

Guide to successful Tenant Participation



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1.0

INTRODUCTION



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This guide was originally developed in 2005 to provide good practice advice and support to those working in Tenant Participation (TP). It has been updated in 2018 by the Social Housing Services Team, within the Scottish Government to cover developments in Tenant Participation including tenant scrutiny and the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

1.1 Who is this guide for?

This Guide will be useful to tenants, tenant groups, Local Authority (LA) and Housing Association (HA) staff who want to know more about TP and who would like to develop their involvement and scrutiny activities further. It is designed for all staff and will be of particular use to staff with strategic responsibility for TP and scrutiny front line staff who work with tenants.

The case studies at the end of this guide demonstrate how effective TP can deliver quality services, involve tenants in assessing landlord performance and encourage improvements.

1.2 What is Tenant Participation?

The “National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999)” describes TP as being “about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies; housing conditions; and housing (and related) services. It is a two way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and service”.

The housing sector’s approach to TP in Scotland is underpinned by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (‘the Act’), which created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support TP. The Act introduced requirements for Landlords to have a TP strategy in place, register tenant and resident groups who meet prescribed criteria and to fund and support TP. It also gave tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) rights to be consulted and involved in landlords decision making on housing and related services.

Effective participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive, and it helps landlords deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities. Effective participation is, therefore, an important component of meeting the expectation to continuously improve landlord performance.



1.3 The benefits of Tenant Participation

When working well, TP delivers clear benefits for tenants, staff and landlords alike. These include:

- better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants which give value for money;
- working together for common goals with respect and understanding;
- informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions;
- increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood;
- identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement these recommended improvements.

The benefits of TP and the improvements in service delivery they bring will evolve over time as effective information, communication and participation structures strengthen. TP and scrutiny can only be effective where landlords are committed to, and have a culture of involving tenants in their decision making process and where the principles of TP are adopted throughout the organisation.

Its success very much depends upon landlords embracing TP at the most senior level, including elected members and committee members who are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation and its culture.

1.4 The legal framework for Tenant Participation

The Act introduced a legal framework for TP. It introduced rights for individual tenants and registered tenant groups to be consulted by their landlord on issues affecting them. Landlords have to take account of their views within a reasonable timescale. The Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and a Short SST, further gives tenants' rights to information and consultation.

Under the Act Landlords have to:

- have in place a TP strategy and review and monitor its effectiveness regularly;
- have a registration scheme for tenant organisations to register with them and keep a publicly available register of these RTOs;
- consult with tenants and RTOs on a range of housing and related services;
- provide a range of information to their tenants.

For more information about the TP requirements of the Act go to:

www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2001/20010010.htm



1.5 The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter). This sets out the standards and outcomes which landlords should be delivering to all social housing tenants, wherever they live. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was reviewed in 2016 with a revised Charter in place from April 2017.

It focuses landlord activity on services that are important to tenants and other customers, and encourages a culture of involving service users in the design, delivery and performance of services. To ensure this succeeds, tenants are empowered to work in partnership with their landlords to monitor and challenge decisions and performance.

The independent Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) (**see 1.6**) is responsible for monitoring, assessing and reporting on how well social landlords, achieve the Charter's outcomes.

The Charter sets out the following specific outcomes and standards for Communication and Participation:

Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

The Charter makes it clear that the outcomes on communication and participation should be reflected across the whole of a landlord's activities. It is clear that where these outcomes are being achieved a landlord's overall performance is better.

1.6 Role of the Scottish Housing Regulator

The SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authority housing services in Scotland. It was established on 1 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The SHR has one statutory objective, to: "safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by local authorities and housing associations."

The SHR monitors and reports annually on landlords' performance in achieving the outcomes and standards in the Charter. Landlords are required to provide information each year to report on their performance against the Charter. The SHR's landlord reports show every landlord's performance on the areas that matter most to tenants such as on repairs and quality of the home. In relation to Tenant Participation, each landlord report details – for example – how satisfied tenants are with their landlord keeping them informed about their services with the opportunities to participate in their landlords decision making processes. Tenants and landlords can access these reports and other information on the SHR website, and compare performance between landlords and against the national average.

More information on the SHR's responsibilities and landlord annual reports on the Charter can be found at: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

1.7 Tenant Scrutiny

Housing providers have been involving and consulting with their tenants for many years. As a result of the introduction of the Charter, they are increasingly going further by giving tenants and other customers formal opportunities to analyse and challenge their performance and decision making through tenant scrutiny.

The aim of scrutiny is to improve organisational performance and the quality and standard of services that landlords provide for their tenants. Successful organisations share a common way of working: they know, understand and respond to their current and future customers. They do this by developing approaches and mechanisms to engage with service users and involve them in decisions about their homes and the services they receive. Through scrutiny, tenants and other customers can make a substantial contribution to services and standards and the assessment of their landlord's performance. There is more on Tenant scrutiny at **2.6 Levels of Tenant Participation and scrutiny**.

1.8 Ensuring equal opportunities

The Act was a major landmark in re-enforcing and promoting equal opportunities in Scottish housing. The Act requires landlords to approach TP in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and observes equal opportunity requirements laid out the Equalities Act 2010.

The Charter also includes an outcome on equalities which states that: “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.” landlords should be meeting this outcome in all their activities.



2.0

TENANT INVOLVEMENT

2.0 TENANT
INVOLVEMENT



2.0 TENANT INVOLVEMENT

2.1 Landlords' approach to Tenant Participation

While all landlords already have a TP Strategy in place, TP is most effective where landlords have a clear culture of tenant involvement within their organisation. Partnership working between landlords and tenants achieves value for money and results in significant improvements to the quality of service delivery.

As TP continues to evolve within organisations, more staff are getting involved in consulting with and involving tenants in their areas of work. While some landlords employ dedicated TP staff to work with tenants and RTOs, good TP should be the responsibility of all staff within the organisation.

Successful TP also depends on landlords being open to partnership working and providing their tenants with the information, support and confidence they need to get involved. This includes sharing knowledge and decision making and working with staff, managers and Board/Elected members to ensure that the services provided are delivered efficiently and effectively and meet tenant needs. It also delivers benefits for staff, landlords and tenants creating a culture of trust, respect and partnership.

2.2 Tenant participation strategies and reviewing them

The term 'Tenant Participation strategy' comes from the Act. Under the Act, landlords must publish a TP strategy in consultation with their tenants and RTOs. The strategy should be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure that it is working.

A strategy is a flexible action plan that:

- sets out the landlord's commitment to involving tenants and tenant organisations in decisions about their homes;
- says how this will be carried out;
- details the resources available such as training and support;
- sets out a range of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) targets.

Implementing an effective TP strategy or reviewing an existing strategy, requires landlords and tenants to work together to review current participation arrangements and progress against targets. Reviewing TP will help landlords and tenants to determine:

- what progress has been made since the last review;
- whether tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords decisions at a level they feel comfortable with;
- any barriers to TP;
- what needs to be changed or developed;
- training and support needs;
- adjustments to the resources required.

When carrying out a review it is useful to undertake an audit of what is working well and what needs to be improved in conjunction with tenants and groups. There are checklists at Section 3 to help with this.

The review process should involve staff at all levels, elected members, Board members and of course tenants and tenant groups. It is recommended that strategies are subject to ongoing monitoring and are reviewed at least every three to five years unless anything significant prompts a review during this time. These timescales however should be agreed with tenants.

A comprehensive strategy includes:

- an introduction/foreword;
- the strategy's background (including the legal framework);
- aims and objectives;
- how the strategy was developed and who was involved;
- why the strategy is in place and the benefits of TP/scrutiny;
- links to other strategies and services;
- how tenants will be kept informed;
- consultation;
- giving tenants feedback;
- working with RTOs;
- resources;
- training;
- equal opportunities;
- action plan;
- how the strategy will be monitored and reviewed.

The following information should be included:

Introduction/foreword

To demonstrate the organisation's commitment at the most senior level, this is best coming from either the convenor of housing, the chair of the management committee, chief executive or director of housing and ideally jointly with tenants involved.

The introduction should demonstrate from the outset that the landlord recognises that tenants are at the heart of its business and that TP is a continuous process which must be constantly reviewed and developed.

Background

This should set out the duties and responsibilities that the Act and the Charter places on landlords and the rights tenants have to be involved in housing and related matters. This should also highlight previous commitments and achievements in TP, and give details of current TP structures and activity.

Aims and objectives

This section should set out the aims of the organisation in reviewing the strategy. It should recognise the benefits and importance of involving tenants in decision making processes, and of committing to continuous improvement in TP, not simply meeting the minimum legal requirements.

How the strategy was reviewed and who was involved

This section should set out how the strategy was reviewed, how tenants and registered groups were involved, and how this helped to influence decisions and outcomes.

Why the strategy is in place and the benefits of Tenant Participation and Scrutiny

This section should cover the benefits of TP for tenants and staff. Where tenants have a meaningful role in decision making and understand the processes, trust and a good working relationships will be developed and maintained, and will result in better services which are focussed on tenant priorities not just about satisfaction. Ultimately, this will increase the levels of satisfaction with the services landlords provide.

How tenants will be kept informed

This section should set out the range of methods that will be used to keep tenants informed. This should be discussed and agreed with tenants. Tenants should have been asked how they want to be kept informed and what information they want. Tenants' preferences, circumstances and priorities may change over time and how they want to be kept informed will depend on the particular issue. Many people now prefer to be kept informed online and if this is available then can be used as an additional way to keep people informed. When consulting with tenants, regularly review how they want to be kept informed by adopting information methods agreed with tenants this way they may be more likely to respond.

Consider using a mix of:

- newsletters and information leaflets;
- a tenants' handbook;
- open days and conferences;
- road shows;
- consultation registers/tenants panels;
- website and IT developments;
- focus groups;
- text messages;
- email bulletins; and

Consultation

This section should set out what issues landlords will consult tenants on and what methods will be used. Landlords should be able to demonstrate that they have asked their tenants what housing and related issues they want to be consulted on. Effective consultation is not just a one-off process, it should be regular and systematic and the methods used should be tailored to the particular issue. Effective consultation encompasses a wide range of different methods so tenants can become fully involved if and when they choose.

Consultation methods need to be reviewed regularly to make sure that they are working, meet the needs of all groups of people and reflect developments in communication methods. Different methods include:

- focus and working groups;
- postal, phone and door-to-door surveys;
- house visits;
- conferences;
- road shows;
- Facebook/Twitter;
- tenants' forums; and
- consultation registers.

The Scottish Government's 'Community Engagement How To Guide' features information on these practical techniques and others. You can find this guide on the Scottish Government's website at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/HowToGuide>

Many tenants don't want to be involved in formal forums or meetings, so a useful way of getting people's views is to set up a consultation register of interested tenants. Landlords could invite every tenant to be included on a register so they can be contacted when their specific area of interest arises. This allows people with a genuine interest in a topic to be involved and provides a database of interested people for landlords to use in the future.

Giving feedback

This is one of the most important areas in the participation process. Landlords must carefully consider how they will give feedback following all consultation processes, and the method of feedback should be agreed with tenants themselves.

This section should clearly set out how landlords will let tenants know how their opinions and ideas helped shape policy and service delivery, and where it hasn't, explain the reasons for this. Tenants take the time to respond to a questionnaire or attend a meeting but are not always made aware of the outcome of their involvement. By keeping tenants informed of how their contribution has influenced an issue, they may be more willing to continue being involved or get involved in the future. Feedback can be given in a range of ways, for example:

- individual letters;
- newsletters and information leaflets;
- including in policies or strategies information on changes made as a result of tenant views and involvement;
- websites;
- text messages; and
- follow-up meetings or focus groups.

Working with RTOs

The Act gives tenant and resident organisations who register with their landlord a recognised role in the TP process. An RTO is an independent organisation set up to represent tenants' interests on housing and related issues. Usually groups cover a mix of tenants and owners, reflecting the different tenures in the communities they live in. Tenant and resident organisations can register with more than one landlord if they represent tenants from different landlords who live in the area the group covers.

The Act requires that landlords must have a scheme in place for registering tenant groups and maintain a public register of RTOs that is available for inspection at local offices. Many landlords make this information available on their website. The register should contain:

- the name of the organisation;
- the area it covers;
- a contact address; and
- any other relevant information.

This section of the TP strategy should set out the ways in which landlords will work with and support new, developing and established tenant organisations and the staff and financial resources that will be provided for this (for example, training, administration support and making premises available to hold meetings).

It should also set out the arrangements for registering an organisation as an RTO and set out the procedure for an organisation appealing against not being registered by the landlord or being removed from the register. For more information see section 4.3.

RTOs are also required to promote equal opportunities for those in the local areas they represent and their commitment to do so should be included in their constitution, as is noted in the Act. RTOs should pro actively seek the participation of hard to reach groups in their own organisation. See section 2.8.

Resources

The strategy should set out the resources to be given to TP.

This may include:

- training and support for tenants, staff, elected members and committee members;
- providing or hiring meeting rooms;
- the cost of providing lunch, teas and coffee for meetings and events;
- providing crèche facilities;
- consultation costs;
- travelling expenses;
- going to conferences and seminars;
- printing and posting newsletters and other information if necessary;
- funding to help new, developing and established tenant organisations;
- access to IT and support networks;
- staff time;

For more information on resourcing TP see section 2.4.

Timescales for consultation

It is essential to plan and include enough time to consult tenants and RTOs, so that they have sufficient time to debate and discuss issues with the tenants they represent, and have a real opportunity to influence the landlord's service and performance. The time required will vary depending on the issue and tenants and RTOs should be involved in setting acceptable timescales.

Tenants should also be involved in agreeing priorities for reviewing services and issues they will be consulted on. An effective way of doing this is to produce a yearly action plan or a participation calendar that clearly sets out priorities for the year ahead. These should reflect both the landlord's and tenants' priorities.

Training

This section should set out the landlord's commitment to providing training and support to ensure that tenants, have the necessary skills to allow them to participate effectively. An effective way of building and maintaining positive relationships is to hold joint training sessions that bring together tenants, staff and elected members and committee members. This also gives everyone involved the opportunity to hear the views and perspectives of others. The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) website details training and development available to community organisations the link is as follows:

<http://www.scdc.org.uk/>

Equal opportunities

Under the Act, landlords must assess the needs of equalities groups living in the area and ensure TP is accessible to all.

The Charter has an outcome for equalities which reads "every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services".

The strategy should set out how equal opportunities will be met to involve all.

Action plan

As part of the strategy, there should be an annual action plan that sets out what policies and procedures will be reviewed or developed throughout the year. A consultation plan for these, and any scrutiny activities that will be carried out, should also be included as well as a timetable for carrying out reviews.

How the strategy will be monitored and reviewed

This section should set out the arrangements to monitoring and reviewing the strategy on a continuous basis against the objectives or action plan set out in the strategy. Landlords should develop and agree these arrangements in consultation with tenants and tenant organisations. They should also develop ways to test how the strategy is working and involve tenants and tenant organisations in this. One way of showing that the strategy is working would be to include examples of how and on what issues tenants were involved in, and the outcome of that involvement. This may also encourage others to get involved, if they see tenants making a difference to policies and practices.

An annual review could include:

- Charter performance;
- progress with the annual action plan;
- tenant and staff training (what training they have had and what they need);
- reviewing minutes from tenants' and residents' meetings to monitor progress;
- feedback and follow up on surveys; and
- the number of events held and the numbers attending.

2.3 Monitoring and evaluating Tenant Participation

Monitoring and evaluating TP activity on a regular basis is important to find out the effectiveness it is having and to identify which activities are working well and those which are not so effective. This will help to adapt participation structures to meet changing circumstances and priorities.

The Charter outcome on participation (see 1.5) describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on TP. 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 RTOs, how they shape services to reflect these views; and how they become involved, including supporting them to scrutinise a landlord's services.

The SHR requires landlords to provide an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and the indicator for participation is the percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. Whilst this provides a useful benchmark to assess performance against peers and to understand how performance has changed year on year, landlords and tenants together should be routinely monitoring and evaluating how well they are meeting this outcome as part of their regular performance management arrangements. These should examine what's working, what isn't and the impact their approach is having on meeting the participation outcome as part of their charter assessment.

To assess how well participation is developing and the impact it is having on services and tenant satisfaction, it is important that landlords and tenants find ways of evaluating participation that are realistic, practical, focus on the Charter outcomes and focus on the things that matter most to those involved.

Planning for monitoring and evaluation

When developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to meet the Charter outcomes and more broadly on participation and communication, tenants should be involved in how this will be done – it should be set out in the TP strategy. It is important to focus on issues that are important to the participants involved, and consider the time and resources that are required for this. The use of new technologies is increasingly being used to evaluate performance and can be a successful way to engage with a wide and diverse tenant population and should be considered as an effective way of reaching tenants and getting feedback. The use of online surveys and snap polls, that provide an immediate response, can also be an effective way to gather views on the impact of your participation policy and actions.

What do you monitor and evaluate

Evaluating the effectiveness of TP can be complex, as many of the outcomes cannot be measured simply in terms of numbers of people taking part or the amount of resources provided. Evaluation should include the views, opinions and perceptions of both tenants and staff to determine what outcomes have been achieved and whether this has resulted in an improvement in housing services and standards.

The aims and objectives of TP for your organisation should include:

- overall how the Charter outcomes are being met;
- an improvement in housing services and standards;
- an increase in tenant involvement in decision making;
- tenant satisfaction with housing services, standards and living conditions;
- promoting TP among equalities groups;
- improved communication and better working relationships between tenants, staff, elected members and committee members.

In evaluating TP, local performance indicators should be developed and examined under the following categories: inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Measure inputs by examining:

- staff time;
- budget to support TP;
- office facilities available to tenant groups, for instance, photocopying, mail, and IT;
- support to attend meetings, for instance, transport, crèches, and out of pocket expenses;
- provision of information, including leaflets and newsletters;
- training for staff, tenants and governing body;
- type of training available to tenants, staff and governing body;
- access to independent advice or dedicated in house support.

Measure outputs by examining:

- areas that tenants have influenced, such as policies or service standards;
- range of decisions in which tenants are involved;
- variety of TP structures and mechanisms;
- actual and committed expenditure on TP compared with budget provision;
- representation of tenant group membership, for instance, area coverage, age, gender, ethnicity, and how this has changed over time;
- number of registered and non-registered groups as a proportion of housing stock and how this has changed over time;
- number of individuals participating as a proportion of housing stock;
- number, variety and frequency of different methods of communication and engagement;
- number of tenants and staff receiving training;
- percentage of tenants responding to consultations.

Measure outcomes by examining:

- the influence tenants have had in decision making;
- increase in tenants' ability to get involved;
- improvements in housing services due to more effective contribution by tenants;
- increases in representation of tenants in the local community;
- views of tenants, staff and governing body members about the difference TP has made; and
- success in reaching new people.

These measures should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a package for assessing the impact and effectiveness of TP. TP develops differently in different areas and depends on local circumstances, and practices will change over time. Before trying to measure the success of TP in your area be clear about what success would look like and base your evaluation on that model.

Improving organisational efficiency and Value for Money (VFM)

The Charter sets out outcomes and standards that landlords should be achieving in relation to VFM. Outcome 13 of the Charter on Value for Money states that social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

“tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.”

This **standard** covers the efficient and effective management of services. It includes minimising the time houses are empty; managing arrears and all resources effectively; controlling costs; getting value out of contracts; giving better value for money by increasing the quality of services with minimum extra cost to tenants, owners and other customers; and involving tenants and other customers in monitoring and reviewing how landlords give VFM.

This has placed increased emphasis on landlords demonstrating continuous improvement in the management of their business. In their Regulatory Framework the SHR sets out high-level VFM expectations, but it's up to landlords, their tenants and other customers to determine what this means in practice.

Scrutiny and providing other opportunities for tenants to participate in decisions can ultimately lead to continuous improvement on services and help to achieve VFM.

Typically, VFM activity includes:

- doing the right things – improving current services and developing new ones based on an understanding of what tenants and other customers want, within locally agreed policies and service standards;
- doing things right – delivering more cost-effective services by getting the processes and systems right; and
- driving down costs – by making sure the approach to organisational structures, procurement and contract management is right.

Being efficient is only half the equation in VFM; there is little value in 'doing things right' if they happen to be the 'wrong things'. The Charter provides an excellent starting point for understanding the 'right things', as it's based on extensive consultation with tenants and other customers on what is important to them.

2.4 Resourcing Tenant Participation and Tenant Scrutiny

LA's and HA's are legally required to carry out an assessment of the resources required for TP and the tenant participation strategy should set out what resources will be made available for this. Resourcing TP and scrutiny is not just about money, it also includes staff support, meeting venues and IT access. This section outlines why resources are essential for successful TP and scrutiny, and provides a framework to help landlords and tenants carry out an assessment of how they resource participation.

Neither the legislation nor associated guidance specifically states what activities landlords should resource. This is because resource requirements will differ significantly from area to area. However, resources should be reviewed regularly.

Types of activity

Staff time

Staff help tenant groups to establish and, support existing groups as well as assisting tenants to broaden and develop their skills. This can be done in a number of ways

- by employing specialist TP staff;
- making TP part of every member of staff's role;
- engaging independent specialist organisations;
- seconding staff to work directly with tenant organisations or providing direct funding to enable groups and federations to employ support staff themselves.

Staff and tenant training

Providing training programmes to increase knowledge and understanding of TP and scrutiny enables all staff and tenants to develop the skills required to progress TP and scrutiny practice. Training can be provided either internally or externally. More on staff and tenant training can be found at 2.5.

Direct grants

This includes start up grants to help new groups establish and annual grants to cover running costs and group activities. These would cover, for example, stationery, mailings, venue hire, telephone costs, office costs and attendance at conferences/meetings. Funding should be based on the group's planned activities and reflect their level of input along with what they are achieving. There should not be any financial barriers to enable tenants to participate in training, meetings etc. and funding should be available to cover reasonable travel expenses, child care and other care costs where appropriate. Expenses should be refunded promptly and where possible paid on the day of attendance at the relevant event/meeting.

How much should landlords spend?

