



Dunbritton Housing Association Limited

Name of Policy	Tenant Participation Strategy
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Date approved by Board	August 2022
Date of next Review	August 2023
Section	Chief Executive
Reference	

We can produce information, on request, in large print, Braille, tape and on disc. It is also available in other languages. If you need information in any of these formats, please contact us on 01389 761486

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Foreword

Dunbritton Housing Association's aims to provide the highest possible standards of service to our tenants and other customers.

Our overall purpose of supporting tenants to have a better quality of life, whilst living in their homes, means that we are committed to:

- Working with our tenants, staff, and partners to achieve our vision.
- Providing good quality housing and services that are affordable and accessible to all.
- Supporting the physical, social, economic, and environmental regeneration of our estates and communities.
- Enhancing the quality of life in diverse communities that are safe, sustainable, and attractive.

Quote from Dunbritton Board

We understand and recognise that to achieve this and our ethos of "Together We Can", it is important to seek and listen to your views to help us shape and continue to improve your homes, communities, and the services we deliver.

We aim to ensure our tenants and customers are at the heart our decision making.

1. Welcome

Welcome to Dunbritton Housing Association's **Interim Tenant Participation Strategy** which outlines our commitment to working with you to deliver excellent homes and services within thriving communities. Over the next year we aim to further develop our participation and scrutiny opportunities and work in partnership with our tenants and customers to develop a new 5-year strategy for 2023 – 2028.

Dunbritton has a strong commitment to involving tenants in tenant participation activities and regularly consults tenants and customers on a variety of policies, services, and issues. This interim strategy builds on the effective partnership working of our tenants and customers, association staff and Board Members to help develop and improve our homes and services, ensuring we continue to be a dynamic and ambitious organisation with a good reputation both locally within the communities we serve and nationally across the Scottish Housing sector.

The new Tenant Participation Strategy will assist us to work towards achieving our vision for **thriving, diverse, healthy, and safe communities with amenities that enhance the quality of life of our customers** alongside the following strategic objectives:

- Delivering excellent affordable services
- Providing high quality affordable housing
- Managing our resources effectively, accountably, and sustainably
- Engaging our partners
- Demonstrating strong financial management

The **Association's Values**, developed and agreed by the Board underpin the strategy and are at the heart of everything we do.

We listen to and learn from our tenants and other customers.
We are a responsible and caring social landlord and employer.
We are open and accountable for everything that we do.
We are pro-active and innovative in dealing with opportunities and problems.
We are honest, approachable, and reliable.
We are respectful and will give fair treatment to everyone.

In response to the worldwide Covid – 19 pandemic we adopted a “business as usual” approach, continuing to deliver our services, ensuring effective communication with our tenants and customers as well as ensuring strong governance. The use of online Board and Annual General Meetings supported the organisation’s continual operation, and we are committed to the further devolvement of these methods for wider tenant participation activities alongside more traditional in person methods.

2. Developing the Strategy

In October 2021, Dunbritton Housing Association commissioned the Tenants Information Service (TIS), to review our tenant participation policy, tenant participation and scrutiny activities and to assist the us develop a new Tenant Participation Strategy.

TIS held information and discussion groups with tenants and members of the scrutiny group, staff, and members of Board to seek views on participation practice and what needs to be in place to increase and further develop opportunities going forward.



TIS is the leading tenant participation organisation in Scotland, working with tenants and housing organisations to develop effective and innovative tenant participation practice.

The TIS review of tenant participation and scrutiny activities at Dunbritton highlighted that although satisfaction with the opportunities provided are high and the Association consults tenants on the reviews of policies, services as well as the setting of annual rent and service charges, the number of tenants actively involved is relatively low and the variety of methods used could be further developed.

The new strategy provides an opportunity to increase involvement alongside the development of new methods in partnership with tenants.

Sharon Donohoe, Development Director, TIS.

Your views

The Association's consultations and surveys show staff and Board Members want to listen to tenants' views.

The tenant scrutiny group provides an opportunity for tenants to carry out in depth service reviews and recommended improvements.

Joint tenant and staff inspections are positive and enable tenants to recommend any improvements required.

The Association's tenant newsletters and annual reports provide good quality, regular information.
There are no tenant and residents' groups operating within our communities.
The Covid 19 Pandemic restricted in person meetings, limiting overall participation and scrutiny activities.
Some tenants live in communities that are more rural, therefore not always easy to engage or attend meetings at the office.
The relationship between the tenant scrutiny group and the Board, should be further developed.
Internet connectivity and equipment for tenants requires improvement.
Systems to increase and improve digital engagement opportunities for tenants require to be developed to include communication, consultation, participation, collation of views and reporting to tenants.
Feedback to tenants on the outcomes of consultation and participation, as well as complaints and service issues could be quicker.
The Association should ensure tenant participation is outcome focused and that tenants, staff and Board members are all aware of it and how it improves services.
There is a need to increase tenant awareness of participation and scrutiny and how tenants can influence and improve services.
Resources, support, training, and funding is required to develop tenants' groups, further develop the scrutiny group, develop new tenant participation opportunities, and increase the skills and knowledge of tenants and staff.

