



Muirhouse Housing Association

MUIRHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Title of Policy: Tenant Participation and Consultation Policy

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Lead Officer: Stephanie Sedstrem

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If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Values

Our Vision is an engaged, thriving, desirable and eco-friendly Muirhouse with high quality, truly affordable and greener homes.

Our Mission - We will provide high quality, truly affordable homes and services for residents and strengthen our engagement and partnerships to enrich the community and safeguard our environment.

Our Values - In upholding our central value of providing high quality, affordable homes and services, our behaviours and decisions will demonstrate our commitment to

Excellence: Ensuring the highest standards in all that we do and innovating to continually improve. Across the MHA Group, we are committed to providing a high quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money.

Caring: Being compassionate about and responding appropriately to the needs of our residents, staff, and Board.

Mutual Respect: Valuing the views, knowledge, expertise, and skills of others and collaborating to achieve good outcomes for residents, staff, and the Association. We will continue to be a leading member of the local community, working with our customers and statutory, voluntary, and private sector partners.

This policy applies to

This policy applies to all Muirhouse Housing Association tenants and employees.

Policy Summary

It provides information relating to tenant participation activities carried out by Muirhouse Housing Association.

Equalities

Muirhouse Housing Association are committed to ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation. This document complies with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

Privacy

This policy has been developed and will be applied in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

Compliance

SHR Regulatory Standards

Standard 1

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

Standard 2

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Standard 3

The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial wellbeing and economic effectiveness.

Standard 4

The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

Other Guidance

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001/2010

The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017:

National Strategy for Participation "Partners in Participation" Scottish Government's Guide to Successful Tenant Participation

Related Policies

Membership Policy
Tenant Participation and Consultation Strategy

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Muirhouse Housing Association (MHA) is a charitable housing association operating in the Muirhouse area of Edinburgh with an aim to put our tenants at the centre of what we do. We recognise the importance of effective tenant participation for both the organisation and individual tenants and believe that this includes:

- Excellent service delivery and value for money
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills
- Excellent communication between staff and tenants
- Links between the association and our community
- Knowledgeable and informed tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial limitations
- Breaking down misunderstandings, helping to remove any mistrust between the association and tenants, and building mutual respect and understanding
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood

1.2 We recognise that there are various methods for consulting with tenants and will attempt to use these as method to ensure that everyone has the ability to participate and identify which best suit the identified needs and aspirations our tenants.

1.3 We also acknowledge that there are others within our community who are not covered by the Tenant Participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 but will regard them as being an integral part of our approach.

2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 We want to ensure that we properly service the requirements of our tenants, wider community and build good relationship with the people we serve. To be effective we need to know what experience people have of our services and what their expectations are. We will survey tenant on various aspects of our service, obtain feedback and where required will make service changes. In addition to our policy aims to:

- Give tenants real opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process of the Association
- Offer a range of options for becoming involved through long term and short-term methods on an individual and collective basis
- Comply fully with all legal, regulatory, and good practice requirements with regard to tenant participation
- Ensure tenants groups are adequately resourced and supported in order to enable them to fully take part in the participation process and provide independent support if required
- Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information processes to meet the needs of all our tenants
- Ensure that tenant participation and consultation is subject to regular review and improvement

- Ensure tenants are kept informed about outcomes and measures taken post consultation including implementation of any changes

3 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

3.1 This policy will comply with all legislative, regulatory, and good practice requirements which includes the following:

3.1.1 Legislation: The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Section 53 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on landlords to develop a Tenant Participation Strategy. The Association is committed to continually developing and improving Tenant Participation practice throughout the Association and across the whole range of housing and housing related services.

3.1.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) Guidelines:

The Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017

Outcome 1: Equalities Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Communication 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.

Outcome 3: Participation Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

3.2 In addition, this policy includes good practice guidance from the National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation and the Scottish Government's Guide to Successful Tenant Participation.

4 COMMUNICATION

4.1 The Association recognises that good communication is crucial to the effectiveness of our tenant participation policy. The Association is therefore committed to ensuring that:

- All literature and communication with residents should be clear, concise, and easy to understand. Printed material must be in plain language, jargon free, clear, and attractive in format
- A translation service will be provided where appropriate. Facilities will be made available on request for those who have either a visual or hearing impairment
- The person dealing with an issue or responsible for an area of service is clearly identified in all communications.

5 METHODS OF PARTICIPATION

5.1 This policy outlines a range of ways to enable effective participation to take place. This range of options will offer choice to tenants and the opportunity to participate at a time, level and method which suits them best.

5.2 Membership of the Association and Board of Management

5.2.1 Membership of the Association and election to the Board of Management represents the simplest and most direct way to participation in the Association. Membership costs £1 for life and is automatically open for all residents.

5.2.2 The Association wishes to encourage as many tenants as possible to join. This will be done in two ways:

a) Existing Tenants - The Association will provide regular information within its newsletter, website and social media promoting membership and encouraging tenants to join the Association.

b) New tenants - All new tenants will be given information on membership when signing their tenancy agreement. In addition, it will be further promoted at the "settling-in" visit.