The research findings in resourcing TP across the UK have been mixed. Some studies have indicated the level of resources has a significant impact on the success of TP, while others have not found this to be the case. What is clear is that it is crucial that landlords discuss and agree with tenants the level of resources required for effective TP and that tenants are involved in agreeing the priorities for the TP budget. Resources also need to be regularly reviewed to ensure they are set at the right amount to achieve what has been planned.

Grants to tenant groups

The majority of landlords fund tenant groups by providing them with a start up grant to get established, purchase essential equipment and raise awareness of their group. Groups are then usually given an administration grant, which is paid annually to cover the running costs of the group.

Another approach is for groups to plan their activities for the coming year and present a business plan to their landlord detailing their aims, planned activities and resource requirements. This gives tenants' groups more control over their funding and how they choose to spend it.

Tenant organisations should be in control of their finances, ensure that proper accountability arrangements are in place and receive training in managing and accounting resources.

The level of grants and means of awarding grants should be negotiated between landlords and tenant groups. Clearly landlords do not have an unlimited budget, resources need to be prioritised and allocated accordingly. The resources for TP should therefore be determined with tenants as part of the rent setting process.

Fundraising

Many groups across the country organise their own fundraising events to raise money to assist with running costs or extra equipment. Local fundraising events such as coffee mornings and social events not only bring in additional income, but also raise tenant and community awareness about the group and can encourage more people to get involved.

Accessing external funding

Many tenant groups undertake community projects that improve their local area, such as environmental projects. Clearly landlords have a limited budget and they may be unable to finance such projects or cannot carry them out for a number of years. However, there are lots of organisations who offer grant funding for community projects and many tenant organisations across Scotland have been successful in tapping into these resources.

Funding Scotland is an excellent site that helps not-for-profit organisations in Scotland find funding for charities, community groups or social enterprises using their free online search engine. From small grants to funding for big capital projects, they can help track down the funding needed to make a difference in the community.

<http://fundingscotland.com/p/www-about>

2.5 Training and support for staff and tenants

Joint Training (The Benefits)

Training for staff

Staff need to be clear about their roles in relation to consulting and working with tenants and tenant groups. As TP covers a wide range of activities most staff will be involved in working with tenants. While some landlords may employ specialist TP staff to support TP activities, good TP is the responsibility of all staff and it is a good idea to include this in all staff job descriptions. TP therefore has time implications for all staff within the organisation.

The staff most directly involved in working with tenants and tenant groups will likely be front line staff who meet tenants regularly and managers who are responsible for service delivery and performance.

It is essential that all staff have appropriate delegated authority to make decisions and respond to requests from tenants.

When working well TP is mainstreamed within the organisation, with all staff having a role to play. All departments and teams within a landlord organisation will be involved at one time or another, in providing information, consulting with tenants and reviewing policies or monitoring and assessing performance, and will benefit from the knowledge they have gained in this area. Staff responsible for an activity or service are the ones best placed to work with tenants when reviewing their service area.

Training for tenants

To be able to fully participate in discussions and decisions on housing issues, tenants need to have access to information, training and development support. They will require some or all of the following:

- the opportunity to network with other tenants at training days;
- funds to cover running costs;
- access to suitable premises;
- support to develop their group;
- access to wider tenant opinion;
- attendance at seminars and conferences;
- information on how policies and services work and the legal framework around them;
- encouragement and support to form representative organisations.

Development support

It is important that tenants have access to staff who are able to help them develop their skills, knowledge and confidence to participate and give their views in a way that suits them. Development support includes:

- support and advice for tenants who want to form a group;
- supporting the growth of existing groups;
- supporting individual office bearers and committee members to be effective;
- providing training to increase organisational skills and knowledge of housing issues;
- enabling groups to network with other tenant organisations groups.

For more information on working with tenant groups see section 4.4.

Joint training

It is beneficial, and often more cost effective, to hold joint training sessions for staff and tenants. Joint training reinforces the message that tenants are key stakeholders and can strengthen relations between tenant representatives and staff. It can also be beneficial to hold joint training sessions with neighbouring landlords, this can cut costs but also gives the chance to share best practice.

Accessing training and Independent Advice

Training for staff and tenants can be delivered in a range of different ways. Depending on the issue, landlords may have the knowledge, skills and capacity to deliver tenant and staff training themselves 'in house'. In some cases external trainers might be invited to give training to staff and tenants on a particular subject.

Remember that training comes in a number of formats, including shadowing an individual, formal training courses, learning from others in small groups and visiting another tenants' group, tenants' federation or landlord. Think about your own and your group's training needs, and find the appropriate training available to meet those needs.

Independent advice and more general training is available from a number of organisations including the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Tenants Information Service (TIS) information on how to contact them can be found at Appendix 1.

2.6 Levels of Tenant Participation and Scrutiny

There are a range of ways that landlords and tenants can exchange information and views on housing issues and make decisions together, in order to participate effectively information and support is essential. Tenants need to have all the information necessary to consider issues properly. In order to do this, landlords and tenants should jointly agree how information will be communicated between all participants. It is important that information is:

- easily understandable;
- made available with sufficient time for tenants to fully participate, consult with others and give their views;
- accurate;
- relevant;
- made available in formats that suit the user, such as Braille, audio tape and community languages.

Within the limits of confidentiality all participants should have equal access to information that is relevant to TP. Where information is sensitive it should be made clear why it is restricted and that participants are bound by confidentiality.

Tenants should have the opportunity to identify what support they need to participate. Where appropriate landlords should ensure that:

- meeting venues are accessible;
- meetings are held at times that suit tenants;
- funding is available to cover crèche or care costs;
- transport and out of pocket expenses are reimbursed promptly;
- communication aids (loop systems, interpreting) are available;
- relevant training is provided.

Staff support should be available to groups to assist them in the day-to-day running of their group.

Consultation

Landlords are legally required to consult with RTOs and individual tenants on a range of housing and related issues, which may affect them under Section 54 of the Act. Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 has a specific duty to consult on allocations policies.

Consultation provides tenants with an opportunity to give their views, but does not give the opportunity to develop their own ideas or participate in putting plans into action. Consultation involves asking for tenants' views before reaching decisions, with enough time for tenants to give their views and landlords to consider them, then agree an outcome together.

There are a range of consultation methods that can be used, including:

- focus groups and working groups;
- postal, phone and door-to-door surveys;
- house visits;
- conferences;
- road shows;
- tenants' forums;
- consultation registers;
- IT and the use of social media.

Where possible avoid carrying out a consultation exercise at times of the year where tenants are less likely to be able to get involved, such as over Christmas and New Year or the summer holiday period. The timing of religious festivals should also be considered. Consultation should be carried out before proposals are formulated, although there will be occasions (involving legal requirements, for instance) where the outline proposals are already formulated and are not negotiable.

Always feed back the results and outcomes of a consultation exercise to tenants. It is helpful for tenants to know that their input has been taken into consideration and not ignored, this will help build trust and partnership working.

Feedback should include the options that have been considered, and the decisions and actions agreed, along with any future activity. Feedback should be provided within an agreed timescale and format.

Partnership Working

Discussions between tenant representatives and landlords suggests that both parties have an interest in reaching an agreeable outcome. This type of discussion often takes time to develop but is the most positive working relationship tenants and landlords can have.

This involves tenants contributing ideas and deciding the best way forward. This process is likely to involve tenants' representatives and groups rather than individuals, where tenants have been involved at the start of the process and have been involved in deciding the issues for discussion, then a shared agreement of the issues emerging tend to be easier to reach.

At all levels of participation the National Standards for Community Engagement should be adopted. The standards are a practical tool to help all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results. The standards can be used in both formal and informal community engagement. For more information see the standards at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/NationalStandards>

Tenant Scrutiny

Scrutiny is a critical examination of services, underpinned by good quality, up-to-date performance data and information that is made available to those involved in scrutiny activities. Scrutiny is about being able to ask landlords questions based on clear information and data, such as: why is a service delivered in a particular way; why are particular timescales in place; how much is this costing; can costs be reduced while still providing a good level of service; and could we do this better or differently? The answers to these and similar questions should lead to recommendations that result in change and improvement.

The Three Principles for Effective scrutiny are:

Independence – scrutiny activities should be separate from governance, management and mainstream TP structures, but have a formal recognised status with support from the organisation at the outset.

Formality – scrutiny activities should include clear roles, remit, terms of reference and lines of reporting for those taking part.

Power – tenants and other customers involved in scrutiny activities should be able to undertake a detailed examination of services and standards, and make recommendations for service improvements. Landlords should respond to this by agreeing which measures can be implemented and, where they can't be implemented, explaining fully why not.

Scrutiny activities can include service-specific scrutiny, where a particular service or policy is scrutinised, or scrutiny of a range of activities, where performance is scrutinised on a regular and systematic basis. This can include comparing performance against, for example, the previous quarter's performance and looking at trends, improvements and dips in performance to identify areas where service-specific scrutiny may be needed.

Ultimately, the purpose of tenant scrutiny is to improve organisational performance and the standard of services being delivered. Tenant scrutiny can be effective in doing this because:

- it provides a valuable reality check about the quality of services;
- it ensures tenants' experiences are routinely considered alongside other forms of performance data;
- it provides a mechanism to ensure that landlords are delivering the services tenants want, which means they can tailor their services to reflect local needs and priorities; and
- tenants can be powerful advocates for efficiency and improving Value for Money (VFM).

The Scottish Government is committed to assisting social landlords in Scotland to develop and improve their scrutiny activities and practices. Guidance has been published to help, the 'Stepping Up to Scrutiny Trainer Toolkit' and 'A Practice Guide for Tenants and Landlords' have been designed to assist social landlord organisations develop and improve their scrutiny activities and practices, in addition to understanding the scrutiny activities linked to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and related regulatory framework.

Links to these are:

Practice guide: <http://bit.ly/2sjwWdi>

Trainer toolkit: <http://bit.ly/2ssBZYK>

Planning Tenant Participation activities

There is no blueprint for planning TP with approaches suiting different circumstances. Approaches should be flexible to suit the particular issues being considered and the level at which tenants wish to get involved.

2.7 Charter reporting and tenant involvement

The SHR requires each Landlord's ARC to be submitted by the end of May every year and they require that landlords engage with tenants through regular surveys on tenant satisfaction to enable them to meet the outcomes of the Charter. Landlords should regularly report their performance to tenants outlining areas of strength but also saying where and how improvements will be made if and where these are required.

2.8 Involving All – Harder to reach groups

It is important that every tenant has the opportunity to participate if they want to. However, there are particular groups that are generally under-represented in mainstream participation structures, for example minority ethnic communities, young people, tenants with support needs, and older tenants in supported accommodation.

Identifying and engaging with these groups is required to enable successful TP. Landlords and tenant groups need to be proactive and put arrangements in place specifically to involve traditionally excluded groups. Case study examples of involving Gypsy Travellers are in Section 5 of this guide and more general advice is given below.

Identifying the needs of harder to reach groups

Making links can be very important in building the confidence of individuals and in strengthening the position of traditionally hard to reach groups in participation processes. These include working with advocacy organisations, religious and cultural groups which can help landlords to:

- identify and address issues likely to affect on the participation of these groups;
- work with organisations who have already established the trust of these groups;
- use existing structures to contact hard to reach individuals;
- help to make links between particular groups and individual tenants.

Landlords can also use their own methods to gather information about the needs of their tenants who have traditionally been hard to reach. For example, when new tenants sign their Scottish Secure Tenancy this can be used as an opportunity to gather equalities information, and find out about their preferred means of communication and involvement.

Removing barriers and involving all

There are a number of steps that landlords can take to remove barriers to participation, including the following basic measures:

- making information available in appropriate formats, including Braille, audio and DVD and in community languages where required;
- holding events in venues that are accessible to those with physical disabilities;
- providing transport to and from events;
- using venues that are used by community organisations working with excluded groups;
- tapping into cultural events;
- holding meetings and events at suitable times*;
- using information technology to communicate with those living in remote areas or those with mobility difficulties;
- providing crèche facilities and offering carer allowances.

* holding events at different times to get around varying schedules (including shift work and full-time work) and preferences (for example some individuals may not like going out in the evenings). It's important that you also take into account religious festivals when planning events.

A common barrier to the participation of traditionally excluded groups is the feeling of isolation and lack of confidence often felt by individuals. These barriers can be addressed through the development of trusting and supportive relationships between staff and individual tenants, and between existing tenant groups and individual tenants.

It is essential that equal opportunities are promoted within all 'mainstream' participation structures and activities. However, minority or excluded groups may feel isolated and lack confidence. One way that landlords can get help is to establish specific participation initiatives aimed at these groups. These can include one-off events, such as social events and outings for young or older tenants, or establishing longer-lasting structures for participation.

2.9 Engaging with minority ethnic communities

Under the Act, landlords have a specific requirement to consider the needs of equalities groups in TP. Almost every part of Scotland, including the most isolated rural communities, now has a multi ethnic population and this has major implications for the relevance and appropriateness of mainstream services.

Although many landlords are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of consulting with minority ethnic tenants and service users, traditional methods of engagement are not always suitable for cultural, religious or social reasons.

The usual standards for engagement are still broadly applicable, but these principles need to be applied sensitively and appropriately to the ethnic group being consulted.

Successful TP requires a positive, respectful and non discriminatory approach. Engagement must always be well-planned with specific consideration given to cultural, historical, religious, social and communication issues.

It is also important that everyone involved is respectful of each other's cultural, religious and language differences.

Getting started

Tapping into established networks, community organisations and cultural events can be particularly effective, and it is important to use channels of communication which are already credible in the eyes of each community. This will most often mean using existing community groups of cultural or religious affiliation, and groups that have a wide reach across the community or among a particular section of it, such as women, young people or older people. The involvement of established, credible groups can dispel a lot of scepticism and doubt about taking part.

Initially it can sometimes be challenging to reach beyond senior members or leaders of a community and engage with the wider membership, and it will take time, patience and perseverance to develop relationships. Working with black and minority ethnic communities in their own environment and respecting their rules and decision making processes is the most successful approach.

Information

Everyone needs to have equal access to information, and it should be provided in English and other relevant languages when required. Interpretation support in understanding information may also be required.

There are also likely to be a wide variety of reading skills, both in English and in the relevant minority ethnic language, and some people may not be fully literate in the ethnic language of their community. Getting it right at this stage will have a direct influence on the effectiveness of information, and on responses where required.

Consultation

The concept of consultation itself may be unclear to some minority ethnic communities and it is therefore particularly important to provide clearly written information on the purpose of the consultation, and what it will involve.

Methods of consultation that involve travelling away from the local area or writing are less likely to be successful across minority ethnic communities. Like all communities, a range of consultation methods should be put in place. Face to face methods such as small focus groups, where everyone can have a chance to make their views clear and be listened to, often work best. These also provide a more relaxed context for those less confident in speaking English. Try organising a relaxed culturally appropriate social event in consultation with the black and minority ethnic community.

Planning consultation events

When planning an event, make sure that you consider:

Location

Where possible, hold events in the local area, as some people will not be confident travelling to an event outside their immediate community. Organising events through existing black and minority ethnic groups and holding the consultation at the same time and place as the group normally meets can be the more successful approach.

Timing

Time events to avoid meal times (unless food is being provided), religious holidays, and observances.

Cultural traditions

As some cultures have specific traditions regarding the social interaction of men and women it may be necessary to hold separate events. At gender-specific events facilitators should be the same gender as the participants. You also need to be aware of inter-generational issues where, for example, young people in a group of older people may not contribute to the discussion out of respect.

Interpretation and translation

Interpretation and translation services should always be available where required. These may be available from family members, friends or staff from community groups. Take the time to discuss the format and content of the consultation with interpreters before participants arrive so that they have a clear idea of what is going on and can provide as high a quality of interpretation as possible. Interpreters may also have to act as scribes if the consultation requires writing, as reading and writing skills may not be as good as spoken language skills. And remember that time for translation can also make events run longer than usual.

Catering

Organising events around food has proven to be very successful in attracting people to get involved, increasing participants' enthusiasm and involvement in an event, and for on going consultation. In planning events you should find out participants' dietary requirements and provide a suitable range of food that complies with religious requirements.

Communication styles

Recognise that different communities have different styles of communicating and everyone involved in engagement needs to adapt to this. For example, what a facilitator perceives as being a hostile and aggressive atmosphere may, to those participating in the consultation, simply be an open discussion.

Training and support

Like all forms of participation, the training and support needs of individuals and groups need to be considered and agreed with them. Effective routine support such as providing grants to groups, training, IT support, use of appropriate languages and providing dedicated staff from the community's ethnic background can strengthen the ability of minority ethnic organisations to engage.

Support is also a key issue in the successful engagement of individuals from ethnic minorities whose culture or religion may make certain factors, which may not seem significant to others, critical in determining their attendance. For those whom childcare is an express responsibility, access to creche facilities can greatly increase the extent of their involvement. The provision of childcare by those outside the family unit may be a new concept, and encouragement may be needed to make use of this facility.

Giving feedback

As in mainstream participation, sometimes those who participate do not receive any form of feedback. This can often generate frustration, as it is unclear whether individual contributions have been considered and if progress has been made as a result. As most participants attach great importance to being involved in consultations in order to improve services or change how things are currently done, lack of feedback is particularly discouraging to this group. Ask participants how they want to get feedback and ensure that written feedback is given in understandable and appropriate language.

2.10 Involving tenants in rural areas

The aspirations of tenants living in rural or remote areas are no different to those of tenants in large urban areas. In terms of the diversity of population too, our rural communities mirror Scotland and rural communities include, among others, the young, the elderly, those with disabilities and those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

It is the geography of rural communities that creates some particular challenges for those enabling TP. The more remote a community is from the large urban centre which provides services and facilities (such as housing administration), the more challenging it becomes for tenants and landlords alike to facilitate effective consultation and involvement. This is especially true where the number of tenants is small and the community itself dispersed. Communities may be more than 20 or 30 miles from an urban centre and those travelling to meetings face long, expensive journeys through areas which often see the worst of weather conditions and where public transport is not always readily accessible.

Costs of staff time, additional venues for meetings, travel and subsistence expenses and the provision of information technology equipment will all influence the resources required.

Engaging with all tenants

In developing and implementing rural TP strategies, focusing on making it convenient for tenants to get involved. Some ideas to consider are:

- Maintaining information in libraries, mobile libraries or service vans, surgeries, local schools and other local access points;
- Maximising the use of local housing scheme facilities (for instance, sheltered housing lounges);
- Holding occasional road-shows and local shows;
- Using local community radio services, community websites and newspapers;
- Holding meetings at a range of venues and times to meet all needs;
- Taking management committee meetings out to rural communities and allowing time for discussions with tenants at the end of the meeting;
- Providing transport and ensuring that expenses are reimbursed promptly;
- Maximising the value of staff who, for whatever reason, will be visiting tenants in their own home. The culture of the organisation should direct and enable all staff to promote participation and deliver feedback from tenants;
- Join forces. If there are several landlords operating in one community then consider how joint working can help all tenants get better consultation opportunities.

Engaging with groups and individuals

For geographical reasons, rural residents are less likely to develop and sustain local and formal tenant groups than those living in towns. Armed with this information, those involved in TP should examine whether other structures for participation can be adopted to fill gaps in communications with, and representation of, rural communities.

The TP strategy should offer rural tenants a range of structures to get engaged in consultation:

Representative volunteers

Many rural and remote communities decide that it is not possible or appropriate for them to be represented through a local group. If this is the case then a second option could be for them to elect a representative volunteer from their community to take local issues and concerns to the landlord, engage in consultations and feed-back to the community. Representative volunteers can also be part of more formal structures which are in place. For example, a landlord-wide tenants' forum.

Developing structures, recruitment, support and monitoring arrangements for representative volunteers requires commitment and planning from staff and tenant representatives, steps in developing a scheme could be as follows:

- Identify communities which are under-represented in consultation;
- Agree draft proposals for a representative volunteer scheme;
- Promote various options for representation to tenants in the community and survey tenants as to their preference;
- If a representative volunteer scheme is selected, agree detailed proposals, including duties, recruitment, support, monitoring and training arrangements;
- Seek nominations;
- Support nominees to give a short presentation and/or narrative in a tenant newsletter;
- Arrange a ballot to elect one or more representative volunteers. A ballot could be held even if there is only one nominee; in this instance the majority of those participating in the ballot should agree to the election of the specific individual;
- Hold elections regularly at a minimum of every three years.

Where there are representatives elected in several communities, these individuals could meet together as a team which is constituted to enable their recognition as a registered tenant organisation. Such a structure would enable the scheme to be self-supported and regulated.

Individual volunteers

Where tenants indicate no inclination to have representation through a formal tenant group, individual tenants may be prepared to come forward to take part in consultation matters within focus groups, forums or panels. These individuals make a valuable contribution to TP even though they cannot be assumed to play a role as a representative of their respective local areas, without proper election. The volunteers should understand their role and be provided with advice, guidance and any essential training to participate fully in the processes.

It does take extra commitment from all parties and adequate resources to ensure that informal comment in the local area can develop into sustained and positive partnership working.

Diversity

In the recruitment of volunteers, efforts should be made to get a cross-section of the community involved, as minority groups may be more hidden in dispersed rural areas than in large urban areas. Special efforts may need to be made to reach and engage with young tenants, those with disabilities and those with language or cultural differences. Those involved in delivering and supporting TP should take steps to ensure that they understand the diversity issues in individual rural communities, as there may be significant variations from one community to another.

Using information technology

Whatever consultation structures are put in place, there are a number of ways in which information technology can assist with rural participation. It may be worth considering the following:

- Encouraging people to participate from their own homes could reduce the need for meetings and be particularly beneficial for those who find it difficult to travel. Also, young tenants may find this a preferable option for participating;
- Setting up email and interactive sites for volunteers and tenant representatives would allow them to communicate with each other and with officers, reducing any feeling of isolation;
- Video-conferencing could be useful for enabling remote communities to share in centralised tenant events or conferences as equipment is available at many local schools, universities and other public buildings.

Those enabling TP in rural communities should be aware of the importance of getting the right structures in place to engage with a diverse range of individuals and representatives. They must also be prepared to be innovative in the use of new technologies and systems which have considerable potential for future rural development.