3. Legal Rights to Tenant Participation

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a legal framework for Tenant Participation.

Tenants have the right to:

- Form independent representative associations.
- Access information about housing policies.
- Be consulted on issues that affect them.
- Participate in decisions that affect the services tenants receive and be given adequate time to fully consider proposals.

Dunbritton Housing Association has duties to:

- Produce a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Make sure that our Tenant Participation Strategy complies with equal opportunities requirements.
- Set up a register of tenant organisations, in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- Consider feedback made by individual tenants and tenants' groups.
- Inform tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) of proposals for housing management, standards of service and the Tenant Participation Strategy.

Social Housing Charter

In 2010, the first Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter) was introduced in the Scottish Parliament. The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. The Charter supports this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was last reviewed in 2022 and has specific standards and outcomes regarding **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.

This **outcome** covers all aspects of landlords' communication with tenants and other customers.

This could include making use of new technologies such as web-based tenancy management systems and smart-phone applications. It is not just about how clearly and effectively a landlord gives information to those who want it. It also covers making it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what

they have done in response to complaints and feedback. It does not require landlords to provide legally protected, personal, or commercial information.

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.

This **outcome** describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants, other customers and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations to become more capable of involvement - this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), such as Dunbritton Housing Association and Local Authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and reporting on how well social landlords achieve the Charter's outcomes.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC): The Association is required to provide information each year to report on our performance against the Charter. Following the submission of the ARC report, the SHR then produces an independent report on our performance by the end of August each year. This report is available to the public on the SHR website and can be used to compare performance between landlords and against the national average.

Annual Performance Report: The Association is required each year to produce an Annual Performance Report to tenants to communicate the outcome of the SHR assessment and performance information.

Annual Assurance Statement: In October each year, we are also required to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the SHR. The Association needs to confirm to the SHR that it is complying with all regulatory requirements and standards. If it is not meeting these requirements, we must advise the SHR and say what we are doing to address the issues. Once it has been approved, the Statement is signed and submitted to the SHR and then made available publicly on the Association's website.

More information on SHR responsibilities and landlord annual reports on the Charter can be found at [Landlord performance | Scottish Housing Regulator](#)

Tenant scrutiny

Housing organisations have been involving and consulting with their tenants for many years. But the Charter introduced a requirement for landlords to be more proactive in self-regulation and to involve tenants to analyse and challenge their performance and decision making through a process called tenant scrutiny.

Ensuring equal opportunities

The **Equality Act 2010** re-enforced and promoted equal opportunities in Scottish housing. The Act requires landlords to approach Tenant Participation in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and observes equal opportunity requirements laid out in the Act. The Charter also includes an outcome on equalities which states that social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- They support the right to adequate housing
- Every tenant and other customer have their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services

This outcome describes what social landlords, by complying with equalities legislation, should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

It includes landlords' responsibility for finding ways of understanding the rights and needs of different groups of tenants, for example victims/survivors of domestic abuse and delivering services that recognise and meet these.

To find out more about the Equality Act 2010, click here [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010)

The **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015** sets the National Standards for Community Engagement and the values that provide the basis for successful community engagement.

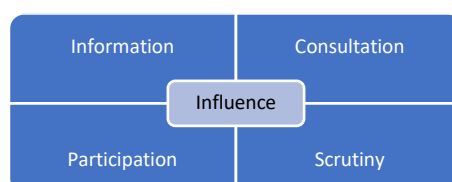
To find out more about the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, click here [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/54)

4. Our Ambition and Principles:

Our **ambition** is to encourage more tenants to actively engage with and influence our decisions, to assist us to continually improve our housing services and standards

We want to make it easy for everyone to get involved in consultation, participation, and scrutiny opportunities. To help us achieve this we will:

1. Ensure tenants are well informed
2. Seek and listen to tenants' views, before making decisions
3. Develop a range of ways for tenants to influence our services and future developments
4. Provide resources, support, and training to assist tenants get involved in participation and scrutiny activities



In further developing our approaches we will work to recognised **Good Practice Principles** to:

Have trust, respect, and partnership in the work that we do.
Agree the agenda jointly with tenants.
Listen to tenants before decisions are reached.
Recognise the independent role of tenants' and residents' groups.
Provide adequate time for responses.
Provide adequate resources, support, and training to encourage tenant involvement.
Report on the results of all consultations.
Ensure equal opportunities for everyone to get involved in a way that suits their needs and location.

