with respect for common understanding
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have skills and confidence to influence decision making
- Increased satisfaction with services and neighbourhoods
- Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement recommended improvements.

#### **4. How Will We Do It?**

This overarching Strategy is supported by a detailed Action Plan that sets out timescales for each main engagement over a 3 year period to maximise opportunities for tenants to engage. The detailed Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

##### **4.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

We will seek to ensure that in all tenant participation activities we are fair, equitable, non-discriminatory and reflect and respect the diversity of all our people.

We will promote different ways to be involved to ensure all tenants have equal access to participation and address any barriers which prevent anyone from being involved.

We will consult and involve tenants from all areas regardless of age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

We will ensure all tenants are able to participate in all aspects of engagement such as meetings, conferences, discussions, surveys etc. We will:

- provide information that is clear, easily understood and jargon-free
- provide information in a range of formats, such as large print, Braille, CDs, different languages, on request
- hold activities in locations and venues which are accessible
- provide access to digital hearing systems at meetings and conferences
- arrange meetings on days and times which take account of needs and preferences
- provide transport or pay reasonable expenses to travel to activities, where required
- meet reasonable carer and/or childcare costs.

## 4.2 Sustainability in delivering our services

We will incorporate sustainable practices into how we deliver our services including how we engage with our tenants. We will do this by reducing carbon emissions; increasing energy efficiency; reducing, reusing, and recycling waste; promoting walking and cycling; using and promoting low carbon transport options; reducing unnecessary use of harmful chemicals wherever possible.

## 5. Tenant Engagement Activities - Current Ways To Get Involved:

**Reading - tenants newsletter.** Tenants read our newsletter and let us know their views or send in their ideas for articles and features.

**Armchair monitor** - tenants let us know how well we and others are performing in making their area an attractive place to live, simply by looking out their window and letting us have their comments.

**Focus group** - This usually meets to discuss a specific issue that affects tenants such as a new building development, parking etc. or a service tenants receive for example, close cleaning.

**Tenants' groups including registered tenants' organisations (RTO)** - Tenants can give their views by becoming part of a tenants' group. This enables tenants to come together to discuss issues which have been raised by them or us. Meetings are generally held within the community or at our offices. Training and funding are also available. Transport and crèche facilities are provided if necessary.

**Participation E Group** - Tenants can join our E Group by providing your email address. This group provides us with feedback by email on issues affecting Forth.

**Membership of the Association** - Any individual aged 18 years or over may apply for membership. Anyone who is already a tenant can apply for membership from the age of 16 years.

**Our Tenants' View Forum** - has agreed to: • meet 3 times per year • discuss Reporting of Key Charter Indicators • analyse general Performance Results • assist in producing the annual Charter Report to Tenants • discuss other policies that are under review at that time. There is also the option to attend via Teams if unable to attend in person. We offer training and skills development as necessary.

**Satisfaction Surveys** - We carry out a formal independent tenant satisfaction survey every 3 years, where we ask a range of questions that help us shape our services and ensure that we have high levels of satisfaction.

We also carry out ad hoc surveys e.g., after planned improvement works such as new kitchens. This helps to ensure we are delivering quality products to our tenants. We will continue to use this method of engagement, and this can give a voice to tenants that don't want to engage in other ways.

**New Build Surveys** – We carry out new build surveys after the completion of each development. This provides feedback for our Design Guide and assists with benchmarking for value for money.

**Complaints** - We use complaints to improve services where the complaint highlights a service improvement is required. We report the outcome of the complaints in our quarterly Newsletter in a You Said We Did format.

We also produce an Annual SPSO Complaints Report which provides a summary of our overall complaints handling performance, what we have learnt from our complaints and what we have planned for the future in terms of our complaints handling.

**New Tenant Visits** - All our new tenants have a home visit by a Housing Officer within 6 weeks of signing for their tenancy. This allows our tenants to ask any questions whilst settling into their property and to raise any issues. Our Income Maximisation Officer also sees all tenants who require assistance with Benefits during this period.

**Texting** - We use texting to seek tenants' views on areas such as Repairs.

**My Forth** - Our on-line digital portal which enables tenants to access details of their tenancy, pay rent and update personal information.

**Conferences and Wellbeing Events** - We hold themed Conferences and wellbeing events which provide our Tenants with opportunities to provide feedback.

## **6. Engagement Strategy - New Activities**

This builds upon our other activities we currently do and introduces new opportunities.

### **Home Visit By Housing Officer**

We are introducing a programme of visits to all tenancies over the strategy 3 year period. At this visit tenants will be able to provide feedback on the services they receive.

Housing Officers will ask 3 main questions:

- How satisfied are you with our overall service?
- How do you wish to be involved in providing feedback?
- What could Forth do better to improve our services?

This feedback will be reported annually in our new Tenant Engagement Report in Spring.

### **Community Outreach – Cake, Coffee and Chew The Fat**

Our Housing Officers visit their Estates every 2 months. This is advertised in our Tenants Newsletter. In addition to this we will carry out a Community Outreach day every 6 months. The HO, IMO and Tenancy Sustainment will carry out this outreach work in our outlying areas who are out with walking distance to our offices.

These will be held in a local community centre (or equivalent) close to the development. Advertised well in advance via all our communication channels including Facebook, website, text and Newsletter, these events will provide an informal setting to obtain advice on benefits, debt advice and all tenancy issues. It will also provide increased opportunities for tenants to meet staff.