3.0

TENANT PARTICIPATION CHECKLISTS

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3.0 TENANT PARTICIPATION CHECKLISTS

This section contains a series of checklists designed to help landlords and tenants assess where they are in terms of TP, and identify further measures they could take to improve practice. These checklists are closely linked to the information and advice given in Section 2 of this guide, and so it may be helpful to use them in conjunction with the relevant parts of Section 2.

3.1 Strategy for effective Tenant Participation

This checklist has been drawn up to assist landlords and tenants to review and develop their TP strategy. If you answer 'No' to any of the questions below please see section 2.2 for advice on how to improve practice in this area.

		YES	NO
Review of current Tenant Participation practice			
1.	Are tenants fully involved in reviewing Tenant Participation policy and practice?		
2.	Have the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy been identified by tenants, landlords, committee members and elected members?		
3.	Does the strategy set out how traditionally excluded groups are encouraged to participate?		
4.	Has an assessment of the resources currently put into Tenant Participation and the resource gaps been made?		
5.	Have any shortfalls identified in the last review of Tenant Participation been addressed?		
6.	Have gaps been prioritised for further development?		
Review of scrutiny practices			
7.	Do services reflect tenants needs and priorities		
8.	Are tenants being encouraged to form scrutiny groups?		
9.	Do tenants and others understand landlord operation?		
10.	Is training being provided?		
11.	Are tenants and landlords working together to achieve change?		
12.	Can you collaborate with neighbouring tenants/landlords to develop scrutiny activities?		

		YES	NO
Partnership working in relation to the Charter			
13.	Tenants should consider if there are opportunities to be involved in monitoring and assessing the Charter performance of their landlord?		
14.	As landlords, is there more you could do to promote the Charter and support your tenants to be involved in scrutinising your Charter performance?		
15.	Is there improved communication, effective partnership working and is scrutiny taking off?		
16.	Are there Service Improvements and efficiencies?		
17.	Is there Tenant involvement in Charter reporting and monitoring?		
Landlord's commitment and capacity			
18.	Does the Tenant Participation strategy fit in with other plans and statutory requirements?		
19.	Are tenants aware that a review of Tenant Participation is underway and do they know how they can get involved?		
20.	Is on going training and briefing in place to ensure the commitment of staff, committee members and elected members to Tenant Participation?		
21.	Do staff, committee members and elected members know about the participation parts of the Act and good practice guidance?		
22.	Are all staff kept up-to-date on Tenant Participation developments?		
23.	Do front line staff who work with tenants have training on equal opportunities, customer care and the skills required to carry out their job effectively?		
Decision making			
24.	Are processes of decision making open, clear and accountable?		
25.	Do tenants have access to decision makers?		
26.	Is consultation with tenants and groups carried out before decisions are made? Are decisions made together?		
27.	Are tenants' views taken into account before decisions are made?		
28.	Are tenants and groups given adequate time to consider and respond to issues?		
29.	Are tenants involved in the review of service standards, best value reviews and monitoring of landlord performance?		
30.	Are methods in place to feedback to tenants and RTOs following a consultation exercise?		

		YES	NO
Tenant representatives			
31.	Has the landlord consulted tenant groups or other networks of tenants to find out what their key housing issues are and what level of involvement they want?		
32.	Has work been undertaken to stimulate Tenant Participation in areas where there is little or no tenant involvement?		
33.	Is there an up-to-date register of registered tenant groups in place?		
34.	Are mechanisms in place to enable tenants at a local level to influence housing management?		
35.	In the case of registered social landlords, do tenants have a place or places on the governing body?		
36.	Are mechanisms in place to enable tenants to contribute to the reviews of service standards, policies, investment priorities and performance monitoring?		
Setting the agenda			
37.	Is the main agenda for Tenant Participation planned in advance?		
38.	Is the agenda jointly agreed with tenants?		
39.	Are processes in place to enable tenants at a local level to influence local housing management services?		

3.2 Planning for monitoring and evaluation

The following checklist can be used prior to embarking on a monitoring and evaluation exercise of TP. If you answer 'No' to any of these questions please see section 2.3.

		YES	NO
1.	Does your Tenant Participation strategy set out processes for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating Tenant Participation?		
2.	Were these processes jointly agreed with tenants?		
3.	Have time and resources for monitoring and evaluating Tenant Participation been allocated within the strategy?		
4.	Have tenants and landlords agreed what information needs to be collected, and how, when, and by whom the evaluation will be carried out?		
5.	Is the information being collected relevant to monitoring and evaluating Tenant Participation?		
6.	Is the information accurate and presented in a user-friendly format?		

3.3 Accessing resources

This section can be used to identify the level of resources being invested in TP and any gaps in provision. If you answer 'No' to any of these questions please see sections 2.4 and 2.5.

		YES	NO
1.	Are staff with specific responsibility for Tenant Participation in place to provide support to new groups, develop existing groups, promote Tenant Participation and consult with the wider community?		
2.	Is a training programme for all staff in place to provide skills and knowledge to develop participation practice?		
3.	Can staff access external training events on Tenant Participation?		
4.	Is training and briefing provided to keep committee members and elected members informed of Tenant Participation practice and developments?		
5.	Is a joint agreement in place between landlords and tenants, setting out what information tenants will receive and how they will receive it?		
6.	Is information for tenants easily accessible, in plain English, provided in different formats where required, relevant and accurate?		
7.	Is information made available with sufficient time for tenant groups to consider and consult their members?		
8.	Is training available for individuals and tenant groups to develop their ability to participate?		
9.	Can tenants access external Tenant Participation training and events?		
10.	Are start up grants and annual running costs available to tenant groups to cover the group's costs?		
11.	Are these grants reviewed regularly with tenant groups to ensure they get enough funding to carry out their activities?		
12.	Is funding available to ensure that there are no financial barriers to tenants participating, i.e. expenses, care costs are met?		
13.	Is 'in kind' support, such as access to premises or photocopying, available to groups?		
14.	Do tenants have access to independent advice?		

3.4 Building, supporting and sustaining tenant groups

This checklist can be used to evaluate how well groups are being supported and identify areas for action. If you answer 'No' to any of the above questions see sections 2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and 3.4.

		YES	NO
1.	Does the landlord recognise and welcome the rights of tenant and resident groups and umbrella organisations to represent the views and interests of their local community?		
2.	Is the independence of tenant groups recognised by the landlord?		
3.	Are tenant and resident groups adequately supported financially and 'in kind'?		
4.	Does the landlord work to ensure that tenant organisations are well informed, resourced and given adequate support so that they are able to influence decisions?		
5.	Is there a range of opportunities and mechanisms in place for tenant groups to access and input to the decision making process?		
6.	Are tenant groups regularly invited to meetings with their landlord to discuss housing and community issues?		
7.	Have the landlord and tenant groups agreed a timescale for receiving and considering information?		
8.	Are tenant groups given the opportunity to meet and discuss joint issues and prepare their points of view before meeting the landlord?		
9.	Do tenant groups have the opportunity to contribute to the agenda?		
10.	Are perceptions of problems and issues shared between tenants and the landlord before potential solutions are discussed?		
11.	Are tenants' views considered before decisions are taken?		
12.	Is feedback provided to groups following consultation exercises?		
13.	Is Tenant Participation seen by the landlord as an on going process?		
14.	Are different ways to maintain communications with groups used?		
15.	Is the relationship between the groups and the landlord a respectful one?		
16.	Are staff in place to help new groups, provide development support to existing groups, and promote Tenant Participation across the organisation?		

3.5 Involving all

		YES	NO
1.	Are equal opportunities build into both mainstream housing services and Tenant Participation strategies?		
2.	Has a training needs assessment been carried out in relation to equal opportunities?		
3.	Have staff and tenant representatives been provided with training on equal opportunities in relation to participation?		
4.	Are equal opportunities and proactive attempts to involve all built into the Tenant Participation activities of the landlord and groups?		
5.	Are representatives from all groups involved in monitoring and reviewing the Tenant Participation strategy?		
6.	Have the individual needs of all groups been identified and met?		
7.	Has action been taken to remove barriers to accessing participation, such as language barriers and child care?		
8.	Have opportunities to take part in a range of participation methods been provided to all?		
9.	Are networking opportunities provided to enable individual tenants to meet representatives of tenant groups and staff?		

If you have answered 'No' to any of the above questions see sections 2.2, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10.



4.0

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR TENANTS AND STAFF

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TENANTS AND STAFF

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4.1 Setting up a tenant group

The most common reasons for tenants and residents forming a group are where there is a particular local issue of concern within a community, or where tenants and residents want to get more involved with their landlord to work on service improvements and performance. Groups of people acting together are usually more effective than individuals. This section of the guide outlines some of the main points to consider for staff supporting tenants and residents to set up a group and for individual tenants and residents who would like to establish a group.

If you are thinking of establishing a group, you probably already have a clear idea of why a group is needed, but you need to talk to other residents in the area who feel the same. Your landlord will be able to provide support at this early stage and help you through the next stages of establishing a group.

You can get people's views by:

- sending out a newsletter with an attached questionnaire;
- door to door visits;
- holding a public meeting.
- posting on social media.

Some people will want to give their views and opinions while other people may not make any suggestions at all. No matter how people respond to you, be friendly and clear about why the group is a good idea and what it would do and respect people's right not to get involved.

If you have support for your idea then get together with the other people that are interested. At this stage, there will usually be a small number of people interested in the idea, so get together informally in someone's home or in a local community facility.

At the informal get together think about:

- what are the issues of concern?
- what streets or areas are affected?
- what would you like to achieve?
- what the group would do.

If you all agree that it would be a good idea to form a group, you then need to get as many people as possible together at a public meeting to discuss the issues and agree on forming a group.

Support from landlords

At this stage it is important to determine how much involvement and support you want from staff. This will depend on the discussions with tenants and residents and how much assistance they require. Some groups may want more intensive support from their landlord while others may prefer not to have any landlord involvement at all. Sometimes groups prefer an independent organisation to provide assistance. This often depends on the existing relationship between tenants and staff. Landlords will be able to provide support at every stage. Landlords should consider preparing a guide on setting up a group that can be given out when a group of people are considering this.

Planning a first meeting

To organise the meeting you may wish to:

- use the contacts you have already made;
- put adverts in local shops, schools and libraries;
- produce a leaflet advertising the meeting and deliver it to everyone in the area;
- get help from your local housing officer;
- invite speakers such as housing staff;
- consider the timing of the meeting;
- consider what arrangements will be required to encourage people to come along, for example having a crèche may encourage families with children to attend.

Where to hold the meeting

Find a suitable place to hold the meeting and always try to ensure that you use a meeting place that is accessible, so that people with disabilities can attend.

This could be:

- a room in a community centre, school, church hall or sheltered housing complex, as long as it is easy for people to get to; or
- a meeting room in your landlord's offices.

Running the first meeting

- Be clear about what the group wants to achieve at the first meeting;
- Be friendly and welcoming;
- Introduce one another. This is very important if people do not know each other already;
- Make sure someone chairs the meeting or ensures the discussion focuses on the issues to be discussed;
- Take a note of who attended, the main points of discussion and any further actions that are decided;
- Ask for volunteers to form a steering group to work out how the group will be organised. Usually about six people will be required, but this can vary from one area to another;
- Agree who is responsible for future actions.

Steering group

Once a steering group has been formed it needs to consider:

- the aims of the group;
- what issues are important;
- how often it should meet;
- what officers and committee members it should have;
- what the officers and committee members should do;
- what resources the group will need and how money will be managed;
- the name of the group and what geographical area it will cover.

All of these things need to be carefully thought out and set out in a formal constitution for the group (see section 4.2).

Holding the next public meeting and forming the group

The same general principles should be followed for public meetings. Usually this meeting will have two main purposes: to discuss the issues of concern to residents and to formalise the group.

At the meeting the office bearers and committee members should be elected.

These should include a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and any other officers required. The constitution developed by the steering group should also be discussed and approved.

Once the committee has been elected and the constitution approved you will have a formal tenants' group.

Responsibilities of committee members

Committee members should be nominated because they are committed to the aims of the group and have the time and interest to devote to the committee.

They will have experience or skills that will be beneficial to the group. The roles and responsibilities of key committee members are summarised below.

Committee members should be offered training by their landlord to help them develop the skills they need to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Chairperson

The chair directs the group's activities and guides the committee meetings.

The chair has a clear understanding of the group's interests, lets everyone have their say and makes sure the constitution is upheld. The chair is responsible for making sure agreed tasks are carried out, and making decisions between meetings if necessary.

Before meetings the chair should plan and understand the agenda and ensure all necessary information is available. At meetings the chair should welcome everyone, introduce new members and visitors, ask for any apologies, and check the minutes of the previous meeting with the group to make sure everyone is happy that the minutes are an accurate record of the previous meeting. During meetings the chair should introduce each item and its purpose, request contributions, encourage participation, ensure others do not dominate the meeting, delegate tasks, record votes if necessary, and make sure the meeting keeps to time.

At the end of each meeting the chair should allow time for 'any other business', confirm the time, date and location of the next meeting, close the meeting and thank everyone for attending.

Secretary

The group secretary is responsible for taking and circulating minutes, preparing agendas for meetings, organising the paperwork and correspondence, distributing information to members, and keeping members up-to-date about dates for meetings and other events.

Treasurer

The treasurer looks after the group's income and expenditure by keeping the finances up-to-date, keeping track of receipts and bank statements and compiling financial reports detailing income and expenditure. The treasurer is responsible for budgeting for the group and preparing annual financial accounts that must be checked by an independent person.

4.2 Developing a constitution

This section provides advice for tenants on developing a constitution and for staff who are helping them. At this stage it is useful to consider the criteria that the group will have to meet in the future if it wants to register with its landlord as a registered tenant organisation and work towards meeting these criteria.

Registering with landlords as a registered tenant organisation gives groups a legal right to be informed, consulted, involved in decision making by the landlord, and to access other funding.

Groups must have a written, publicly available constitution which details;

- who can be a member;
- the purpose of the organisation;
- how funds will be managed and accounted for;
- the minimum number of members who need to be in attendance for general meetings and committee meetings to take place – this is called a quorum;
- how the group will inform, consult, get views and feedback to all tenants and residents living within the area where it operates;
- how the group will ensure its members are involved in making decisions;
- the group's commitment to equal opportunities and how this will be met;
- procedures for electing the committee, rules of conduct and how it will reach decisions democratically;
- what geographical area of operation the group will cover.

A well thought out constitution will ensure that the organisation has an effective operating structure for electing office bearers and committee members, getting members' views and feeding back to them, handling resources and sorting out any problems that may arise within the group in the future.

Landlords who are working pro actively to promote TP will have a model constitution available, which groups can use to develop their own, if they wish.

There is a sample constitution at Appendix 3.

4.3 Becoming a Registered Tenant Organisation

The concept of RTOs was introduced by the Act and gives important rights to groups who register with their landlord. RTOs are independent organisations set up primarily to represent tenants' housing and related interests. Registration gives groups a recognised role in the decision making process. Landlords should help guide groups through the registration process.

The Statutory Instrument link can be found in Appendix 5 Page 61.

Basic features of registration

Every landlord must keep a register of tenant groups in their area, which is open to public inspection at reasonable times.

Criteria for registration is set by Scottish Ministers.

Tenants' groups can register with the landlord, provided they meet the criteria set by Ministers about being democratic and accountable.

To receive the full benefit of the legislation, tenants' organisations should register with every landlord whose tenants they represent.

Tenants' groups can appeal to the Scottish Government if they are unhappy about a decision reached about registration.

Landlords are responsible for ensuring that registered groups meet the registration criteria and that this is regularly reviewed.

All groups wanting to become registered must provide their landlord with:

- a copy of their constitution;
- a list of office bearers and committee members;
- a contact address for correspondence which can be made public (this could be c/o the landlord);
- a description of the area the group operates in;
- details of other landlords they are registered with or applying to become registered with.

Registration criteria

There is a range of criteria groups have to meet.

The group must have a written constitution that is available for inspection and which details:

- the group's objectives;
- the area in which it operates;
- the membership process;
- how the committee operates and is elected;
- how business is conducted;
- how funds are managed;
- when meetings are held, including the Annual General Meeting;
- how the constitution can be amended;
- the group's commitment to equal opportunities;
- how the group intends to promote housing and housing related matters.

The group must have a committee that:

- is elected annually and committee members must be required to stand down after a certain period (this period should be included in the constitution);
- consists of at least three members who can co-opt other members on;
- reaches decisions democratically (the decision making process should be included in the constitution).

The group must operate within a defined area that includes the landlord's housing stock, and it must be open to all tenants within that area.

The group must have proper accounting records showing income and expenditure, assets and liabilities. The constitution must require an annual audited financial statement to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

The group must be able to demonstrate how it plans to represent the views of its members and how it will keep them informed.

Tenant federations

The criteria for the registration of tenant federations will be the same as for individual tenant organisations.

Groups who do not wish to register

Not all tenant groups will wish to register. If this is the case, individuals still have a right to be consulted. Landlords should encourage groups to register by providing training, information and support.

Changes made by RTO

If a tenants' organisation changes its constitution, office bearers, membership or area of operation, they are required to inform their landlord. Providing the changes mean that the registration criteria are still met, landlords will amend the register of tenant organisations accordingly. The failure of a registered group to meet the criteria for registration would constitute grounds for de registration.

Where groups no longer meet the registration criteria, landlords should provide support to help them meet the criteria again, but should not shy away from de registering them if need be.

Rights of RTO

RTOs should work with their landlord in a variety of ways, in addition to any specific consultation with tenants as a whole. Landlords and RTOs should work together to identify policies and practices that they think should be revised. RTOs should be notified by the landlord of their intention to review policies and practices at the planning stage, and should not be presented with proposals as a finished article. Areas that are likely to be subject to review, or new proposals that landlords should involve RTOs in, include housing services, housing standards, TP strategies and stock transfers. RTOs should be given information on the background to proposals and reviews, and given a reasonable timescale, that has been agreed between the RTO and landlord, to consider the issues and give their own views and suggestions.

Landlords should take these views into account and provide feedback to RTOs on the outcome of the review and proposals.

Appeals procedure

A tenant's organisation may appeal against the landlord's decision:

- not to register the organisation; or
- to remove the organisation from the register; or
- not to remove the organisation from the register.

The appeals process will be considered by the Scottish Government. It is important to note, however, that an appeal should be presented only after the landlord's internal appeal procedures have been exhausted. The internal appeals procedure should be initiated without delay and should be completed within three months of the appeal being made, or as otherwise agreed between the landlord and the RTO.

4.4 Working with groups

Supportive staff

Front line staff working in TP often spend a good deal of time helping people come together as an effective tenants group, and working with and supporting the development of existing groups. The time spent will vary from group to group, because it is down to each individual group to decide how much support from staff they require and are comfortable with. Staff working with groups will use a number of key skills to support and enable the development of tenant groups.

The role of members of staff working with groups is usually that of facilitator.

They help bring people together and help the group set out its aims and objectives.

Staff can also play a vital role in helping make links between community groups.

Staff should encourage individuals within the group to give their views, and build the confidence of group members who feel uncomfortable expressing their opinions. Staff should also provide advice on activities such as how to chair a meeting, take minutes, set the agenda and the division of tasks within the group.

They should also help groups understand the landlord's decision making structures, how they can negotiate and make their views known. Tenant groups should have access to, and be able to negotiate with decision makers. Staff can help tenant groups develop the confidence and skills to do this.

Staff are likely to be a valuable resource to established groups and may provide assistance in a number of ways, including helping with advertising and publicity, attracting new members, assisting them access external funding and directing them to other organisations.

It will vary from group to group, but it is likely that staff involvement will be more intensive when a group is starting out. At this stage staff may be required to take the initiative in coming up with aims and suggestions. As the groups develop, however, they will start coming up with their own ideas and suggestions and should be encouraged to do this. As time goes on, staff are likely to find that groups require their advice and support less. However, it is crucial that groups determine the level of support they receive at all stages of development, and landlords must respect this. It is also up to groups to decide whether they wish staff to attend their meetings.

Successful tenant groups

Like any successful group, a successful tenants group will have the following characteristics:

- members respect each other;
- different views and opinions are welcome and encouraged;
- individuality is encouraged;
- aims and objectives are agreed but can be discussed and changed;
- aims and objectives are realistic and achievable;
- group members co-operate, rather than compete, to achieve goals;
- feelings can be expressed accurately and openly;
- positive feedback is given and valued;
- negative feedback is delivered in a constructive way;
- each member's contribution is recognised and valued;
- problems are seen as normal and dealt with constructively;
- consensus is looked for in important decisions.

The roles and responsibilities of the group's members may change on an annual basis or at a time period the group agrees, to enable individuals to develop new skills and take ownership of different activities.

Groups evaluate their progress and effectiveness and continually look for ways to improve and develop.

Successful groups do not emerge overnight. They take time to develop, encounter teething problems, learn from experience and stay focused on their overall aims and objectives, while working with day-to-day issues.

Landlords play a crucial role in helping develop and support successful groups.

4.5 Managing conflict

In any situation where a group of people get together there is always the potential for conflict. Conflict may arise within groups, between groups and between groups and their landlord. This section provides advice on ways of resolving conflict.

When tenants and landlords are working together, it is crucial that the ground rules for engagement are clearly agreed at the outset. This will help to reduce the potential for conflict as the partnership develops. You can refer to The National Standards for Community Engagement for some advice too, these can be found at www.scdc.org.uk It will not always be possible for every idea or solution to a problem to be implemented and the scope and influence that tenants can have needs to be clearly agreed.

Conflict arises when differences can't be satisfactorily dealt with, where people may be unwilling to accept different values and points of view, or where rivalry emerges between groups for example, where resources are perceived to be unfairly distributed. Individuals may be resistant to changing their views and agreeing a consensus, people may want to hold onto their power and position and there may not be clear procedures for exploring differences and reaching consensus before they develop into conflict.

Where conflict arises there are three approaches to the situation. First, those concerned can ignore the problem. This will often mean that the problem doesn't go away, but emerges in the future in ways unrelated to the real problem.

Ignoring the conflict can have a very negative effect on trust and relationships and can undermine months and even years of good joint working.