5.2.3 Shareholders will be encouraged to stand for election to the Board of Management. The relevant newsletter issued prior to the Annual General meeting (AGM) will publicise when the AGM is taking place and will actively encourage members to stand for election.

5.3 Other Key Methods of Participation

Effective participation and consultation will depend on all tenants being made aware of relevant policies, service reviews and all relevant new initiatives and events. This will be achieved through:

- Newsletters

The Association uses its newsletters to give a summary of key issues/proposed changes and encourages feedback from tenants to promote greater involvement in the Association.

- Annual Landlord Report on the Charter

Each year the Association produces a Landlord Report on our performance to comply with the requirements of the SSHC. The Association is required to distribute this to all tenants by the end of October each year.

- Leaflets

Leaflets are used mainly to provide a summary of information from the Association's policies or to explain how procedures work e.g., making a complaint.

- AGM

The Association holds an AGM which is open to all our shareholders in September each year. At the AGM, a will report on all activities during the year is provided, along with information about performance and annual accounts.

- Tenant Panels

Tenant panels provide an opportunity for small groups of tenants and local residents to meet to give their opinions on a range of subjects.

- Public Meetings

Such meetings may be held for a whole area or only for street/block meetings, where appropriate. The Association will ensure, as far as possible, that feedback on issues raised at such meetings is provided to tenants.

- Open Days/Evenings

The Association appreciates that people have busy lives and that some people are often unable to attend a meeting with fixed times. The Association will therefore consider holding open days/evenings at times which allow people to drop in and talk to appropriate staff about any issues. This may include virtual meeting held via zoom or similar platform.

- Digital/social Media

The Association has a website communication with our tenant and wider community. This will be utilised as far as possible to encourage interaction with tenants to report repairs, make complaints and to provide feedback etc. The use of e-mail or texting will also be utilised, as well as social media.

- Interviews

Tenants frequently attend the Associations offices to meet with staff. Staff are encouraged to use these opportunities to obtain feedback from tenants on our performance, policies or to highlight opportunities for tenant involvement.

- Satisfaction Surveys

Satisfaction questionnaires are also routinely used to gauge satisfaction in the delivery of services received by tenants including close cleaning and grounds maintenance. Satisfaction questionnaires are also given to tenants when they receive a new kitchen, bathroom, or heating systems/boilers.

6. BUDGETS AND SUPPORT

6.1 The Association will ensure that adequate funds are available for tenant participation, which will cover the cost of:

- Printing and distributing newsletter (including digital newsletters)
- Other information produced for tenants
- Customer satisfaction survey(s) or to provide any other feedback mechanisms
- Any meetings held
- Support or training for groups or individuals
- Childcare to attend sessions
- Translation support
- Transport costs

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1 The policy will be subject to continual review and is intended to evolve.

7.2 A range of information and feedback will be collected to enable staff and tenants to assess the success of the policy in meeting its aims and objectives. We will consider and review:

- How participation took place i.e., methods used and number of people who participated?
- What subjects and topics did consultation and participation take place on?
- What arrangements were made to ensure there were equal opportunities to participate?
- What feedback was received from tenants?
- How were the results of participation reflected in the outcome?
- Satisfaction levels of participants about the opportunity for involvement and with the quality of information provided.
- How much did consultation and participation cost?
- What were the timescales for participation and consultation?

7.3 Internal Monitoring

Customer satisfaction levels will be reported to Board of Management quarterly as part of the Associations performance report. The level of consultation and responses on individual topics, for example the responses to our annual rent review consultation, will also be routinely report to the Board of Management.

7.4 External monitoring

7.4.1 Scottish Housing Regulator:

Performance against the Charter is reported annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The four Charter outcomes directly relate to tenant participation, in the areas of communication, participation and rents/service charges.

8 TRAINING

The Association will provide an induction and continued training for the Board of Management on an on-going basis. Where tenants wish to form a Tenants or Residents Association or Group the Association will support the provision of training for members of the Association and its own staff where this would be appropriate and of benefit and assistance. The Association will also endeavour to provide meeting facilities.

The Association will seek to develop and review on an ongoing basis a detailed Tenant and Participation Consultation Strategy which maximises the opportunities for tenant and resident involvement and meets Best Practice Guidelines.

9 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

- 9.1 The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Muirhouse Housing Associations privacy notice.

10 POLICY AVAILABILITY

- 10.1 This policy will be made available to all staff members within the "Policies" folder, available on our website and at our office on request.

11 REVIEW

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required due to legislative or best practice changes.

The effectiveness of accompanying procedures and guidance will be monitored on a regular basis and, where applicable, amended as required operationally; or to reflect legislative changes.

Where references are made to specific job titles, roles, groups or committees, such

references shall be deemed to include any changes or amendments to these job titles, roles, groups or committees resulting from any restructuring or organisational changes made between policy reviews.

Employees and Members of the Board will be made aware of their obligations in respect of this policy as part of their induction training.