### **Annual Tenant Engagement Report – News Round-Up of Year**

A new annual report that will be produced from April 2024 detailing the activities of the year, and this will be a summary of each month with highlights. This will highlight what we have achieved together and how we are continuing to develop engagement opportunities for tenants.

### **Scrutiny Panel**

Facilitated by TIS these joint events with Rural Stirling Housing Association will enable tenants to come together to scrutinise the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) and the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator. (SHR).

### **TPAS Accreditation**

Facilitated by TPAS these 3 half day sessions are to discuss with staff and tenants the process, as Forth works towards accreditation by collecting the evidence required for accreditation including discussion of standards.

### **Collaborative Working with our Partners**

We will work with our partners on events to promote health and wellbeing for our tenants e.g. public health nutrition NHS Forth Valley, Active Stirling, Recyke-A-Bike, Stirling Community Enterprise, Dogs Trust Chipping etc

## **7. Our 3 Year Activities Calendar Listing Actions**

To underpin the strategy our Activities Calendar is attached at Appendix One and will enable tenants to view the options on offer during the calendar year over a 3 year period. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **8. Conclusion**

Within the plan we have built upon our existing mechanisms and provide a variety of engagement options for all our tenants to engage at a level they feel comfortable. Our staffing team, with the community outreach work, will enable us to be physically visible to all our tenants within the several communities we operate.

Cake, coffee and chew the fat will be our theme throughout and will also be included in an annual event to meet Management Committee in December.

## Appendix One - Tenant Engagement Strategy – Activities Calendar Aug 2023 to Dec 2026

### 2023/24

<b>March 23</b>	<b>TPAS Consultation with Tenants View</b> - Review of Tenant Participation Policy and consultation on Strategic Options Appraisal.
<b>March 23</b>	<b>Health and Wellbeing Conference</b> – including tenant consultation on Strategic Options Appraisal, Business Plan and Tenant Engagement Policy
<b>August 23</b>	<b>Launch</b> of Activities Calendar
	<b>Community Open Day</b> with Partners at Our Offices Before Schools Return
<b>August 23</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – Annual Assurance Statement
<b>September 23</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – Annual Assurance Statement
<b>October 23</b>	<b>Cake, Coffee and Chew the Fat</b> *Community Outreach – Plean, Fallin and Cowie
<b>November 23</b>	<b>Tenants View</b> - July to Sept Performance (2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter), Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice Issue
<b>December 23</b>	<b>Meet our Management Committee</b> – Mince Pies and Chew the Fat
<b>February 24</b>	<b>Tenants View</b> – Oct to Dec Performance (3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter), Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Annual Tenant Engagement Report – News Round-Up of Year</b>
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – ARC Return to SHR
<b>All year</b>	Armchair monitoring
<b>All year</b>	Housing Officer Visits
<b>All year</b>	Collaboration with partners including health and wellbeing events.
<b>Date to be confirmed.</b>	<b>TPAS</b> accreditation – staff and tenant consultation on tenant engagement and collection of evidence for TPAS accreditation – 3 half day sessions during year.



## 2024/25

<b>April 24</b>	<b>Easter Event</b> – Office Open Day – Meet Our Staff (Tenants and children in office, meet your Housing Officer, Property Services Officer, Income Maximisation Officer, activities for children)
<b>April 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – ARC Return to SHR
<b>May 24</b>	<b>Tenants View</b> – Jan to March Performance (4 <sup>th</sup> quarter), Annual Performance, Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice.
<b>May 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – ARC Return to SHR
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Cake, Coffee and Chew The Fat</b> *Community Outreach – Bannockburn, Cornton and Dunblane
<b>June 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – ARC Return to SHR
<b>July 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – Annual Assurance Statement
<b>Aug 24</b>	<b>Tenants Open Day</b> with Partners at Our Offices Before Schools Return
	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – Annual Assurance Statement
	<b>Tenants View</b> – April to June Performance (1 <sup>st</sup> quarter), Policy Review and Tenant Choice.
<b>Sept 24</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – Annual Assurance Statement
<b>October 24</b>	<b>Cake, Coffee and Chew The Fat</b> *Community Outreach – Cultenhove, St Ninians, Torbrex and Cambusbarron.
<b>December 24</b>	<b>Meet our Management Committee</b> – Mince Pies and chew the fat!
<b>Feb 25</b>	<b>Tenants View</b> – Oct to Dec Performance Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice
<b>March 25</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel with Rural HA</b> – ARC Return
<b>All year</b>	Armchair monitoring
<b>All year</b>	Housing Officer Visits
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## 2026/27

<b>April 26</b>	<b>Easter Event</b> – Office Open Day – Meet Our Staff (Tenants and children in office, meet your Housing Officer, Property Services Officer, Income Maximisation Officer, activities for children)
<b>May 26</b>	<b>Tenants View</b> – Jan to March Performance (4 <sup>th</sup> quarter), Annual Performance, Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice
<b>June 26</b>	<b>Cake, Coffee and Chew The Fat</b> *Community Outreach – Cornton and Dunblane
<b>August 26</b>	<b>Tenants Open Day</b> with Partners at Our Offices Before Schools Return
	<b>Tenants View</b> – April to June Performance (1 <sup>st</sup> quarter), Policy Review and Tenant’s Choice
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