The second approach is where a solution is imposed by a third party in a forceful way without considering the sensitivities surrounding the source of conflict. If those involved in the conflict accept the solution, this approach can work, however, they will have less motivation to implement the solution than if they had been involved in resolving the conflict themselves. Often this approach does not get to the root of the problem and it re-emerges in the future.

The third approach is where those involved in conflict find their own solution.

This can be done with or without a third party. It is usually better for the people involved to come up with their own solutions, either through compromise or consensus by problem solving, as they are more likely to stick to the agreement reached and have a better understanding of the position of the person/group/organisation that they were in conflict with.

Some steps for resolving conflict

Conflict resolution means discussing, negotiating and coming to a joint solution through compromise or consensus. In order to successfully resolve conflict, everyone involved has to want to overcome disagreements and be willing to take part. Mediation is an effective way to resolve conflict, and taking the following steps should increase the chances of resolving problems.

Everyone involved should mutually agree a time and place to meet.

Ground rules/guidelines should be agreed for the meeting (for example, no interrupting when someone is speaking, agreeing to listen to each other, not using bad language or name calling, and being willing to listen to others' points of view and explore a range of solutions).

At the start, everyone involved should have the opportunity to clarify and define the issues of concern as they see them, trying to separate facts, opinions and values.

Individuals should have the opportunity to clarify why they wish or need to resolve the conflict and agree shared goals.

The key issues and concerns that those involved need to agree about should be clearly defined.

It can be helpful to brainstorm positive ways and suggestions for the resolution of each issue which would be acceptable to those involved. Those involved should try to generate as many ideas as possible.

Everyone involved should agree a specific solution for each issue of concern and the steps to implement it, either by consensus or compromise. This may take time, however, it is important that the process is not rushed.

Everyone should agree that they are willing to implement the solutions, even if they don't fully agree with them. Those involved should explore what support and assistance they may need.

A procedure for reviewing the situation, to be sure that the solution is working out and/or dealing with those who do not do what they committed to, should be agreed.

Involving a third party to help resolve conflict

A third party from within or outside the group may be able to help the people in conflict move from their fixed positions and work towards an agreed solution.

These people must not be directly involved in the conflict and must be given permission to help solve the conflict by all parties. They must be clear about their role (for instance, to help the parties to resolve their conflict) and must not get caught up in the conflict or misuse their position.

Organisations such as TIS and TPAS have experience of acting as third party mediators to resolve conflict situations, both within tenant organisations and between tenant organisations and a landlord. There are also specialist mediation services who can help. Staff from a landlord may be asked by a tenants' group to act as a third party when there are internal problems within their group.

A person in this position should try to be:

- committed to finding a solution acceptable to all parties;
- able to recognise and build on points of agreement;
- aware of their own values, views and opinions in relation to the conflict and to keep them separate from the process of conflict resolution;
- committed to equalising the power as much as possible between the two parties;
- committed to finding out the underlying causes of the conflict with those involved;
- committed to focusing on the problem rather than the personalities concerned;
- committed to encouraging open communication, honesty and expression of feelings.

4.6 Organising tenant events

Tenant conferences and events are popular with both staff and tenants, and are a good way of providing information and getting people's views. Tenants should be involved in the planning group for the event. The following is a list of some ideas to think about if you are involved in planning an event.

- Decide what kind of event you want to create (for example, informal or formal) and what you want to achieve (for instance, give information, or get more people involved in TP);
- Consider the best time to hold an event so that the maximum number of people can attend (this could be evenings or weekends);
- Avoid religious holidays and other times of the year that will stop some people coming along;
- Check if there is anything else on in your local area the day you propose to have that event, to ensure it doesn't clash;
- Advertise the event in a variety of ways (for instance, with posters, leaflets left at different venues, individual letters, social media or a newsletter);
- Are you going to provide a meal for those who come along? Plan the menu and look into the most suitable catering arrangements. Don't forget people with special dietary needs.
- Make sure people know what expenses will be reimbursed;
- Do you want to target people who have a specific interest, or is it to be open to all tenants?
- Design the programme and decide who is going to meet guests, make introductions and start the event off;
- Are you going to have any speakers/workshop facilitators? Who is the best person for the job?
- Decide on a venue. Will it comfortably hold the number of people you are proposing to invite? Is it accessible? Does it have a loop system?
- Arrange to see the venue in advance if you are not already familiar with it, and check all the details and arrangements, and that it is fully accessible;
- Are exhibition materials needed which will explain your group or organisation's work and activities?
- Will transport be needed? What special arrangements will you make for people with disabilities?
- Will you need name badges? Prepare these in advance and lay them out in alphabetical order;
- Will you need a delegate pack? What do you think it should contain (for instance, programme, copy of presentations, evaluation form and leaflets)?
- What IT equipment do you need? Arrange it and test it before the event;
- Do you need to provide a crèche and/or entertainment for children?
- Have fun!
- Review the success or otherwise of the event/conference. This will help in future planning.

4.7 Producing a newsletter

Most landlords and many tenant groups produce newsletters to keep tenants up-to-date with the latest news. This section gives pointers to help landlords and groups make sure their newsletter is reader-friendly, relevant and interesting.

Providing good information to tenants can develop their interest in housing and related matters and inspire them to participate. As a matter of course, tenants should be on the editorial committee.

Before putting pen to paper, the editorial committee need to decide what the newsletter will be about. Ask tenant groups and representatives what they would like to know about.

Producing the newsletter should be the responsibility of a named person and realistic timescales should be set. The budget also needs to be agreed. This will help decide the format and design of the newsletter.

Writing your newsletter

Plan what articles you would like to include, gather information and decide on essential information. Use everyday, informal language (but not slang) and keep it simple. Sentences should be short (around 15-20 words), but vary that number to keep readers' interest. Write as if the person reading it has no knowledge of the subject and is sitting opposite you. Emphasise crucial points by making sentences shorter. Edit out all unnecessary words.

Jargon hinders understanding and puts people off. Avoid it! Don't say 'void property' when it's an empty house. If you feel you must use jargon, explain what it means.

Make your tone friendly. Don't refer to 'the tenant' when you can talk to your reader directly by using 'you'. It's friendlier and informal.

Decide on a headline for each article that will grab your readers' attention. Add a sentence underneath if necessary to explain what the information is about.

The first paragraph should get people's attention and explain the purpose of the information. Keep it short - no longer than 40 words. Aim for two or three sentence paragraphs - no more than four. The font size should be 12 points or more. Smaller print is difficult to read.

You should also use a regular font such as Arial, Times New Roman or Comic Sans; this is because these are easy to read.

The design of newsletters should be well thought out and eye-catching. Try to convey information in different ways to keep your readers' interest. Use pictures, clip-art, diagrams and bullet points. Avoid complicated tables and charts.

Signposting

Increase your print size to signpost information in headings and subheadings.

Use bold highlighting, capital letters and bullet points for emphasis. Colour adds interest to the page and can draw attention to important points. Formatting text in columns helps present information in more manageable chunks and takes up less space.

Photographs look best if you can print out in colour. Give consideration to your choice of colours. People with colour blindness commonly confuse green and red, and yellow does not photocopy well.

Making Your newsletter useful

It's helpful to add a paragraph or section that explains how the information will be useful to tenants. Try to spell out the benefits of keeping the group informed.

Testing your newsletter

When you have finished writing and designing your newsletter ask:

- Is it accurate?
- Is it readable?
- Is the tone friendly?
- Does it meet its objectives?
- Does it meet tenants' needs?
- Is it attractive?

Licensing and copyright laws

Generally permission must be obtained before photographs or other information from the Internet is reproduced in publications. If you are using Microsoft to word process your newsletter you must have a licensed copy of the software. Landlords will be able to advise tenant groups if they are uncertain about these issues. In addition, if you are using pictures of anyone of 17-years old and under, permission to include the picture must be obtained from parents or legal guardians.



5.0

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

5.0 GOOD
PRACTICE CASE
STUDIES

Case Study:

Rural Participation



Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter embraces an “involving all” approach. It embraces groups who are often difficult to reach or excluded.

Involving rural, island and remote communities is challenging, tenants can be widely scattered, the more traditional participation methods and activities may not be appropriate.

Some key questions to think about:

- Do tenants who live in rural/remote communities have a range of methods to enable them to take part?
- Is distance and travel time taken into account when organising events?
- Is participation adequately resourced to enable tenants to get involved?

The Act requires Local Authorities, Housing Associations and co-operatives to consult and involve tenants, and to take account of their views across all services and decisions which impact on tenants lives irrespective of where they live.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter lays down 16 outcomes that all social landlords in Scotland should aim to achieve when undertaking their obligations and services to tenants. “The Charter helps to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide, and supports the Scottish Government’s long term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland”
no matter where tenants live.

Outcome 3 – Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants and other customers find it easy to participate and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Working effectively in rural communities

- o Involve and ask tenants what methods they prefer.
- o Use a wide range of methods, including face to face, phone, online forums etc.
- o Involve tenants in planning a consultation or an event.
- o Ensure resources are available to enable involvement, tenants should not be out of pocket.
- o Build relationships and community knowledge.
- o Use participation structures that are already in place such as community groups, community councils, participation structures through NHS and Social Care.
- o Build on the active networks of local groups, clubs societies and informal connections that complement public services. They provide personal support, social networks and learning opportunities. These connections can provide the first steps.



Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP): A good practice example

Rural participation has some key challenges, not least of which is geography, but with a range of methods and excellent communication structures, participation can work and tenants can play a meaningful part in all service delivery and in improving services.

The Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) was formed following a tenant ballot and a stock transfer from the Western Isles Council. It has tenants scattered across 10 islands. HHP have a long history of tenant involvement across the islands and have developed a range of Tenant Participation methods which works for them including:

- **Wester Isles Community Housing Association Forum** - is the umbrella group for all RTO's, tenants groups and village voices across the Western Isles. Membership of the Forum is open to formal and informal tenants groups and village voices.
- **Resources** - all tenants travel by road, ferry and air and any overnight expenses to meeting or events are funded by HHP tenants developed an expenses policy.
- **Village voices** - village voices gather the views of their friends and neighbours and report back to the Forum or HHP, there is a scheme in place to support and recruit village voices.
- **Out and about** - the Tenant Participation officer has built excellent links across the islands with interested individuals and community groups and is a regular visitor to the remote island communities to support Tenant Participation.
- **Tenant and community events** - in addition to an annual tenants get together in Stornoway, there are events for tenants across the islands.
- **Information** - the forum have an action plan with the participation officer on key issues they wish to focus on, such as communication, and producing good quality information.
- **Building links** - the forum in its early days spent time making connections and developing relationships with tenants, staff community groups, and partner organisations.
- **Consultation** - the forum and the Tenant Participation officer have developed methods of consultation and communication for HHP to meet the challenges of working across the islands communities and settlements.
- **Communications group** - this group of staff, including the Tenant Participation officer has created a forum to share ideas and resources and co-ordinate all tenant faced communication.
- **Housing staff** - staff contact the Tenant Participation officer to identify tenants who have expressed an interest in getting involved.



- o **Information** - newsletters, the web site and the forum all work hard to increase tenants awareness and understanding of the options and support available to help them get involved.
- o **Going local** - informal approach works well across the island with tenants meeting in a range of very local settings such as cafes, community halls, and tenants homes.
- o **Piggy back** - HHP staff, the Tenant Participation officer and the forum attend other events such as village fairs, local agricultural shows etc. to encourage participation.

Challenges

- o Resources and time - need to account for the time and costs of travelling across a large rural area.
- o Take account of the time it takes to get to know people, to build relationships and trust.
- o Acknowledge and understand the potential power imbalance in communities and with organisations. Recognise that there may be a need to support communities and individuals to become more competent and confident.
- o Public transports systems can be poor.
- o Tenants in island communities may have additional challenges with ferry times which may require overnight accommodation.
- o The weather can have an impact.
- o Poor/slow internet connections.





Key learning points

- Do not impose landlords agenda and structures, create agendas and structures that suit the rural circumstances;
- Listen actively to peoples stories to build connections;
- Try new things - let the tenants take the lead - it's an evolutionary process;
- Use every and all communication mediums but face to face is always best;
- Engage with decision makers, explore issues and maximise influence;
- Provide “on the job training” and information for tenants;
- Know your community, challenges and issues that they are facing;
- Identify the skills and assets that they have. The knowledge and opportunities that already exist;
- Don't worry about people dipping in and out - they have other things going on in their life. Send a little hello from time to time and take an interest in them;
- Allow things to evolve organically;
- Integrate with other infrastructures;
- Facilitate and allow individuals, groups and communities to develop their own solutions;
- Give respect and recognition for the issues and challenges people face, rural poverty is a huge issue;
- Long term commitment, not short termism.

South Dell, Isle of Lewis

This group has been going for ten years. They are a small informal group and want to remain as a small informal group. From the beginning HHP staff have attended and participated in their meetings, giving everyone on this small estate the opportunity to share concerns and ideas. The group focus on sharing with neighbours and fostering a good community spirit, welcoming new people to the area and keeping in touch with HHP. The group work on maintaining the area with funding to buy flowers and tubs. A few years ago they won the best small rural estate award.

Case Study:

Involving Gypsy/Travellers



Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter encompasses an “involving all” approach, which it embraces groups who are often difficult to reach or excluded.

Gypsy/Travellers and their sites are predominately the responsibility of Local Authorities, some sites are managed by Housing Associations on behalf of a Local Authority.

Some key questions to think about:

- Are Gypsy/Travellers routinely included in any participation and consultation activities which may impact on their services?
- Is information provided in a range of formats?
- Is there feedback after any involvement?

The Act requires social housing organisation to consult all tenants and take into account their views when making decision about services and policies. Although Gypsy/Travellers do not have a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement they must still be consulted and involved in decisions which might affect them.

Charter outcome 16 is concerned with Gypsy/Travellers, and importantly states that notes that “all the standards and outcomes apply to Gypsy/Travellers”. With this in mind Gypsy/Travellers must have access to a range of services and can participate in decisions which may affect them.

It also states that – “local councils and social landlords with responsibility for managing sites for Gypsies/Travellers should manage the sites so that: sites are well maintained and managed, and meet the minimum site standards set in Scottish Government guidance.”





Challenges

- o In some instances, long term projects are less likely to be successful due to the fact that the Gypsy/Travellers may move on to another site.
- o Many Gypsy/Travellers do not consider themselves part of the Social Housing sector; they have a distinct culture, traditions and needs, it's important that staff understand these needs.
- o Many site residents are not used to being asked their views or opinions.
- o Literacy and numeracy could be a problem.
- o There can be a lack of trust of authority; it takes time to build relationships and trust.

Working effectively with Gypsy/Travellers

1. Building trust takes time, feedback on how residents' views have influenced or impacted is important to build trust.
2. Every site is different, for example on one site the residents were happy to meet as a group, on another they preferred a one to one approach, find out what suits residents and use a mixture of approaches and methods
3. Include participation and success stories as part of the site settling in procedures
4. Where possible, use informal approaches to participation and involvement
5. Working with individual families rather than the traditional group model works well
6. The site manager is often the key to the success of involving Gypsy/Travellers, they are the key point of contact with residents and have responsibility for the day to day running of the site and will be aware of the best approaches to take with residents
7. All staff must be trained in equalities and in particular working with Gypsy/Travellers their culture and traditions



Shawlands Park Larkhall, North Lanarkshire

Working with Gypsy/Travellers requires knowledge and understanding of their cultures and traditions. Building trust and demonstrating change, where the views of the Gypsy/Travellers have been fed back and taken on board is a key to success. Residents will have experienced a range of participation practices; there is not one perfect solution to involving Gypsy/Travellers.

The success of involving Gypsy/Travellers on this site is due to the hard work and commitment of the site manager. He has, with site residents, built a range of methods for involvement and running the site including:

- **Clear procedures** – the site manager has worked with residents to develop clear procedures for dealing with issues such as repairs.
- **Excellent communications** – residents have excellent two way communication between themselves and the Local Authority through the manager, in, for example investment priorities.
- **Building** – the manager has built strong relationships built on trust and mutual respect which has enabled the residents with the manager to develop simple, fair rules.
- **Understanding** – with the residents, clear roles and responsibilities have been developed which are easily understood and applied consistently.

- **Annual event** – an Annual event is held in September each year where they can discuss local issues and influence the services they receive.
- **Making it happen** – from the annual event, action plans are developed and monitored and progress fed back to tenants.
- **On going involvement** – residents are clear what their involvement is and are kept up-to-date with progress.
- **Rents** – annually residents give their views on any changes to rents.
- **Involving all** – residents are encouraged to attend the Local Authorities tenants conference.

The residents feel empowered and confident to engage with the local authority and give their views resulting in increased resident satisfaction with their home and living environment, residents feel pride and ownership of the site and are involved in a loosely structured approach to decision making.



Key learning points

- Information for residents on how the site works and opportunities for involvement is important for new residents;
- Working with residents;
- Demonstrate change and any impacts residents have been involved in, no matter how small;
- Be prepared for starting over when residents move on;
- Well trained and well informed staff are crucial;
- Develop a variety of methods that residents are comfortable with;
- Present information in a variety of ways;
- Give options for change;
- Consistent frequent feedback, the good news and the not so good news;
- Locally agreed activities and events;
- Involving children will often encourage adults to attend;
- Link activities and consultations to other events on the site, such as health services events;
- Invite Gypsy/Travellers to get involved in other participation events such as tenants conferences, and fun days;
- Take time to build relationships and trust;
- Informal activities around children and families such as fun days work well.

Case Study:

Involving Tenants in Rent Setting



Introduction

A housing organisation's main source of income is the rents that tenants pay, and for most tenants, it is also the main item of household expenditure.

With this in mind, it is crucial that housing organisations engage with tenants, provide clear information, and listen to their views about the rents that tenants pay before considering any increase or change to how rents are set or structured.

Key questions to think about include:

- Are tenants given genuine options and opportunities?
- Is information clear and transparent?
- Are tenants listened to?

The Act requires social housing organisations to consult tenants and take account of their views when making decisions about proposed rent increases. Landlords should give tenants at least four weeks' notice of the increased rent due to be paid. Prior to issuing this notice, social rented landlords must consult with tenants affected by the proposal and take their views and opinions into account.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) sets the standards and outcomes that all social housing organisations in Scotland should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities including:

- Social Landlords manage all aspects of their business so that tenants, owners, and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay. (outcome 13);
- Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:
 - o A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the service and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them. (Outcome 14).
 - o Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants. (Outcome 15).

Involving Tenants in Rent Setting



Six Steps for Effective Consultation

1. Involve tenants in planning your consultation
2. Agree your consultation activities and timescale
3. Remove barriers to ensure lots of different consultation methods are used to encourage responses from a broad range of tenants
4. Provide information on how rent money is spent and find out tenant priorities for service delivery and investment
5. Provide realistic and achievable options that assist tenants to choose between varieties of genuine options. Each option should set out what services or levels of investment would be delivered
6. Demonstrate that you have listened: It is important that you feedback the findings of the consultation and clearly highlight how tenant consultation shaped the rent setting process.

North Lanarkshire Council: A Good Practice Example

Effective Tenant Participation means tenants being involved in all aspects of service delivery in a meaningful and inclusive way. Where Tenant Participation is well embedded within an organisation, establishing structures for planning and overseeing the rent setting consultation can be more straightforward.

North Lanarkshire Council, has established a programme of consultation that takes place from September and December each year. Recently consultation methods have included:

- **Open meeting:** In September 2017, North Lanarkshire Tenants' and Residents' Federation (NLF) hosted an open meeting and the rent consultation was formally launched.
- **Food 4 Thought:** The NLF also run a programme of 'Food 4 Thought' sessions throughout the year in partnership with the Tenants and Residents Participation Project, providing more information about particular topics to tenants and members of Tenants' and Residents' groups. The rent setting 'Food 4 Thought' every year, provided tenants with the opportunity to discuss the options and the process in more detail.
- **Tenant survey:** The Council uses Survey Monkey to develop a rent setting questionnaire that is available online and promoted via the Council's website and social media sites.

Case Study:

Involving Tenants in Rent Setting



This platform gathers feedback around tenants' views. Other rent consultation processes have included a survey postcard summarising the proposed rent increase options, and giving participants the opportunity to indicate their preference.

- o **Tenants' newsletter:** The summer edition of the tenants' newsletter includes a section on the rent setting process. It includes background information about how collected rent is spent and priorities that have been identified for the year ahead. A paper version of the rent survey is also included.
- o **Vote at tenants' conference:** In November each year the Council hosts its annual tenants' conference and rent setting is featured on the agenda. The event includes an interactive voting session allowing participants to express their preference for the options presented.
- o **Feedback:** All feedback from the above methods is collated and considered before Council Officers submit final proposals to Elected Members for consideration and approval. Tenants are then informed of the result of the consultation process in advance of rent increase notices being issued to each tenant in March.

Challenges

- o Not all tenants participate in the consultation activities.
- o Communicating with all tenants individually can be costly.
- o Councils are not always aware of what funding will be provided by the Scottish Government in advance of setting housing service budgets and rent increase proposals.
- o The austerity agenda means landlords need to do more with less.
- o Balancing the needs and demand for services and investment needs with affordability.



Involving Tenants in Rent Setting



Key Learning Points

- In order to give an informed view tenants need to know and understand how rents are set and spent;
- A variety of consultation methods is crucial;
- Opportunities are required for tenants to discuss proposals with officers and other tenants encourage learning and debate in a more considered and meaningful way;
- Information on expenditure and performance is required prior to consultation taking place;
- Opportunities for involving tenants in scrutiny of the housing budget, although a recent development, is encouraging a deeper understanding of rent and budget setting processes along with how income and expenditure is monitored, which will in turn provide an opportunity to identify any improvements required.



Tenant Led Scrutiny



Introduction

Tenant led scrutiny aims to give tenants more power in holding their landlord to account for their decisions, performance and conduct. Changes to regulation in Scotland following the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) and the independent Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), require landlords to be more proactive in self-regulation and to involve tenants in the scrutiny process.

Together these have created a new environment in which registered social landlords, Councils and their tenants must work in partnership to achieve positive outcomes for tenants and other service users in Scotland. The emphasis from the Scottish Government means that landlords must deliver quality services, involve their tenants in assessing the performance of these services, be able to demonstrate value for money and drive forward improvements. Tenant led scrutiny and landlord self assessment are key priorities on the Scottish housing agenda.

Key Characteristics of Tenant Led scrutiny

Key characteristics required for genuine tenant led scrutiny:

Commitment from tenants and service users and across the whole organisation to ensure that tenant led scrutiny is an integral part of the landlords' governance and performance management frameworks. The development and implementation of a “**strategic scrutiny framework**” that is jointly agreed with tenants will clearly demonstrate commitment of everyone involved.

Training and support is required for tenants and service users involved in scrutiny activities, along with staff and Elected and Board Members to ensure awareness and understanding of the scrutiny process.

Independence from other governance and management structures. This means that the people who control the tenant led scrutiny activities are not the same people involved in managing or governing the organisation.

Formality in operation. Formality gives tenants and service users' confidence that they are entitled to ask for information and that their activities and recommendations will be taken into account and fit into the landlords' other business processes. Formalisation of the scrutiny group or panel and its activities should also assist in the demonstration of accountability to and between participants, the landlord and other tenants and service users.

Power for tenants and other service users to challenge and effect change, making the process an equal partnership between tenants, senior staff, Elected and Board Members.

Case Study: Tenant Led Scrutiny



Planning and procedures are required to be in place to ensure that everyone understands tenant led scrutiny processes, expectations are defined and met, communication between those involved in scrutiny activities, staff and Elected and Board Members is clear and timescales for implementation of recommendations and monitoring progress are in place.

The Steps

1	Planning:	Agree area of scrutiny
2	Skills Development:	Information, training and support
3	Carry out scrutiny:	Agree and participate in scrutiny tasks
4	Reporting:	Report results and recommendations
5	Implement Recommendations:	Agree what will be done, when and how
6	Monitor and evaluate:	What's been done, is it working?





Glen Oaks Service Improvement Group: A Good Practice Example

Having shared their experiences of moving into their home with Glen Oaks Housing Association, Service Improvement Group (SIG) members identified some common themes and started a conversation on how the experience could be improved for all new tenants, particularly with regard to the standard and cleanliness of properties. The Void and Lettable Standard Scrutiny Project was therefore agreed.

The SIG members carried out a range of scrutiny activities to assist them thoroughly review the service including:

- An extensive desk top audit of the lettable standard, void contract, specification, void process paperwork, complaint and satisfaction levels with regard to the standard of the home when a new tenant moves in;
- Meetings with the Association's Technical Team to understand roles and responsibilities as well as processes and procedures;
- Staff survey;
- Work shadowing void inspection visits with staff;
- Inspection visits to void properties when tenancy terminated and then after void works carried out.

The SIG members demonstrated a great understanding of the financial constraints on the Association when properties are vacated in a poor condition, as well as the importance of keeping refusals and void rent loss down and tenancy sustainment high. This tenant led scrutiny resulted in the SIG proposing 91 recommendations for improvement, which the Corporate Management Team and Association Board welcomed. The recommendations were used to procure a new void contractor and overall from the 91 recommendations, the Association agreed to 59, 22 were addressed through the new void contract, 5 will be considered at a future date, and only 5 were not taken on board. The SIG recommendations on what should be included in the lettable standard and void contract resulted in a 30% increase in tenant satisfaction with the quality of their home when moving in.

Challenges

Time - tenants involved in scrutiny activities are volunteers and need time to carry out this work and it may take longer than initially envisaged

Staff pressures - staff may not always be available to meet with or assist tenants in their work due to other constraints on their time

Resources and costs - not all recommendations may be implemented due to finance or other resource implications



Key Learning Points

- Commitment, enthusiasm and understanding of tenants, staff and Board members is crucial;
- Tenants identified and reported on good practice, as well as recommending improvements. This reassured staff that the SIG is not “out to pick faults”;
- Staff and Board members must be willing to embrace new ideas and change;
- The SIG has become an integral part of the Association, finding a balance between being “friends of the Association” and being “the critical eye” never afraid to challenge something they think isn’t right;
- Tenants must be aware that not all recommendations may be feasible;
- SIG Terms of Reference and Scrutiny SIG Outline for staff developed;
- Training and support is vital;
- Action Plan developed for scrutiny project and assessment of information required at outset agreed and supplied.



6.0

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Further reading

Scottish Executive (2001) Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 - Guidance on Tenant Participation
- <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/09/15487/11225>

Statutory instrument

- http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2002/416/pdfs/ssi_20020416_en.pdf

Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017:

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-april-2017/>

Scrutiny Good Practice Links:

<http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/scotscrutiny/Scrutiny%20Guide%20Complete%20FINAL.pdf>



APPENDIX 2

Useful sources of advice

For further information, advice or services relating to Tenant Participation the following organisations can be contacted.

The Scottish Government

Tenant Priorities Team

Anne Cook
Team Manager
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
Tel: 0131 244 0710
Email anne.cook@gov.scot

Susan McLellan
Tenant Participation Manager
Scottish Government
Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU
Tel: 0141 242 5437
Email: susan.mclellan@gov.scot

Michael Boal
Charter and Regulation Manager
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
Tel: 0131 244 0643
Michael.boal@gov.scot

Tenant Priorities Team
Admin Support
Scottish Government
Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU
Tel: 0141 242 5448
tpadminsUPPORT@gov.scot

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)

160 Dundee Street
Edinburgh
EH11 1DQ
Tel: 0131 225 4544
Email: scotland@cih.org

Tenants Information Service (TIS)

Clockwise
Savoy Tower
77 Renfrew Street
Glasgow
G2 3BZ
Tel: 0141 248 1242
Email: www.tis.org.uk
jmiller@tis.org.uk

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

Room 2, 3rd floor Erskine House,
1 North Avenue, CLYDEBANK G81 2DR
Tel: 0141 552 3633
Mobile: 07753686792
www.tpasscotland.org.uk

Shelter

4th Floor,
Scotia Bank House
6 South Charlotte Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4AW
Tel: 0800 800 4444
Email: shelter.org.uk

Positive Action in Housing

98 West George Street
Glasgow
G2 1PJ
Tel: 0141 353 2220
Email: home@paih.org
<http://www.paih.org/>

Legal Services Agency

3rd Floor,
Fleming House
134 Renfrew Street
Cowcaddens
Glasgow
G3 6ST
Tel: 0141 353 3354
Email: Isa@btconnect.com
<http://www.lsa.org.uk/>

SHR

Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Rd
Glasgow
G4 0HF
Tel: 0141 242 5642
<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>

APPENDIX 3

Sample tenant group constitution

1. NAME

The name of the Association shall be

2. OBJECTIVES

To improve the living conditions, community facilities and services for tenants and residents living in the area covered by the attached map and marked. The Association will at all times operate on an equal opportunities basis.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership shall be open to all members of the community.
- B. All members shall have an equal vote.
- C. All members should actively seek to represent the various needs of the area and must not discriminate on the grounds of nationality, political opinion, race, religious opinion, gender, sexuality or disability.
- D. Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending meetings or any other function in connection with the group.

4. COMMITTEE

- A. A Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association and shall serve for 12 months.
- B. The Committee shall consist of at least three members, who shall have the power to co-opt other members on to the Committee, during the course of the year. All members will have voting rights.
- C. The Committee shall elect from within their number a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. No committee member shall fill more than one position.
- D. The Committee shall make and carry out decisions in accordance with the objectives of the Association.
- E. Meetings of the Committee shall be open to any member of the Association who wishes to attend.
- F. There must be at least two-thirds of the Committee members present for decisions to be made at a Committee meeting.
- G. Non-voting members may be co-opted onto the Committee from landlords, staff, Councillors etc.
- H. Voting members may be co-opted amongst other tenants to fill casual vacancies throughout the year.
- I. Committee members can be voted off if: they have not attended number of meetings or have terminated their tenancy.

Committee members must declare any interest they may have in the topic under discussion and the Committee will decide if they need to forfeit their right to vote on this occasion.

5. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS OR STANDING ORDERS

- A. Members may speak only through the chair.
- B. Decisions will be made by a simple majority, voted in through a show of hands or a secret ballot.
- C. Meetings will end at a time agreed by the Committee.
- D. Any offensive behaviour, including racist, ageist, sexist or inflammatory remarks will not be permitted.
- E. Any member who consistently brings the group into disrepute or refuses to comply with the constitution shall be expelled on a two-thirds majority vote of the full Committee.
- F. Any such member will have the right to appeal within 28 days of the expulsion. The appeal shall be heard by the membership at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- G. The secretary shall deal with all correspondence.
- H. Agendas will be distributed to the membership at least seven days before a meeting. Items should be forwarded to the Secretary and Chair 14 days before the meeting.
- I. Minutes will be distributed to the membership at least seven days after a meeting.

6. FINANCES

- A. The Association may raise funds by obtaining grants from other bodies or by fundraising schemes.
- B. All funds shall be kept in a bank account, which shall be opened in the name of the Association.
- C. The Secretary, Treasurer and the Chairperson shall be the signatories on the account and all cheques shall require two of these signatures.
- D. Accounts shall be kept by the Treasurer, and brought to every Committee meeting where they may be inspected. Failure to bring the books to a meeting on three consecutive occasions will mean the Treasurer will be asked to resign.
- E. All expenditure shall be agreed and controlled by the Committee.
- F. All payments over Fifteen pounds shall be made by cheque, not cash. Any exception to this rule shall be discussed and agreed by the Committee.
- G. No officer shall sign a blank cheque - all cheques to be filled in before signatures are added.
- H. Once a year, the accounts will be audited and presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Association. The Auditors will be either: - An Officer or Councillor, Committee member, Landlord or: - The Committee of another local community organisation.
- I. All correspondence of the organisation, including the bank statement, shall be addressed to the Secretary.

7. PUBLIC MEETINGS

- A. Public meetings of the members shall be regularly held to discuss matters of importance and to keep the members fully informed of the Association's activities.
- B. Members shall be given 14 days notice of a public meeting.
- C. All votes shall be decided by a simple majority of the members present. This applies to all meetings of the Association.
- D. Any member, having the written support of 10 other members, may request the Committee to call a special Public Meeting of the Association. The Committee shall call the meeting within 21 days of this written request.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- A. An Annual General Meeting shall be held every year to discuss the activities of the Residents' group, to receive the audited accounts and to elect the Committee.
- B. The Annual General Meeting shall be held at a suitable venue to accommodate as many members as possible.
- C. Quorum shall be ____% of members.
- D. ____ days notice needs to be given to members of the Annual General Meeting.

9. CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

- A. This constitution shall only be changed at a Special Public Meeting of the Association, or at an Annual General Meeting.
- B. For decisions to be taken there must be a quorum of at least 10 people. The voting shall be by a simple majority of those present.
- C. All members shall be given 14 days notice of the meeting and proposed changes.

10. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

- A. If the Committee or any member wishes to dissolve the Association, a special Public Meeting shall be called.
- B. If two-thirds of voting members present at the Special Public Meeting agree to dissolve the Association, any remaining funds shall be donated to a relevant charity, after returning unused grants to the Landlord.

Appendix 4

Jargon Buster

A guide to housing and related terms for tenants and housing staff in the social rented sector in Scotland.

The social rented sector is formed of both Local Authority and Registered Social Landlords.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are independent housing organisations, including housing associations, housing cooperatives, Abbeyfield societies and co-ownership societies registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator.

How to use this Jargon Buster

There are two main sections in this document:

SECTION 1 – Key Housing Words & Abbreviations

Pg 68

- Provides a definition of words and phrases in alphabetical order, along with the abbreviations commonly used for these words or phrases.

SECTION 2 – Key Housing Organisations

Pg 106

Provides a fuller explanation of the organisations that influence housing policy developments in Scotland.



This guide should be used as a reference document for any tenant or resident interested in finding out more about the jargon and abbreviations often used by housing staff within landlord organisations. This guide explains these terms in Plain English and should give the reader a clearer understanding of housing services, housing policy and legislation. If a phrase appears in bold it will be found as a term within the jargon buster.

Landlords may also find the document a useful resource for communicating with tenants and tenants and residents organisations on complex housing issues.

Key Housing Words & Abbreviations

Abandoned House	An empty house where a tenant has stopped living in a house without informing the landlord.
Abbeyfield (Societies) Scotland	Registered as a social landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), Abbeyfield Scotland provides supported housing for older people.
Absentee Landlord	Landlords who do not live in or near the property they own. Used to describe landlords operating in the Private Rented Sector.
Access to Personal Files	Personal Files Housing (Scotland) Regulations 1992 – gives a tenant the right to examine certain information held in written form by a landlord on him/her. Information held on computer is covered by the Data Protection Act 2018.
Accountability	Assurance that a landlord organisation, or tenants and residents organisation, will be measured on their performance or behaviour related to the things they are responsible for. This includes justifying actions to the tenants or customers affected by the actions or decisions taken.
Accounts Commission	The Accounts Commission is the public spending watchdog for Local Government. It is a statutory, independent body, which, through the audit process, assists Local Authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. In housing terms, the organisation is responsible for ensuring that there is no misuse of money in the housing department of the Local Authority and that it is properly managed.
Audit Scotland	Audit Scotland is responsible for monitoring how well local authorities deliver their services and spend their money. Audit Scotland checks whether local authorities get the best value for the money they spend.
Acronym	The initials of a phrase that spells a word – e.g. TIS = Tenants Information Service, TPAS = Tenant Participation Advisory Service
Act of Parliament	A document written in legal language agreed by the Scottish or Westminster Parliament. It sets out the law regarding specific aspects of housing. See also Housing Act.
Action Plan	A list of things a landlord or tenants' organisation must do in order to achieve an aim or an objective within an agreed timescale.
Acquisition	The purchase or transfer of property or land that becomes a landlord asset.

Adaptation	Alterations to a house to make it suitable to meet the specific needs of the tenant or a member of household.
Adapted Housing	Housing that has been altered or built to include features that make it suitable for a person(s) with specific needs.
Adoption	When a new or amended rule is presented to the members at an annual general meeting and is agreed - the rule has been adopted.
Affordability	The level of rent landlords/government believe a tenant can pay without causing hardship.
Affordable Housing	Housing that is available to buy or rent at a level below the local market level. This can include low cost home ownership, mid-market rented homes or homes that are rented from a local authority or registered social landlord.
Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP)	The Scottish Government's programme for providing grants to social landlords to support the delivery of new affordable housing to meet needs in their area.
Agenda	A list of proposals, issues or items to be delivered or discussed at a meeting.
Aims	Things a landlord or tenants' organisation wants to achieve. Aims are often set out in strategies along with all the actions that will need to be carried out to meet each aim.
Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	ALMOs are used in England. These are companies set up by local authorities specifically to manage and improve all or part of their housing stock as an alternative to transferring the stock to another landlord. As an ALMO they can attract funding not available to the Local Authority.
Allocation	Where a property that is vacant (or soon to become vacant) is offered to a person on a landlord's waiting list and that person accepts the offer.
Allocation Policy	The Landlord's rules for deciding who should get priority for houses when they become available for let.
Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA)	<p>Are available for Universal Credit (UC) claimants who can't manage the standard Universal Credit payment. There are three types of APA available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct payment of the housing cost element to landlords (known as managed payments) • splitting of payment between members of a couple (husband / wife or partners) • more frequent payment of benefit. <p>NOTE: Landlords can request deductions from a claimant's Universal Credit to repay existing rent arrears. This can be done via the APA form, at the same time as the APA application. Deductions will be a minimum of 10% and maximum of 20% of a claimant's Universal Credit standard allowance.</p>

Ambulant disabled	The term 'ambulant disabled' refers to people with a wide range of disabilities who are not regular wheelchair users. This could include, for example, people who have diabetes, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis or cancer.
Amenity Housing	A property with special features – such as level access – to assist a tenant to retain an independent life.
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	<p>A meeting that must be held once a year whose agenda is determined by the constitution of the organisation. The meeting usually provides an update of the work of the organisation over the year, presentation of independently examined or audited accounts and election of committee members.</p> <p>NOTE: For some organisations election of office bearers will take place at the AGM and for others, office bearers will be elected at the first committee meeting after the AGM.</p>
Annual Report	A report produced by an organisation, such as a landlord or tenants and residents group, that sets out what the key actions were that took place over the previous year. It may also include a report of performance and details of accounts.
Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)	Each year every social landlord must complete a report that details how they perform against each of the outcomes in the social housing charter. They submit this report to the Scottish Housing Regulator and they must publish it for their tenants too.
Annual Report to Tenants	Each year landlords must provide a report to tenants on the organisations performance. This should reflect the detail of the ARC and show comparisons with previous years, usually two.
Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)	<p>The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 defines a person to be acting in an antisocial manner if they:</p> <p>Act in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or Pursue a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to at least one person not of the same household as them.</p>
Antisocial Behaviour Contract (ABC)	An early intervention - generally following two warnings but prior to an Antisocial Behaviour order (ASBO) - made against individuals who are perceived to be engaging in antisocial behaviour. Though they may be used against adults, almost all ABCs concern young people.
Antisocial Behaviour Notice (ASBN)	Local authorities can serve an Antisocial Behaviour Notice on private landlords in their areas. The ASBN specifies the action the private landlord must take to address antisocial behaviour within their property.
Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBO)	<p>An order that a local authority or registered social landlord can issue in consultation with the police to restrain a person (anyone over the age of 12) acting in an antisocial manner.</p> <p>See also Interim Antisocial Behaviour Order</p>
Antisocial Behaviour Strategy	Introduced in the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004. Local authorities and Chief Constables must jointly prepare a strategy setting out how they plan to tackle antisocial behaviour within their areas.

Arrears	The amount of money a tenant has not paid to the landlord on time. See also rent arrears.
Arrears Direct	<p>If you get income support, jobseekers allowance, employment and support allowance or pension credit and you have rent arrears, payments towards your arrears can be deducted directly from your benefits.</p> <p>NOTE: Although welfare reform has introduced Universal Credit, Arrears Direct will continue as the legacy benefits (existing benefits) remain in place for the majority of people claiming benefits</p>
Asset	Anything that is worth money. For example, a house is an asset.
Asset Management	The process for operating, maintaining and upgrading physical assets , such as housing stock, in a cost effective way to maximise financial returns, minimise financial risk and meet the needs of current and future tenants.
Assignment of Tenancy	<p>When the landlord agrees to a request from the tenant to pass the tenancy on to another person.</p> <p>To qualify for assignment, the tenant must live in the property and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the house must have been your only or principle home during the 12 month period immediately before written permission is requested - the person you wish to pass your tenancy to must have lived in the house as their only or principle home for 12 months before you apply - the 12 month period cannot begin, unless the landlord has been informed that the person has been living in the house as their only or principle home
Assured Tenancy	<p>A legal agreement between a private landlord and a tenant setting out the rules that allow a tenant to occupy the house, and describing the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and the private landlord.</p> <p>Assured tenancies have been replaced by the private residential tenancy for tenants who signed a lease for a property since 1 December 2017.</p>
Assured Tenant	A tenant who lives in a house owned by a private landlord.
Audit	A process of checking all income and expenditure of a landlord to ensure the money has been spent in a proper and accountable manner.
Average cost per unit	This is worked out by taking the total cost and dividing it by the number of houses involved. Average or unit costs are used in business planning for things like day to day repairs and housing management costs.

Ballot	<p>A way of allowing all affected individuals to vote on an issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants and residents groups might have a ballot to elect a chairperson, • Landlords would have a ballot to allow tenants to vote on whether they should transfer their stock to another landlord or to join a group of landlords.
Bedroom Tax	<p>An informal name for a measure introduced in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, by which the amount of housing benefit is reduced if the property a person is renting is judged to have more bedrooms than they need.</p> <p>Your Housing Benefit could be reduced if you live in social rented housing and have a spare bedroom. The reduction is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14% of the 'eligible rent' for 1 spare bedroom • 25% of the 'eligible rent' for 2 or more spare bedrooms
Below Tolerable Standard (BTS)	A house falling below the minimum quality standard set down in law. See also tolerable standard.
Bench Marking	A system used by landlords to compare the cost and how a service is provided with similar organisations, with a view to adopting best practice.
Best Value	A system that local authorities use to make sure the services they provide deliver continually improving performance alongside an appropriate balance between quality and cost.
Bill of Quantities	A document that sets out construction details for every component in a house, with a cost against each item. Landlords use it to pay contractors for new building. See also schedule of rates.
Black & Minority Ethnic (BME)	Term used to describe minority groups recognised as falling under the race relations Act 1976.
Board of Directors	A group of people, elected by its members, who oversee and control the operation of a registered social landlord. Can also be called management committee or governing body.
Borrow	A sum of money given by a bank or building society to a registered social landlord, which that landlord has to repay with interest over a period of years.
Borrower	A person or organisation who borrows money.
Borrowing Consent	Local authorities need permission from the government to borrow money to spend on its houses - this is known as borrowing consent.
Breakage Cost	Cost for repaying a loan early to a bank or other lender.
Briefing Paper	A short explanation of a policy or proposal. Briefing papers should always be in Plain English.
Budget	An estimate of all income and expenditure on housing over a set period - most often a year, but other periods can be used.
Building Regulations	These are defined by an Act of Parliament and set the rules for constructing and altering houses.

Business Plan	<p>This is a formal statement of an organisation's business goals, reasons they are achievable and plans for reaching them. It includes a set of forecasts of the money likely to be incurred to operate over many years. It is a forward planning tool, and one, which shows financial viability, capacity to repay borrowing and capacity to deliver services. Written business plans are often required to obtain funding, bank loans or other financing.</p> <p>For a landlord it also shows the organisation's capacity to reach and maintain suitable standards of housing and housing services and build new housing.</p>
Buy back	<p>This is where local authorities use grants made available by the Scottish Government to buy back houses that were sold under the Right-to-Buy, when they come up for sale on the open market, and make them available for rent to applicants on their waiting list.</p>
Buy to let	<p>This refers to the purchase of a property specifically to let out - that is to rent it out in the Private Rented Sector. Buy to let properties are usually residential but the term also includes student property investments and hotel room investments.</p>
Cabinet Reports	<p>A report that is tabled at a local authority committee meeting (meeting of councillors) giving background information so councillors can take informed decisions on proposed policies or service changes.</p>
Cabinet Style Government	<p>A council made up of elected members takes all decisions on policy. Some local authorities have now adopted a cabinet style of decision-making. This means the chair of the housing committee will make the decisions and other elected members only have a questioning and monitoring role.</p>
Calling up notice	<p>A notice issued by the lender to the borrower warning that the lender is about to go to court to repossess the property - usually because of non-payment of loan instalments.</p>
Capacity Building	<p>The process where tenants' organisations, community groups and individuals are supported to develop the skills they need to influence decisions taken by their landlord. This is usually achieved through a mix of training, practice and support.</p>
Capacity to Influence	<p>The skills (such as public speaking or negotiation), information (on specific issues) and ability (experience and confidence) members of a tenant's organisation have to influence decisions taken by their landlord.</p>
Capital Expenditure	<p>Spending to make lasting changes to the quality of houses. This would include items such as replacement windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms and installation of external render and insulation.</p>
Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR)	<p>Capital expenditure which is funded out of rents without borrowing.</p>

Capital Improvement Programme (CIP)	A landlord's plan for investing in tenants homes in a way that will make lasting changes to the quality of houses - such as new doors, windows, kitchen, bathrooms, external insulation & render. Also known as Capital Investment Programme and Housing Improvement Programme.
Charity	Some housing associations are registered with the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and have charitable status. As a charity, it cannot distribute any profit (surpluses), by the way of a dividend or other payment to shareholders. All income must be used for the benefit of the people it serves.
Charitable Status	Organisations registered with the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) have charitable status. This can include housing association landlords, tenant and resident and community organisations.
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)	CIPFA produces "ratings reviews" which show trends in how much income local authorities bring in and spend across all their services.
Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)	CIH is the representative body for housing professionals. It researches and produces good practice guidance for housing managers and provides training to all that have an interest in increasing their knowledge in housing matters, including tenants. See Key Housing Organisations in Section 2 for more information.
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	Is a type of housing allocation system where applicants bid on available properties rather than waiting on an offer being made to them. Once the bidding closes, the applicant with the highest priority out of all those who made a bid is offered the property.
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	A Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can give free information and advice to people on issues such as benefits, debt, consumer rights.
Clerk of Works	A person employed by a landlord to oversee a contract on a daily basis. Sometimes called a contract supervisor
Close Circuit Television (CCTV)	A network of TV cameras that record any activity in the area they oversee. Primarily used to collect evidence on vandalism.
Closing Order	A local authority can send you a closing order if your home is below the tolerable standard but is part of a building in which other properties are not. For example, this may be the case if you own a flat which is in a bad state of repair but the other flats in the block are kept in good condition. If a closing order is issued for your home, it means that the property can no longer be used as living accommodation.
Closure Notice	Under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 the Police have powers to serve a closure notice to prevent people from entering premises which have been a constant focus of antisocial behaviour.

Code of Conduct	A document setting out the standards of behaviour expected from all members of a group or organisation during meetings and when representing the group or organisation outside of meetings.
Code of Practice	A document setting out processes and procedures, which if followed should result in achieving a set objective in a proper manner. Often government or other monitoring organisations publish these. A landlord not following these codes of practice may have difficulty in justifying its actions.
Committee	A group of people (usually elected) who take decisions.
Common Allocation Policy	A single allocation policy that a number of landlords have developed and operate in partnership with each other.
Common Housing Register (CHR)	A single register that can be accessed by a number of landlords who have stock in an area. Usually applicants only have to complete one application form to join the register.
Common Repairs	<p>Repairs to properties not solely owned by a social landlord, such as roof or secure entry repairs required to a block of flats where some flats have been purchased through the Right to Buy.</p> <p>Social landlords are required to seek owner approval and agree their share of the cost prior to work being carried out. Where the repair is an emergency and not doing the repair will cause more damage to the property or harm to its occupants, social landlords can carry out the work and recharge the owners.</p>
Community	A group of people living in an area who share common interests and are served by common services and amenities - e.g. schools, doctor surgery, shops.
Community Action Planning (CAP)	A process that brings together all the community groups that operate in a particular town or village to develop an action plan for improving their area.
Community Asset Transfer (CAT)	Where land or buildings are transferred from local authorities and other public bodies into the management or ownership of community groups.
Community Based Housing Association	A housing association set up to acquire, improve and develop housing. Such associations have a strong connection to the community, with tenants / community representatives on the governing body (Board).
Community Empowerment	A term that describes an aim to allow tenant and other community groups to influence decisions that affect their communities.
Community Land Trusts (CLT)	Are a form of community-led housing set up and run by local people to develop and manage homes, as well as other assets important to that community, like community enterprises, food growing or work spaces.
Community Planning	A framework which brings together public services and local communities to plan how services in the local areas should be planned and delivered.

Community Planning Partnership (CPP)	The group of organisations in each local authority area, which form a partnership to plan how local services will be delivered in their area. Tenants and residents organisations can be represented on this partnership group.
Community Payback Orders (CPO)	Community Payback Orders (CPOs) make individuals pay back to their communities for the damage they have caused with their offending - usually by doing unpaid work.
Company	A landlord registered under the Companies Act 1985 with a main purpose of providing rented housing and that meets the criteria for Registration.
Company Limited by Guarantee	A landlord registered as a company whose members are not normally individually liable for meeting the debt of the company and whose board of directors cannot profit financially. This can also refer to tenant, community or other organisations.
Component	A part of the house such as roof, bath or window.
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)	An order by a local authority seeking to buy land or a house from someone who does not want to sell. The local authority has to be prepared to justify why it should own the land or house at a public enquiry.
Concierge	A form of caretaker in a housing development, usually multi storey flats, who controls access to the block, monitors the block through the use of close circuit television and may provide other services to the tenants.
Conflict of Interest	This happens when a member of staff or a management committee member is taking part in making a decision that may result in personal benefit.
Consortium	Several organisations join together to work in partnership with other organisations but do not give up their individual identity.
Constitution	An agreed set of rules that define a tenant's organisation or landlords' aims, what it can do, and how it is managed and controlled.
Construction Design and Management Regulations	These regulations ensure that for major construction works to your home, the people responsible for the works consider how to ensure no one is hurt during the construction phase.
Consultation	A process carried out by organisations and agencies to seek the views of service users and other interested parties. Consultation provides an opportunity for people who will be affected by, or have an interest in, a proposal to help shape that proposal and/or to give their thoughts and views on a draft version of a proposal before taking a decision.
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them.

Consumer standards	Apply to all registered landlords and set out what standards tenants and other stakeholders can expect and against which they will be held accountable.
Contractor	An organisation that is not the landlord but provides a service to the landlord's tenants.
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	An organisation to which some local authorities belong. It looks to collect housing information from its members and then reflect a collective view on housing in Scotland.
Co-op	A registered social landlord run by tenants who form most or all of the management committee. A housing co-op's members cannot remove any of the assets if they leave. Sometimes known as a par-value co-op.
Co-opt	Where a new member is able to join a committee out-with an AGM . The proposed membership must be nominated and seconded by existing committee members. Organisations may co-opt individuals for a specific purpose, to carry out a specific role, or due their particular field of expertise.
Co - production	Where a variety of people and organisations come together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them.
Credit Union	A not-for-profit financial organisation that is owned and controlled by its members which provides savings accounts and loan facilities.
Criminal Antisocial Behaviour Orders (CRASBO)	Can be granted by a local Sheriff when someone is convicted of a criminal offence. This means that a landlord does not have to pursue its own action for an ASBO against someone.
Criteria	A range of definitions setting a standard against which something can be measured. For example - the Scottish Housing Regulator has a set of rules for registering with them as a landlord. If the landlord does not meet the criteria it will fail to obtain registration.
Criteria of recognition	The set of guidelines that landlords use to set out what a tenants' association must do in order to be 'recognised' by the landlord as the official group for their area and then go on to receive funding and other support from the landlord.
Cyclical Maintenance	Some components in a house need regular maintenance such as a gas boiler. The landlord does not require a survey to make a decision that maintenance is required. It happens automatically at regular intervals, therefore is called cyclical. Sometimes it is called planned maintenance.
Data Protection Act 2018	<p>The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Act controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.</p> <p>An example is that a landlord cannot provide tenants' addresses and other information to a private company who would then write to you to try and sell something.</p>

Day-to-day Repair	Repairs carried out in a single house by a landlord at the request of an individual tenant. This can also be called a responsive repair or reactive repair.
Dayworks	Dayworks is a means by which a contractor is paid for specifically instructed work on the basis of the cost of labour, materials and plant plus a mark-up for overheads and profit. It is generally used when work cannot be priced in the normal way.
Debt	Money owed.
Decanted	A tenant is moved temporarily from their home to allow repairs / improvements to take place.
Decree	A court order which enforces the law. A decree can be granted to a landlord or a tenant.
Default	This is a standard that applies automatically unless someone decides it is inappropriate. Such as, a preselected option adopted by a computer program or other mechanism when no alternative is specified by the user or programmer.
Defects Liability Period	A guarantee period during which a contractor is still responsible for the work to your house rather than the landlord.
Defender	In court the individual or organisation opposing the case against them.
Demand	This word is used in housing to describe the difference between the number of households looking for a house in an area and the number of houses available in that area. If there are more houses available to let in an area than applicants looking to live in that area it is described as low-demand or hard to let. If there are lots of people on the list for an area but houses do not become available to let very often, the area is described as high-demand.
Demolition Order	If a local authority is concerned that your home is below the tolerable standard and cannot be brought back up to standard, it can send you a demolition order. A demolition order requires you to leave the property within 28 days of receiving the order, and to demolish the property within the next six weeks.
Depreciation	As an asset wears out or ages it becomes worth less money. Depreciation is the difference between the costs when new against the current value.
Desk top review	A review of existing published or on-line information to inform a proposal or policy.
Determination of a contract	
	The ending of a contractor's employment.
Development Funding	Money given by the Scottish Government to assist with funding new house building or rehabilitation.

Development Support	Support for tenants' organisations that assists them to effectively influence their landlords. Development support usually involves providing information, training, advice and practical assistance to support groups with the following: developing a constitution; organising meetings; planning for action; undertaking policy and service reviews; influencing policy development; carrying out tenant scrutiny.
Direct Labour Organisation (DLO)	A contractor that is owned by the landlord and does work to the housing stock - such as repairs. See also public works department.
Discounted Cash Flow	The method of calculating a price for houses being sold under the stock transfer process.
Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)	This is paid by local authorities to people who receive housing benefit but need extra help to pay their rent. For example to mitigate the effects of the bedroom tax. DHP is funded by the Scottish Government.
Dispersal of Groups	Part 3 of the 2004 Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act gives the Police in Scotland powers to disperse groups of two or more people who are behaving in an antisocial manner.
Displacement	The movement of a housing problem from one area to another because of action by the landlord. An example might be a landlord evicts an antisocial tenant and then rehuses him/her in another area where they may cause the same problems.
Disturbance Payments	A payment sometimes made to a tenant by a landlord to cover any upset due to major works.
Elected Members	Councillors that have been elected in Local Government elections.
Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)	An organisation providing support for the governing bodies of housing associations in all aspects of their role as employers.
Enabler	A term for local authorities who do not have any housing stock to manage but still have a duty to enable (or support) other landlords to provide housing in their areas.
Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)	The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases.
Energy Savings Trust (EST)	An organisation that brings forward schemes to help residents keep their energy bills manageable.
Environmental improvements	Improvements to the way landlords maintain their estates such as planting shrubbery or installing car parking spaces.
Equality Act	The Equality Act became law in October, 2010. It replaced previous legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in what employers and employees need to do to make their workplaces a fair environment and comply with the law

Equal Opportunities	An equal opportunities landlord should not discriminate against a person when assessing an application for housing on the basis of 9 'protected characteristics' defined by the Equalities Act 2010. See EQIA
Equal opportunities legislation	Landlords should also ensure that they act according to legislation which relates to equal opportunities, such as the Race Relations Act or the Equalities Act.
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	When developing new policies or legislation landlords must carry out an assessment to make sure that policy doesn't have a negative impact on individuals with one or more 'protected characteristics'. Protected characteristics include: Age; sex; race; disability; pregnancy; marital status; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; religious background.
Estate Inspections	Estate inspections (or walkabouts) are joint inspections of a local area with members of tenants and residents groups, housing staff and representatives from other of other organisations, agencies or services who provide a service in the community. The aim of these inspections is to identify issues and find joint solutions to address them.
Evict	The process of taking a tenant's home from them against their will. Landlords have to follow specific legal procedures before they can evict a tenant.
Executive Directors	A member of a board of directors who is also an officer of the organisation.
Expenditure	Money spent on housing and related services.
Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)	A meeting called for a specific purpose out with the usual cycle of meetings. The term is usually used where the group would ordinarily hold an annual general meeting (AGM) but where an issue arises that requires the input of the entire membership and is too serious or urgent to wait until the next AGM .
Factoring	A term most commonly associated with providing housing management or garden maintenance services to owner-occupiers.
Fair Rent	A fair rent can apply to accommodation in the private rented sector which was let before 2nd January 1989 without a resident landlord. A rent officer will set a rent level based on a range of information about the property. Fair rents are registered by a rent officer at the request of a landlord or tenant and should be fair to both.
Feasibility Study	A study to investigate the facts and estimate what may happen if a course of action is undertaken e.g. examination of the result that might be expected if houses are transferred.

Federal Structures	<p>Are groups of registered social landlords and other non-registered subsidiaries which come together to deliver a range of housing and other services.</p> <p>Within the structure each of the subsidiary organisations continue to operate independently, with their own management teams and boards of directors, however there is one parent (lead) company that has overall legal control over the subsidiary organisations. The parent must be a registered social landlord.</p>
Federation	<p>A group of tenant associations coming together to form one organisation that will promote things of common interest to influence the housing policy makers and service providers. Sometimes called a forum or panel.</p>
Feu Superior	<p>An organisation or person who retains an interest in land and its future development although it has no direct ownership of the land. The Abolition of Feudal Tenure etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 abolished all the remaining aspects of the feudal system as at 28th November 2004.</p>
Financial Year	<p>Starting on the 1 April and finishing on 31 March. This is important to tenants because local authorities and registered social landlords plan, organise and discuss their affairs based on financial years not calendar years.</p>
First - tier Tribunal	<p>The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) was formed to deal with determinations of rent or repair issues in private sector housing as well as assistance in exercising a landlord's right of entry</p>
First time fix	<p>Where a reactive repair is fully completed on the first visit as the contractor had all the necessary equipment. Also known as 'Right first time'.</p>
Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)	<p>These notices provide a swift and effective response to antisocial behaviour and reduce the burden on the courts of dealing with relatively minor cases.</p>
Focus group	<p>A method of gaining opinion from a group of people that may have an issue in common. For example a landlord may set up a focus group of tenants that have recently used its repairs service to find out how tenants feel about the service. Focus groups are not democratically elected.</p>
Forum	<p>A group of tenants' associations coming together to form one organisation that will promote things of common interest to influence the housing policy makers and service providers. Sometimes called Federation or Panel.</p>
Framework	<p>a) An outline of a process omitting the detail.</p> <p>b) A list of suppliers of good or services that landlords can order from without going through a full procurement process.</p>
Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002 (FOI)	<p>A Scottish piece of legislation that defines what information public sector organisations are obliged to provide on request. The Westminster government passed the Freedom of Information Act for the United Kingdom in 2000.</p>

Friendly Societies	A charitable registered social landlord. See also Industrial and Provident Society.
Fuel Poverty	A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating level, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income on all household fuel use. If over 20% of income is required, then this is termed as being in extreme fuel poverty.
Full Housing Benefit	If a tenant does not contribute towards the rent but it is covered entirely by housing benefit, then they are said to be on full housing benefit.
Fully mutual Co-op	Same as a co-op except that all tenants must be a member and every member a tenant.
Funder	Bank or building society, which lends money to registered social landlords or local authorities.
Furnished Let	A property that it is either fully-furnished or part-furnished when it is let to a tenant. The furnishings form part of the tenancy agreement and the landlord is responsible for maintaining or replacing them.
Garden Maintenance Scheme	Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 obliges local authorities to provide or make provision for gardening assistance to those requiring some help through old age, disability or infirmity.
General Fund	The general fund is the account held by local authorities into which council tax is paid. It is used for all other council services that are not funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) such as roads, cleansing, education etc.
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	Mutually agreed European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force on 25th May 2018. It changed how businesses and public sector organisations handle the information of customers.
General Needs	Houses provided to meet the needs of families and other households without any special design features. Sometimes known as mainstream housing.
Governance	The process by which a management committee or board of directors manages a social landlord and makes sure it acts within the law and achieves the standards required by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).
Governing Body	A group of people elected to control a registered social landlord by its members. It can also be called management committee or board of directors
Gross Annual Valuation	A value put on a house by an independent assessor reflecting its location and the amenities in the house. Some landlords use this as a basis for rent levels.
Group Structures	Are formed where a number of registered social landlords merge to form one company, or where a registered social landlord (the parent) sets up a number of subsidiary registered social landlords.

Guidance	A set of instructions often provided to landlords to help them put new legislation into practice.
Handbook	A document provided to tenants setting out all the rights, services and standards provided by the landlord.
Hard to Let	<p>Properties are deemed hard to let when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are empty for a longer than expected period of time - Demand for the property is low, or there is no demand - Offers of the property made to applicants are refused (more often than other properties) <p>This can be due to the property's type, size, condition or its location.</p> <p>See also demand and low letting demand.</p>
Health Check	A process that organisations can go through at the start of a review or scrutiny exercise to evaluate how well things are working currently.
Health and Safety Executive (H&SE)	An organisation that is charged with setting safety standards and investigating any accident or incident to workers in houses to find out the cause and who is to blame. It will prosecute the person at fault, if its investigations warrant this action.
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)	This is the government department responsible for collecting national taxation and VAT .
Homeless	Households who are either without or who are going to be without a home in the near future.
Homelessness Strategy	Local authorities must submit a strategy to the Scottish Government (usually as part of the Local Housing Strategy) demonstrating how they plan to prevent and alleviate homelessness in their areas.
Home loss and disturbance payment	<p>If you are forced to move out of your home – for example if it's going to be demolished – you may be able to apply for a home loss and disturbance payment to compensate you for the inconvenience, disturbance and stress.</p> <p>The nationally agreed home loss payment is of £1500, with disturbance payment levels being agreed by individual landlords.</p> <p>NOTE: where a tenant entitled to home loss and disturbance payments owes any outstanding debt to the landlord, this will be deducted from the payment.</p>
Homeswapper	A national company that matches social rented tenants looking to swap their home with another person in some other part of the country. www.homeswapper.co.uk . See also mutual exchange
Household	An individual or family that occupies or wants to occupy a house.

Housemark	HouseMark is a membership organisation that provides solutions and opportunities through data, insight and knowledge exchange to drive performance improvements and add value to businesses across the housing sector.
Housing (Scotland) Act	A document written in legal language agreed by the Scottish Parliament. It sets out the law regarding specific aspects of housing in the future. An example is the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The date tells you when it became law.
Housing Association	A not for profit landlord that is registered with and monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) whose membership is open to tenants amongst others. There can be non-registered housing associations using the name; therefore, tenants need to ensure the housing association is registered with the SHR .
Housing Benefit	Payment of money to assist a tenant to cover either the full or partial cost of the rent due. See also full housing benefit and pre-tenancy determination of rent. NOTE for tenants of working age, this will be included in the Universal Credit entitlements as introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
Housing Bill	A draft document written in legal language that reflects changes the government wants to make to Scottish housing law. Once it is debated, amended and agreed by the Scottish Parliament it becomes a Housing (Scotland) Act.
Housing Co-op	A not for profit landlord who is registered with and monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator and whose membership is mostly or exclusively made up of tenants.
Housing Finance	Covers all income and expenditure on housing.
Housing Investment	Money spent on building new houses, rehabilitating old houses, improvements or major repairs.
Housing Management	A wide term covering all the services a landlord provides to manage their stock and support their tenants.
Housing Needs	The difference between the existing number, type and size of houses available and the level of demand from current and future households.
Housing Partnership	A number of organisations and companies joining together to promote the regeneration of an area.
Housing Providers	Collective term including anyone who makes rented houses available in the market.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	The account into which all local authority tenants' rent money is paid into. This money is then used to cover all the day-to-day expenditure on council housing. The HRA is ring-fenced and should not be used to pay for services that should come from the General Fund.
Housing Trust	Usually set up by a council to buy council houses under a stock transfer proposal; the Local Authority retains a minority interest in the trust. Tenants are offered places on the board of directors.

Human Rights	<p>Fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the United Kingdom (UK) is entitled to. These are defined in law by the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>NOTE changes may be introduced due to the UK leaving the European Union, otherwise known as Brexit.</p>
Improvements	<p>Work done to your property that gives it something it did not have before e.g. replacing single glazing with double-glazing.</p> <p>See also capital improvement programme</p>
Income	<p>Housing income is made up of rents, service charges, subsidy and loans.</p>
Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA)	<p>An external agency, independent of the landlord, employed during a major project (such as a transfer of ownership or creation of a partnership) to work on behalf of the tenants.</p> <p>An ITA provides independent advice and assistance to ensure tenants understand the process and are supported to be involved in the decision-making.</p>
Industrial and Provident Society	<p>A legal form that a housing association takes. Its members own it, it is a not-for-profit organisation, and it's run by a voluntary management committee. The Registrar of Friendly Societies ensures the rules of an Industrial and Provident Society are in line with the legislation.</p>
Inflated Cash Flow	<p>A financial plan, usually over thirty years, that takes account of future inflation. Every year a landlord must balance income and expenditure. Sometimes the landlord may borrow to cover any shortfall in income for short periods. An inflated cash flow, using budgets and life cycle costing, shows whether a landlord will remain financially sound over a period of time or go out of business.</p> <p>Typically, a bank will use this before considering whether to grant a loan to a housing association.</p>
Infra-structure	<p>The roads, footpaths, street lighting, phone & internet cabling, and other services that are required to support a housing estate.</p>
Interdict	<p>An order from a court instructing a person to stop doing something. For example, to stop causing a specified nuisance to a neighbour. The court has to be satisfied that the offence is being committed. See also Interim Interdict.</p>
Interests	<p>A person in a position to make a decision for a registered social landlord or local authority who also has the ability to gain personally by that decision is said to have an interest. This applies equally if it is a close member of the person's family. This is not allowed under Section 15 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. If the person could receive any payment from the decision then it is called pecuniary interest.</p>
Interim Antisocial Behaviour Order	<p>An interim ASBO can be used to provide quicker, more immediate, protection to victims of antisocial behaviour than a full ASBO.</p>

Interim Interdict	<p>An order from a court instructing a person to stop doing something.</p> <p>For example, to stop causing a specified nuisance to a neighbour. The court has only to believe that the offence is being committed. See also Interdict.</p>
Intranet	<p>A communications system that links computers owned by the same people or company in different locations. This is common in local authorities and registered social landlords to allow staff access to internal information about the organisation.</p>
Joint tenancy	<p>Where more than one person signs the tenancy agreement and everyone signing takes joint responsibility for maintaining the tenancy.</p> <p>Where a tenant wishes to add a joint tenant to the tenancy agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed joint tenant must have lived in the house as their only or principle home for the 12 months before the tenant applies to the landlord for them to become a joint tenant - The 12 month period cannot begin unless the landlord has been informed that the person is living in the property as their only or principle home.
Judicial Review	<p>If someone thinks a decision taken by an individual or an organisation in authority is illegal, they can ask the court to review that decision. It is usually a very expensive process, so only used by organisations with access to a lot of resources.</p>
Land Bank	<p>Land owned by a landlord which may be used to build new housing at some time in the future.</p>
Landlord	<p>An individual or organisation who lets a property to someone on the basis of a legal agreement</p>
Law	<p>A law is a rule agreed by Parliament which set out the things that a person, or organisation can or can't do. The law is enforced by police officers, government and the courts.</p>
Lay Person	<p>A lay person is someone who may serve on a committee or board, who is not trained, qualified, or experienced in a particular subject or activity.</p>
Lease	<p>A tenancy agreement setting out the rights and responsibilities of the landlord and tenant.</p>
Legislation	<p>A law that has been agreed and passed by Parliament.</p>
Lender	<p>A bank or building society who lends a person or organisation money to spend on housing.</p>
Lettable standard	<p>The standard that houses must meet before they are allocated to a new tenant.</p>
Lettable Standard Repair	<p>Repairs that are carried out while a property is empty to bring it up to the lettable standard.</p>

Letting Orders (Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001)	Often referred to as Section 5 referrals - where a local authority requests that a registered social landlord let a house to a particular applicant, who has been assessed as being homeless. This means local authorities who have a statutory responsibility have access to more houses for example through housing associations to help them house homeless applicants and discharge their statutory duty.
Liaison Officer	A person who links groups or organisations to achieve a common aim.
Life Cycle	Every component in a house will wear out (or reach the end of its useful life) and need replaced. The time between installation and being worn out is its life cycle.
Life Cycle Costing (LCC)	Where the replacement of a component is costed and programmed over a period of time - usually 30 years.
Loan	Money borrowed from a bank or building society by a landlord.
Loan Charges	The money that is paid back by a landlord on what it has borrowed from a bank or building society. Also known as interest.
Local Authority	A local council that owns and manages public services, including council houses. In Scotland some local authorities have transferred the ownership of their houses to an alternative landlord.
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	The amount of housing benefit that is payable to tenants in the private rented sector. It is calculated using rent levels across a geographical area, and varies across Scotland - e.g the LHA for Ayrshire is lower than the LHA for Edinburgh. If the rent charged is higher than the LHA, the tenant has to pay the difference.
Local Housing Company	Usually set up by a local authority to buy local authority houses under a stock transfer proposal; the local authority retains a minority interest in the company. Tenants are offered places on the board of directors.
Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	A statutory document produced by all local authorities that assesses the housing need in their area and sets out the actions they will carry out in order to meet that need. This covers all tenures not just rented houses.
Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	Houses built and sold at a price that is lower than the local market value.
Low Letting Demand	Where the number of tenants seeking rented housing in an area is less than the number of houses available for rent. This can be due to reasons such as the type, size, condition or location of properties available. See also demand and hard to let.
Mainstream Housing	Any house not adapted to meet a specific need of a tenant. Sometimes known as general needs housing.

Major Component Replacement	The main parts which make up a house and require renewal from time to time. This includes heating systems, kitchen units, electrical rewiring, windows and outside doors etc. Also known as capital investment programme.
Managed Payment to Landlord (MPTL)	Under Universal credit (UC), MPTL is rent paid direct to the landlord. This can be requested by the landlord automatically if arrears are more than 8 weeks.
Management Committee	A group of people elected to control a registered social landlord by its members. Can also be called board of directors or governing body.
Management Transfer	The transfer of a tenant between houses owned by the same landlord that is outside the normal rules – usually on social grounds. A management transfer is granted at the discretion of the landlord.
Mandate	A document signed by an individual giving another person authority to do something on his or her behalf.
Market Rent	A rent set by a private landlord based on the maximum amount it can receive by offering the house on the open market.
Mediation	When someone helps two or more people to find their own solution to a dispute or disagreement.
Member	<p>a) Any person can be a member of an organisation if he/she meet the organisation's rules. A tenant can be a member of a tenants' association in his/her area.</p> <p>b) A local councillor is often called a local member or an elected member.</p> <p>c) Any tenant of a registered social landlord is able to become a member by paying £1 for one share in the company.</p>
Memoranda and Articles of Association	All companies must have these. It sets out what the company can do and the principles of its workings as a company.
Mid-Market Rent	A rent that is higher than the social rented sector or LHA level but lower than the market rent for a particular area.
Minutes	A formal record of a meeting that includes who was in attendance, what was discussed and any actions that were agreed. Minutes should be agreed as accurate at the start of the following meeting.
Missive of Let	A legal agreement between a landlord and a tenant regarding the occupancy of a house which sets out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Usually called a tenancy agreement.
Model	A template or example version – For example, the Scottish Government provides a Model Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement. This can be used by all landlords saving them from starting from scratch, especially as there will be many similarities in each landlord's agreement.
Modernisation	The bringing of existing property components up to current day standards.

Monitor	Checking progress of a policy, service or project by collecting information and measuring it against set standards.
Mortgage	A loan used to buy a house or flat. It is usually secured on the property. This means that if you default on the loan (don't pay) the lender can repossess the property.
Mutual Exchange	Where a tenant agrees to swap their home with another tenant. Mutual exchanges require landlord approval and can happen between tenants throughout the United Kingdom.
National Home Energy Rating (NHER)	A standard that a house is measured against to identify if it is well insulated and will be economical to heat.
Need	<p>a) The difference between the existing number, type and size of houses available compared with the requirements of current households wanting a house.</p> <p>b) Defines the type and size of property a household may require, depending on the number of household members or specific requirements member(s) of the household may have such as ground floor or adapted housing to suit mobility issues.</p>
Neighbourhood Management	The activities carried out by a Housing Officer to keep the housing stock and the local area tidy and safe. Also known as estate management.
New Tenant Pack	Information and advice pack provided by landlords to new tenants that includes details such as: officer contact information, services provided, support agency information, landlord partner organisations etc.
Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB)	A body which has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from ministers.
Non-Executive Directors	Directors of a registered social landlord who are not members of staff of that organisation. See also executive directors.
Non-profit distributing	Registered social landlords are often described in this way. It means that no one involved in the organisation is allowed to take any income beyond staff salaries and expenses. Extra income in any one year can be kept in reserve for the future or spent to build or improve houses. See also not-for profit.
Non-traditional housing	Houses that were not made using traditional construction material – timber frames, brick walls and tiled roofs. Instead they are often made of concrete and steel. These materials can be difficult and/or expensive to bring up to the housing quality standard and often have low NHER ratings.
Not-for-profit	Registered social landlords are often described in this way. It means that no one involved in the organisation is allowed to take any income beyond staff salaries and expenses. Extra income in any one year can be kept in reserve for the future or spent to build or improve houses. See also non-profit distribution.
Notice of Proceedings	Formal notice of the landlord's intention to seek a decree from a Sheriff to evict a tenant.

Objectives	Targets a landlord or tenants' organisation wants to achieve. See also aims.
Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)	Is the independent regulator and registrar of Scottish charities
Ombudsman	An independent person who can hear a qualifying grievance by a tenant against his/her landlord and suggest a remedy if required.
Open Market Acquisition Scheme	Through the Open Market Acquisition Scheme, grants are available from the Scottish Government for Councils to buy houses for sale and make them available for rent to applicants on their waiting list. This is often called a 'buy-back' scheme.
Options Appraisal	A landlord considering the best way forward for a particular service develops a number of proposals taking into account a range of factors and assumptions. Each of these proposals (or options) is then assessed against established criteria to identify which one they will take forward.
Output	Measurable item that is produced as a result of action and can be used to evaluate progress (e.g. production of a document by an agreed timescale).
Outstanding Debt	A landlord decides to sell its housing stock for a price less than the current debt on the houses. The difference between the price paid and the size of the debt is the outstanding debt. Sometimes called residual debt.
Over crowding	Where a household are living in a property that has fewer bedrooms than they need for the size of their household.
Owner Occupier	A person who owns the property that they live in.
Panel	A group of tenant associations coming together to form one organisation that will promote things of common interest to influence the housing policy makers and service providers. Sometimes called federation or forum.
Parenting Orders	These orders were introduced in the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004. They require parents to do something to change or improve their child's anti-social behaviour and/or their own behaviour. Often orders require parents to attend counselling or parenting classes.
Parliament	The body of politicians that debates and agrees legislation for Scotland and the UK. There is a Scottish Parliament and a Westminster Parliament with different responsibilities.
Partial Stock Transfer	This is when a local authority decides to retain ownership of some of its houses and sell others to one or more alternative landlords.

Participatory Budgeting (PB)	<p>Where the control of community budgets is passed from the council or registered social landlord to be managed by local groups. Local groups are then invited to bid for funding from this budget using a democratic process that allows local people to decide how the money should be shared out.</p> <p>Participatory Budgeting can also be used to enable local people to decide on how parts of the housing service budget should be spent in their area.</p>
Particular Needs	An individual or household might have a need that requires a particular solution – e.g someone in a wheelchair has a particular need for an adapted property.
Partners in Participation	A document produced by the Scottish Office in 1999 containing a national strategy and definition for tenant participation.
Partnership	Organisations working together towards a common aim. For example, the local authority and its tenants set up a local housing company with both having votes on the management committee.
Pecuniary Interest	When a member of a registered social landlord who owns, or part owns, another business or land or works for a business that enters a contract with that landlord or makes money from the landlord. Section 15 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 sets out what happens in these circumstances. See also interest.
Peer Review Process	A system used by landlords to compare the way in which a service is delivered with similar organisations with a view to adopting best practice. This is also called bench-marking.
Phase	When a project is divided into two or more parts, each part is called a phase.
Place Making	A term that is used to describe the process of making communities attractive places to live and work that people choose to locate themselves in. It involves thinking about roads, footpaths, houses, shops, amenities, greenspaces etc.
Planned Maintenance	Each year the landlord will survey parts of the housing stock and decide which components need replaced in all or some of the houses. This is then included in the budget and tenders sought from contractors to carry out the work. For example, the rewiring of a group of houses would be planned maintenance.
Planning Permission	Permission given by a local authority to allow a landlord, individual or developer to build or carry out major alterations that affect the internal or external structure of buildings.
Positive Action in Housing (PAH)	<p>An organisation with the aim of promoting racial equality and the wider ethos of equal opportunities policies and practices in Scottish housing.</p> <p>See also Key Housing Organisations in Section 2.</p>
Pre-tenancy Determination of Rent	This is a rental valuation by the independent rent officer provided to a private tenant before they take up a tenancy. This lets the tenant know how much of the rent will be covered by Housing Benefit.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	A method of raising private money to spend on housing, which normally would have been financed through public expenditure. The local authority will provide a specification for the housing service to be provided and a private contractor will put up all the upfront costs required to deliver the houses and will then recharge the Local Authority until the costs have been recovered (usually twenty years or more). It will only be a private finance initiative if the contractor is seen to be taking a risk.
Private Residential Tenancy Agreement (PRTA)	<p>Introduced on 1st December 2017, the Private Residential Tenancy Agreement (PRTA) replaced assured and short assured tenancy agreements for all new tenancies in the Private Rented Sector (PRS).</p> <p>It sets out the terms and conditions of the tenancy, including: the rent; the length of the tenancy; repair responsibilities; the amount and reason for the deposit; when the landlord can enter the property; and any conditions and restrictions on the use of the property.</p>
Probationary Tenancy	Also known as a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) – where a tenancy is given for a trial period of 12 months or more. During this period a Local Authority can evict a tenant without a decree from a Sheriff if any of the conditions of tenancy are broken. For example, a landlord might use a probationary tenancy where a tenant was previously evicted for Antisocial Behaviour.
Probationary Tenant	A person who has signed a probationary tenancy or short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).
Procurement Procedure	The way that a landlord buys services and goods from an outside agency. (e.g. building contractor).

Property Type	<p>There are many different property types that make up a landlord's housing stock such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bungalow – a single storey house. • Common entry (or tenement) flats – single storey flats that share a main entry, with each flat accessed off of a common landing. • Detached house – a house that doesn't have any shared walls with other properties • Semi-detached house – a house that shares a dividing wall with 1 neighbour. • End Terraced house – a house at the end of a row of houses which are joined together • Mid Terraced house – a house that has neighbours on either side. • 4-in-a-block (or cottage) flat – single storey flats with own front door. • Multi-storey blocks – flats that share a main entry, with flats accessed off of a common landing, where there are more than 4 floors. • Town House – a single house built over more than 2 floors
Protected Characteristics	<p>Equality Act 2010 sets out 9 protected characteristics against which landlords should not discriminate when developing policies or delivering services: age; sex; race; disability; pregnancy; marital status; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; religious background.</p>
Prudential Borrowing	<p>The set of rules governing local authority borrowing which requires the borrowing to be affordable and within the limits set by the local authority based on its existing debt and available (non HRA) revenue to pay back the borrowing.</p> <p>See also borrowing consent.</p>
Public Enquiry	<p>A review of a decision of a local authority held in public and chaired by an independent person appointed by the First Minister of the Scottish Government.</p>
Public Expenditure	<p>Money spent by a government, local authority, or any other public organisation.</p>
Public liability insurance	<p>Public liability insurance is required by landlords to cover compensation payments and legal costs if a member of the public (tenant, supplier or passerby) is injured or their property is damaged. Some tenant and community organisations may also have public liability insurance depending on the type of services, activities or events they deliver.</p>
Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR)	<p>The amount of money government and public bodies borrow to help finance national and local public services, including local authority housing. For example, if the government wants to borrow more for the health service it can increase the borrowing limit or reduce expenditure elsewhere.</p>

Public Works Department (PWD)	A contractor owned by the landlord who does work to the houses, such as repairs. See also direct labour organisation.
Pursuer	The individual or organisation who is acting against another individual or organisation in court.
Quantitative	A way of measuring how well something works by using hard information such as numbers or statistics.
Qualitative	A way of measuring how well something works by using soft information such as tenant's quotes.
Quorate	The rules governing boards or committees of organisations will state how many of its committee must attend its meetings in order to make any decisions. The committee is quorate if at least that number is present.
Quorum	The number of people who must attend a committee meeting before it can make any decisions.
Random Survey	A survey of tenants where there is no selection of who to survey. See also sample survey and satisfaction survey.
Reactive Repairs	Repairs carried out in a single house by a landlord at the request of an individual tenant. These can also be called responsive repairs or day-to-day repairs.
Recovery Action	The process a landlord goes through to repossess a house.
Recovery of possession	If a landlord is successful in the recovery action the tenant is evicted and the landlord gets back possession of the property.
Refurbishment	Large scale repair and replacement of property components all at the same time.
Regeneration	A wide ranging improvement of a housing estate that involves housing and other factors that contributes to a better life for the residents.
Regeneration Capital Grant Fund	This is delivered in partnership with COSLA and local government, and supports locally developed regeneration projects that involve local communities, helping to support and create jobs and build sustainable communities.
Regional Networks	RTOs from across the country are represented on one of 4 networks which have formal links with the Scottish Government and are involved in the development of housing policy and have access to information that they are responsible for sharing with their local federations, forums or panels.
Register of Interested Tenants	A register of interested tenants is often used by landlords to record individual tenants who wish to be consulted or participate without being the member of a tenants' organisation.
Register of Private Landlords (RPL)	Local authorities have a duty to compile a register of private landlords in their area and make it available for public inspection.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	An independent landlord (including housing associations, housing cooperatives, Abbeyfield societies and co-ownership societies) registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), which owns and manages houses on a not for profit basis.

Register of Tenants Organisations (RTO) 1	A register a landlord has to keep which contains details of registered tenants' organisations.
Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) 2	<p>Introduced as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Registered Tenants Organisations (RTO's) are formally elected groups of tenants, who meet the criteria set out in Scottish Government guidance.</p> <p>Groups apply to their landlord to become an RTO. Where groups represent tenants of several landlords, RTO applications can be submitted to all relevant landlords.</p>
Registered	This defines the process of a landlord being on a list of organisations that will comply with the standards, rules and regulations set by another organisation. Usually involves being monitored by the other organisation - the most common is a registered social landlord which is registered with Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and is monitored by them.
Registered Rent	This is a rent for a regulated tenancy determined by a rent officer or rent assessment committee.
Registrar of Friendly Societies	The person who is responsible for maintaining the standards of Industrial and Provident Societies.
Regulated Tenancy	A legal agreement between a tenant and a private landlord entered into before January 1989.
Regulations	These are prescriptive rules that an organisation must follow to comply with best practice or the law. E.g. Health and Safety regulations set the rules that must be followed to keep people safe.
Rehabilitation	Large scale improvement of a building to bring it up to a good standard of repair. Also known as refurbishment or modernisation.
Related Organisations	<p>Two organisations not related by their constitutions but by something they do.</p> <p>For example a local authority landlord and an RSL that have stock in the same area both deliver housing to meet need, but do not share a constitution - they are independent of each other.</p>
Relet	The process of preparing an existing house for letting, ensuring it meets the lettable standard and finding a tenant for that house. See also allocations.
Rent Arrears	The amount of rent money a tenant has not paid to the landlord on time. Sometimes just called arrears.
Rent Assessment Committee	An independent committee, normally of three people: a lawyer, a professional surveyor and a lay person. They can determine the maximum rent for a regulated tenancy. They hear appeals against the rent set by a rent officer. They can also vary the conditions of a tenancy.
Rent Officer	An independent person who determines and registers rents for houses let on regulated tenancies and sets the LHA for a local area.

Rent Structure	The system by which different rents are charged for different properties owned by a landlord. Often it is worked out based on house size and type, but might also include area, level of amenity and quality of the environment.
Rent Restructuring	The process of looking at the existing rent structure and identifying any changes that might be needed to make sure the different rents charged are fair.
Repossession	A legal process whereby a lender takes back legal ownership of a property because the borrower has not paid the instalments on the loan.
Residents Association	Another term for a tenants and residents association. It is sometimes used to refer to associations formed exclusively of owner occupiers who are unable to register with a landlord.
Residual Debt	Where a landlord decides to sell its housing stock for a price less than the current debt on the houses, the difference between the price paid and the size of the debt is called the residual debt. Sometimes called outstanding debt.
Resource Planning Assumptions (RPA)	The amount of funding the Scottish Government will award each Local Authority to help them deliver their Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).
Responsive Repairs	Repairs carried out in a single house by a landlord at the request of an individual tenant. This can also be called a reactive repair or day-to-day repair.
Restriction of Liberty Orders (RLO)	RLO's confine an offender to a particular place for up to 12 hours per day, or restrict him or her from a particular place. Also known as 'tagging'.
Retail Price Index (RPI)	The Retail Price Index (RPI) is currently used to index various prices and incomes including tax allowances, state benefits, pensions and index-linked gilts. In housing terms it is commonly used as a baseline to determine proposals for annual rent increases.
Revenue Expenditure	The spending of money to meet day-to-day costs such as reactive repairs, housing staff and loan charges - the opposite of capital expenditure.
Right to a Written Lease	A landlord must provide the tenant with a written tenancy agreement.
Right to Compensation	Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Scottish secure tenants and short Scottish secure tenants may be able to receive compensation from their landlord for improvements which they have made to their home on, or after, 30th September 2002, with the permission of their landlord. If someone was a secure tenant and carried out improvements to their home before 30th September 2002 they will continue to have rights to compensation under the old scheme.
Right to Manage	A scheme defined in law that sets rules to allow a group of secure tenants to set up a housing cooperative to manage their homes.

Right First Time	A repair standard, measured by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), where a repair was fully completed at the first visit because the contractor had all the necessary equipment. See also first time fix.
Right to Repair	A scheme defined in law that sets rules to allow a tenant with a SST or SSST to order their own repair and the landlord pays for it. The repair must cost less than £350 and the contractor must be on an approved list held by the landlord.
Right to Succession	<p>The rules for succession are based on law and on what is written in the tenancy agreement. An adult who is part of a household at the time of the tenant's death may have a right to have the tenancy transferred to him/her.</p> <p>To qualify for succession, the person must have lived in the house as their sole and only home for a minimum of 12 months and the landlord must have been notified that the person has been living in the house.</p>
Ring-fenced	Where money can only be spent on a particular service e.g. the HRA cannot be used to pay for education or waste management services as it is ring-fenced for spending on housing services.
Risk Assessment	Where you identify potential risks in a workplace and take action to remove or reduce the level of that risk.
Risk Management	Process of identifying and managing potential risks to the delivery of a project or service.
Rules	Every registered social landlord is governed by a set of rules that sets out how they will conduct their affairs, elect its management committee etc. A tenants' organisation has a set of rules know as its constitution.
Sample Survey	A survey of a selected number of tenants designed to give a result that mirrors what would have been obtained if all tenants had been surveyed. See also random survey and satisfaction survey.
Satisfaction Survey	A survey of a sample of tenants undertaken by the landlord to see what they think of the services the landlord provides. See also random surveys and sample survey.
Schedule of Rates (SOR's)	A document that sets out repair details for every component in a house, with a cost against each item. Landlords use it to pay contractors for reactive repairs. See also Bill of Quantities.
Scotland's Housing Network (SHN)	Scotland's Housing Network is a consortium of local authority and housing association landlords working together to drive up performance, meet the demands of Best Value and deliver quality services through benchmarking, peer review, good practice exchange and information sharing.

<p>Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)</p>	<p>A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) is a legal structure which has been purpose built for the charity sector in Scotland. It provides limited liability and a separate legal identity to organisations that want to become charities but do not want or need the complex structure of company law. This means that even the smallest charity can access the benefits of incorporation – including limited liability and legal capacity.</p> <p>It is only available to charities with a principal office in Scotland and is regulated by OSCR and subject to the Charities and Trustee Investment Act (Scotland) 2005.</p>
<p>Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)</p>	<p>An organisation made up of registered social landlords that collects information from its members and then puts forward a collective point of view.</p> <p>See the key housing organisations in Section 2 for more detailed information.</p>
<p>Scottish Government</p>	<p>The devolved Government for Scotland with responsibility for housing matters in Scotland.</p>
<p>Scottish Housing Associations Resources for Education (SHARE)</p>	<p>A not for profit organisation whose primary aim is to provide training for the members and staff of registered social landlords. It is commonly known as SHARE.</p>
<p>Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)</p>	<p>The independent regulator of social housing services. They are responsible for assessing and reporting on how all landlords are performing (including local authority landlords), and the financial wellbeing and standard of governance of RSLs. They can intervene to secure improvements where necessary.</p>
<p>Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)</p>	<p>The SHQS was introduced in 2004 and is the main way to measure housing quality in the social rented sector. It is the minimum standard which all social rented properties must meet.</p>
<p>Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC)</p>	<p>The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and came into force in April 2012. Updated in 2017, the charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should be aiming to achieve for their customers when performing their housing activities.</p>
<p>Scottish Parliament</p>	<p>The body of Scottish elected politicians that debates and agrees housing legislation for Scotland.</p> <p>The Westminster Parliament deals with national legislation.</p>
<p>Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST)</p>	<p>A legal agreement between a local authority or registered social landlord and a tenant setting out the rules that allow a tenant to occupy the house and describing the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and landlord.</p> <p>See also Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement.</p>

Scrutiny	<p>Scrutiny is a process where tenants and residents are given greater influence and ability to hold their landlords to account, by exercising more power over the business decisions, governance and performance of their landlord.</p> <p>The scrutiny process includes tenants, residents and other customers carrying out a review of policies, procedures and practices to assess what works well and what could be improved.</p>
Section 5 Referrals	Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on registered social landlords to provide accommodation to homeless people referred to them by the local authority.
Section 15	Section 15 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 sets out how a registered social landlord deals with providing a housing service to a committee member, member of staff or a close relative. See also interests.
Secure Tenant	A tenant who has signed a secure tenancy agreement.
Security	When a lender lends a substantial amount of money to someone to buy a property, they want a guarantee that the borrower will pay. The borrower usually has to grant a security over the property, which means that if they do not pay the loan instalments then the lender is entitled to repossess the property and sell it to repay the loan.
Sequestration	Also known as bankruptcy – it is a formal legal process which takes all your assets and transfers them to a trustee so that he/she can use them to pay some of your debt.
Sequestration for Rent	A process that can be used by a landlord to recover unpaid rent. This is not the same as formal sequestration.
Service Charge	A landlord sometimes offers a specific service to some of its tenants and levies a separate charge on top of their rents to cover the cost - this is called a service charge. For example, tenants living in a block of flats may be charged a service charge to cover cleaning of the common areas.
Service Level Agreements	An agreement between a service provider and a service user setting down the standard of service to be provided.
Shared Equity	Where a loan is provided for part of the value of your home and you take out a mortgage for the rest. When you sell the home, the equity loan has to be repaid based on the sale value – if the loan was for 20% of the purchase price 20% of the re-sale value should be repaid.
Shared Ownership	Where a person buys part of a house and rents the remainder from the property developer or landlord.
Sheltered Housing	A house designed for people who want to live independently but require extra support. There are lots of different types of sheltered housing. Most have a 24 hour alarm system and a warden who is on-site for part of the day.
Sheriff	A term for a Scottish Judge.

Sheriff Court	<p>A Sheriff Court is the principal local civil and criminal court in Scotland, with exclusive jurisdiction over all civil cases with a monetary value up to £100,000.</p> <p>Registered social landlords seeking to recover a property (evict a tenant) is required to present the case to the Sheriff at the local Sheriff Court.</p>
Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST)	<p>A legal agreement between a local authority landlord or a registered social landlord and a tenant setting out the rules that allow a tenant to occupy the house and describing rights and responsibilities of the tenant and landlord. One of the rules defines the length of the tenancy which is initially 12 months.</p> <p>See also probationary tenant.</p>
Short Scottish Secure Tenant	<p>A person who has signed a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) agreement.</p>
Single Seller Survey	<p>Introduced in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 - sellers of houses arrange for a single survey to be carried out on their home before marketing it. The survey is made available to all possible buyers.</p>
SIST	<p>A term in Scots Law for a court order stopping or suspending proceedings.</p>
Social Housing	<p>Housing at an affordable rent provided by local authorities and registered social landlords.</p>
Social Inclusion	<p>A wide ranging term to cover all the things that are required to help people to play a full part in society.</p>
Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP)	<p>A range of organisations and local people who work together to deliver all the services that are required to enable an individual to play an active part in society.</p>
Space Standards	<p>A measure of the size of rooms a landlord should plan to deliver when designing a new house.</p>
Special General Meeting (SGM)	<p>A meeting held because the members of the organisation wish to discuss, and reach a decision about, an urgent matter that cannot wait for the annual general meeting.</p>
Specification	<p>A written standard that a landlord requires a contractor to reach when delivering a service or carrying out work.</p>
Stakeholder	<p>A person who has an interest in what the landlord is doing. This applies to tenants, residents, and staff amongst others.</p>
Standard	<p>A measure which a landlord should aim to reach when delivering its services to tenants.</p>
Standing Orders	<p>A set of rules that control how a landlord, or other organisations, will run their business.</p>
Start Up Grant	<p>A grant provided by a landlord to assist a new tenants and residents group when they first set up to purchase the equipment or services that they need to develop.</p>

Statutory	<p>Something set down in an Act of Parliament that a landlord must do.</p> <p>For example a landlord has a statutory duty to keep a house wind and watertight.</p>
Steering Group	A short term working group, set up to oversee the delivery of a specific task or a strategy. Steering Groups usually disband once the task is completed or the strategy has been implemented.
Stock	Houses owned by a landlord.
Stock Condition Survey (SCS)	<p>A survey of the condition of houses. This not only estimates disrepair, it also judges the future remaining life of major components and provides a reliable estimate of costs across the housing stock.</p> <p>Usually a one in ten sample survey is enough for this purpose.</p>
Stock Transfer	An existing landlord selling (transferring ownership of) houses occupied by secure tenants to a registered social landlord or another alternative landlord.
Strategy	A plan for moving towards an agreed goal or aim.
Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)	Sets out the local authority's priorities for developing new affordable homes in their area to support the Local Housing Strategy. These are submitted to the Scottish Government to agree a 3 year programme of development funding.
Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)	A tool that can be used to support business planning or strategy development within an organisation. Users consider how each of the categories will affect its prospects and can plan accordingly. Sometimes known as a SWOT analysis.
Sub-letting	<p>A tenant can let part of their home for short periods of time if they are going to be away from home and if the landlord agrees.</p> <p>The tenant must live in the property for a minimum of 12 months before a sub - let would be approved.</p>
Subsidiary	A company that is owned and controlled by another (parent) company. A subsidiary company cannot be a registered social landlord if the parent company is not a registered social landlord.
Subsidy	Money given to a housing provider to assist with the cost of building new, or improving existing, housing.

Succession	<p>The right to pass the tenancy of a house over to someone else after the death of the tenant. Rights to succession are outlined in a tenant's tenancy agreement.</p> <p>To qualify for succession, the person must have lived in the house as their sole and only home for a minimum of 12 months and the landlord must have been notified that the person has been living in the house.</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no qualifying period for succession for the tenant's spouse or joint tenant - For unmarried partners, family members and carers the qualifying period is 6 months, until November 2019, when this will change to 12 months as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
Summary warrant	Issued by a Court to allow a creditor to recover money due to them. Often used to collect unpaid council tax.
Summons	A document detailing a court case against the defender. This can also be a witness citation.
Supported Accommodation	A property that is linked to support staff (either present in the building or via a call system) who provide support to the tenant to help them to manage their home.
Sustainable Housing	Housing which is built and maintained in an energy efficient way to reduce the impact on the environment, and which is built to a high standard to ensure it will last for a long time.
Task Group	A group of people brought together for a short time to carry out one specific job.
Tenancy	A general term describing a tenant renting a house.
Tenancy Agreement	A legal agreement between a landlord and a tenant regarding the occupancy of a house which sets out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Sometimes called Missive of Let or Lease.
Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme	<p>All private landlords and letting agents taking tenancy deposits in Scotland are required to safeguard them with a Government approved tenancy deposit protection scheme. The aim of the scheme is to protect both tenants and landlords by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring tenants' deposits are returned to them at the end of the lease, unless there is damage to the property or rent arrears owed - Providing landlords with funds to assist them to recoup rent arrears or costs of damage to the property
Tenant Participation	A process providing ongoing opportunities for tenants to influence the decisions taken by their landlords before those decisions are made.
Tenant Participation Officer (TPO)	A member of staff employed by a landlord to promote, and support the delivery of, tenant participation.

Tenant Participation Strategy (TPS)	Section 53 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on local authorities and registered social landlords to produce tenant participation strategies. These strategies promote the influence of tenants in landlords' services and show how the landlord will obtain and take account of tenants' views.
Tenant Participation Structures	The way that landlords and tenants' organisations are set up to ensure tenants can influence their landlord.
Tenant and Residents Association (TARA)	A group of people who live in the same area who work together to represent the views of all tenants and/or home owners in their area to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live. A registered TARA is one that is registered with their landlord. The landlord must consult all registered TARAs about changes to the service and can often provide financial and other support.
Tenanted Market Value	The value of houses that have sitting tenants and must continue to be made available for renting in future.
Tenants Handbook	A guidebook for tenants that explains the services tenants can expect from their landlord.
Tenants Information Service (TIS)	An organisation, managed by its members, that provides information, training, development support and advice to tenants and landlords throughout Scotland. Sometimes known as TIS, see the Key Housing Organisations in Section 2 for more detailed information.
Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)	An organisation that provides information, training and advice to tenants and landlords throughout Scotland. Sometimes known as TPAS, see the Key Housing Organisations in Section 2 for more detailed information.
Tenant Scrutiny Framework	A process that sets out all the ways an organisation will support tenants to be involved in scrutinising their services and procedures.
Tender	A process of seeking, from a range of suitable contractors, a cost for carrying out work on behalf of the landlord.
Tenure	The relationship between who owns a property and who lives in it. The most common tenure types are: rental from a local authority or registered social landlord; rental from a private landlord; and owner occupation.
Thematic Enquiry	A detailed examination of all the available evidence relating to a particular topic. Sometimes carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to look at practice by a number of landlords on the same service or topic.
Third Sector	Groups that are not operated by the government or local authorities (public sector) or aiming to make profits for shareholders (private sector) – charities, community groups and social enterprises operate in the third sector.
Timescales	The length of time to carry out a task or number of tasks.
Timetable	A list of actions and details of when each of the actions will be completed.

(In) Today's Money	This means a figure for the future is being quoted before inflation is taken into account. For example, if rents rise at the rate of inflation, the average rent will still be the same value as it is now in 5 years' time, "in today's money".
Tolerable Standard	A minimum quality standard set down in law below which no house should fall. See also Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS)
Transfer Agreement	Legal agreement between a local authority and the prospective new landlord which sets out the terms and conditions of a housing stock transfer.
Transfer 1	The process of a tenant moving from a house owned by a landlord to another house owned by the same landlord.
Transfer 2	The process of changing ownership from one landlord organisation to another. Sometimes referred to as stock transfer.
Transfer List	A list of existing tenants who are looking to move to another property.
Transparency	Where business and financial activities are done in an open way without secrets, so that people can trust that they are fair and honest.
Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE)	<p>This refers to legislation that protects the continuing rights of staff when one landlord decides to transfer its houses to another landlord. Sometimes called TUPE.</p> <p>Also used to transfer staff from one contractor to another, when a new contractor is appointed to deliver the same services.</p>
Treasury	The government body responsible for managing the financial affairs of the UK.
Treasury Management Policy	This is a written policy explaining where a registered social landlord will borrow money from and where it will invest any temporary money it has.
Trickle Transfers	The transfer of houses to another landlord one at a time - usually when the house becomes vacant.
Trustee 1	A person appointed by the court to administer someone's assets and repay their debts.
Trustee 2	Trustees have the overall legal responsibility for a charity. The law describes charity trustees as 'the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity.
UK Government	The Prime Minister and Cabinet in Westminster who are responsible for non-devolved matters - matters that affect the whole of the United Kingdom - such as Immigration, Foreign Policy or Defence.
Under Occupation	Where a household has one or more bedrooms than they require.

Universal Credit (UC)	<p>UC is a new single benefit for working-age people, being introduced in stages across the country as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. UC will merge six benefits into one payment.</p> <p>UC includes: income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit.</p> <p>It is expected that UC will be in place across the whole country by 2023.</p> <p>NOTE: although UC is rolling out across the country at different times, a new claim to the above benefits, or certain changes in circumstances, will trigger a claim to Universal Credit.</p>
Value Added Tax (VAT)	Value Added Tax, or VAT , in the United Kingdom is a general, broadly based consumption tax assessed on the value added to goods and services. It applies more or less to all goods and services that are bought and sold for use or consumption in the United Kingdom.
Valuation	The price set by a surveyor which a landlord must usually pay to buy houses.
Valuation – Open Market	The price a house would sell at if offered with vacant possession to the public.
Valuation – Tenanted Market Value	The price a house would sell at where it can only be used for letting to tenants.
Value for Money (VFM)	A term used to measure the quality and performance of services provided against the cost of delivering them.
Vetting	A process of checking the previous record of a prospective tenant before letting them a house.
Void	A house that is empty.
Voluntary	Activities carried out by a person of his/her own free will and who receives no payment for the activity. They may receive expenses to cover travel and carers costs. Membership of a management committee of a registered social landlord or a tenants' organisation is voluntary.
Waiting List	A list of individuals who have completed an application form and are looking to be offered a home by a landlord. See also Common Housing Register (CHR)
Walkabouts	Opportunity for tenants and others to “walkabout” their communities with housing staff and representatives of other organisations, agencies or services to highlight issues or concerns and work together to develop solutions and agree priorities for expenditure.
Welfare Reform	Is the collective name for a number of changes that have been made to the benefit (or social security) system under the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

<p>Westminster Parliament</p>	<p>The body of United Kingdom politicians that debates and agrees national legislation some of which applies to Scotland. The legislation related to housing benefits is discussed at Westminster.</p> <p>There is a Scottish Parliament with responsibilities for the devolved functions that apply only to Scotland.</p>
<p>White Paper</p>	<p>A policy document that sets out the government's proposals for future legislation. The document often includes a draft Bill and provides the opportunity for the government to collect views on their proposals and make amendments before presenting the Bill to Parliament.</p>
<p>Workshop</p>	<p>A learning tool where a group of people come together to hear information about a particular topic and then take part in discussions, activities and/or question and answer sessions to find out more about the topic.</p>



Key Housing Organisations

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH)

This is the professional body for everybody that is interested in housing.

The Institute ensures that its members have reached a standard of competence, by means of education, examination and continual professional development.

The CIH researches and produces good practice guidance for housing managers.

The Institute also provides training to all that have an interest in increasing their knowledge in housing matters, including tenants.

Finally, the CIH lobbies government to ensure that it is aware of housing issues when considering introducing new or implementing existing legislation.

You can contact the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland by telephoning 0131 225 4544 or email scotland@cih.org

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA)

Most local authorities in Scotland are members of CoSLA. Policy is developed through leaders (Council) meetings and there are a number of forums, although no specific forum on housing exists.

CoSLA is the forum for local authorities to discuss issues, and the views of the authorities will be represented to Government and the public through CoSLA. By bringing together the local authorities and presenting a common voice, CoSLA seeks to promote and protect the interests of councils.

CoSLA has among its aims, increasing the role and influence of local government within the communities they serve, and to increase the control of local government over its own affairs. It has produced a number of papers on housing from a council's perspective.

You can contact CoSLA by telephoning 0131 474 9200 or email enquiries@cosla.gov.uk

Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

EVH is a unique organisation, providing unlimited support to the governing bodies of not for profit and voluntary organisations in all aspects of their employer role. It is a fully volunteer-led organisation. They provide training for board members and staff; health & safety services; and human resource and recruitment services.

EVH has membership from over 150 organisations in all parts of Scotland, and in the last decade our membership has grown to include a wide range of social employers throughout the social enterprise and not for profit sectors.

EVH can be contacted on 0141 352 7435 or email contactus@evh.org.uk

Housemark, Scotland

HouseMark is a membership organisation that provides solutions and opportunities through data, insight and knowledge exchange to drive performance improvements and add value to businesses across the housing sector.

You can contact HouseMark on telephone **0131 221 7758**

Or email housemark.co.uk@HouseMarkScot

Positive Action in Housing

This organisation has a mission to promote through a national training programme, racial equality and the wider ethos of equal opportunities policies and practices within the Scottish housing movement.

It aims to help tenants' organisations consider race equality issues in the work of tenants' organisations, in particular to play a key role in challenging racial harassment of black tenants. Positive Action in Housing offers tenants training programmes to achieve its mission and aims in housing.

You can contact Positive Action in Housing by telephoning 0141 353 2220 or email home@paih.org

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

SFHA is the representative body of housing associations (HAs) and co-operatives in Scotland. Nearly 200 HA's or co-ops subscribe to SFHA. The SFHA is governed by a Council of 22 who are elected from representatives of the member HAs and co-ops.

The SFHA has established the following aims:

“To contribute to the provision of high quality, affordable housing and housing related services, and to the creation of sustainable communities, by promoting, representing and providing services to housing associations and co-operatives in Scotland, and campaigning on their behalf.”

Activities:

- Consultancy: SFHA will provide assistance on a range of areas, e.g. developing housing management policies.
- Policy Development: SFHA works with its members to produce a common approach to issues. The common approach is then represented to Communities Scotland or other agencies, as the views of the movement.
- Standards: SFHA produces its own standards for HAs to follow. These cover good practice in housing management, governance, model rules etc. Communities Scotland monitors associations' performance against these standards.
- Equality: The promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of housing association activity is an important concern for SFHA.
- Training and Events: SFHA provides a range of training services and conferences.
- You can contact Scottish Federation of Housing Associations by telephoning 0131 556 5777 or email sfha@sfha.co.uk

Scottish Parliament and Government

The Scottish Parliament is responsible for housing in Scotland. The Parliament is made of Members called MSPs who debate and agree legislation in relation to housing.

The Scottish Government is made up of Ministers and Civil Servants who are responsible for bringing forward housing legislation and implementing the parliament's policies.

The paid officials and civil servants, work with Scottish Ministers to improve the well being of Scotland for its people. Their values are:

- Integrity and honesty;
- Objectivity;
- Political impartiality; and
- Fairness.

You can contact the Scottish Parliament by telephoning 0131 348 5000 or 0845 278 1999 or email sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

Scotland's Housing Network (SHN)

Set up in 1995 the Scotland's Housing Network is a consortium of Local Authority and housing association landlords working together to drive up performance, meet the demands of Best Value and deliver quality services by means of benchmarking, self assessment, good practice exchange and information sharing.

You can contact the SHN by telephoning 0131 466 3710 or emailing info@scotlandshousingnetwork.org

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

SHR are the independent regulator of RSLs and local authority housing services in Scotland. They were established on 1 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. They have one statutory objective, to:

“safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities”.

They regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- how social landlords are performing their housing services
- RSLs' financial well-being
- RSLs' standards of governance

We intervene to secure improvements where we need to.

We also keep a Directory of Social Landlords in Scotland, which holds important information about each landlord and how you can contact them.

You can contact the SHR by telephoning 0141 242 5642 or emailing shr@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

Shelter Scotland

Shelter Scotland is a charitable organisation that helps people who find themselves in bad housing conditions or homeless through the provision of advice support and legal services.

Shelter Scotland also has a campaigning arm and works to tackle the root causes of bad housing by lobbying government and local authorities for new laws and policies, and more investment, to improve the lives of homeless and badly-housed people.

They work in conjunction with the housing sector to promote good practice, publish reports, and deliver professional training.

You can contact the Shelter Scotland helpline on 0808 800 4444. For non urgent enquires you can use their web-site: https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/about_us/contact_us

Tenants Information Service (TIS)

TIS is the leading organisation inspiring innovative Tenant Participation practice in Scotland. As a national membership organisation, we promote excellence in tenant and resident involvement, offering independent advice, support, and training. We support tenants and landlords to work together to improve housing services and standards. Our services include providing:

- Information and advice about housing issues;
- Consultation services to support national and local organisations engage with residents throughout review and development of their policies and services;
- Training courses covering a wide range of topics aimed at supporting professional and personal development;
- Seminars, consultation events and conferences;
- Independent Tenant Advice;
- Development support to help tenants' organisations become more effective and influential;
- Scrutiny training, support and accreditation

Our aim is simple, we want to help change social housing in Scotland for the better.

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) exists to promote good and effective relationships between tenant and landlord organisations in Scotland. TPAS is a membership organisation, and social enterprise run by its membership through its Board of Management. TPAS works with tenants and landlords across Scotland, in rural, urban and island communities.

TPAS offers a range of services including:

- Scrutiny training and support
- Conferences and events
- Training for all across housing and engagement topics
- Accreditation - a measure of excellence across all participation activities
- Independent tenant advice
- Supporting tenants and landlords to improve their participation

You can contact TPAS by telephoning 0141 552 3633 or email enquiries@tpasscotland.org.uk



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