5. What Will We Do

a) Ensure tenants are well informed

Communication is key to building relationships between tenants, staff, and Board Members. We will ensure tenants have the information they need to influence our decisions to continually improve services.

We are committed to:

- Providing information that is easy to read, understand and is in a format to suit tenants needs, including large print, braille, audio, and other languages.
- Ensuring you have time to review the information and respond to any proposals.
- Ensuring we are aware of how you want us to communicate with you – by post, telephone, text messaging, online, in person.
- Providing information online and in paper formats.
- Providing opportunities for you to speak to our staff to give your views and to assist you to respond to consultations.
- Providing updates on consultation results, agreed actions and progress.

The methods we will use include:

- Newsletters
- Information Leaflets
- Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Annual Reports
- Questionnaires
- Interested Tenants Register
- Meetings and Events
- Telephone, Email, Text Messaging

b) Seek and listen to tenants' views, before making decisions

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do. We will seek and listen to your views to help us to continually improve our homes, services, and communities, and increase tenant satisfaction.

We are committed to:

- Encouraging tenants to engage and get involved with us.
- Listening to our tenants, taking account of your views, and acting upon your feedback.
- Showing tenants how we make decisions and how your involvement can influence what we do.

The methods we will use include:

- Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Complaints, Suggestions, and Compliments Feedback
- Annual Performance Reports
- Service Delivery Feedback & Tenant Satisfaction Reports
- Consultation on Changes to and Development of Policies and Service Delivery
- Meetings and Events

c) Develop a range of ways for tenants to influence our services and future developments

Effective tenant participation supports tenants and landlords to work together to ensure services, standards and policies meet legislative requirements, good practice standards and tenant priorities.

We are committed to:

- Increasing the number of tenants who actively participate from across our areas.
- Providing a range of ways for tenants to easily get involved.
- Encouraging tenants to carry out in depth service reviews through tenant scrutiny.
- Working with our tenants to improve their communities and local services.

The methods we will use:

- Developing tenants' groups with our tenants in our communities.
- Reinvigorating our tenant scrutiny panel.
- Agreeing new participation opportunities with our tenants.
- Developing and supporting digital engagement opportunities.
- Supporting community resilience through our wider access projects and funding.
- Providing opportunities for tenants and tenants groups to come together to share views and ideas.
- Working in partnership with other organisations to achieve tenants' priorities for their homes and neighbourhoods.
- Continuing to hold our annual garden and good neighbour competitions.

6. Resources and Support

Provide resources, support, and training to assist tenants get involved in participation and scrutiny activities

We understand that tenant participation requires adequate resources and support.

The methods we will use:

- Providing a Tenant Participation Budget for participation and scrutiny activities.
- Providing funding to support the development of tenants' groups.
- Providing training and support to ensure tenants have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate.
- Ensuring that tenant participation is a key part of all staff's role, and that staff are trained and supported to ensure that tenant participation is an integral part of service delivery.
- Providing tenants with access to independent development support and training.
- Supporting the development of new digital participation methods, including supporting tenants access the devices and training required.
- Reviewing the staffing required to deliver the new Tenant Participation Strategy

7. Monitoring Our Success

A monitoring group made up of staff and members of the tenant scrutiny group will meet twice a year to review and monitor the implementation of the strategy.

This group will be responsible for reporting the strategy outcomes to the Board and wider tenants 6 monthly.

8. Example Participation Methods

During 2022 / 23, we will be consulting tenants on the **Interim Tenant Participation Strategy** with a view to developing a new 5 – Year Strategy for 2023 – 2028. The consultation programme will seek your views on the content of the strategy and assist us to agree the range of participation methods we will develop in partnership with you.

This section provides examples of the kinds of participation opportunities you may want us to include in the new strategy.

Interested Tenants Register
An Interested Tenants Register is a database of individual tenants who have expressed an interest in being involved in housing service consultations.
Tenants and Residents Associations (TARA's)
Tenants' and residents' associations provide a collective voice and some powers for people who live in the same area, or who have the same landlord. Members work together to improve housing and environmental standards in

their neighbourhood and increase a sense of community. Often they deliver local community projects and activities.

Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO)

An RTO is a group who has applied to become registered with a landlord and meets certain conditions which have been set down in the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Estate Walkabouts / Inspections

Estate Walkabouts / Inspections are jointly carried out by tenants, members of tenants and residents groups and landlord officers to identify areas for improvement within their neighbourhoods and communities.

Focus Groups

Usually, time limited groups made up of tenants, officers, and service providers coming together to address specific policy or service issues.

Community Champions

The role of Community Champions is to improve communications between tenants, landlord officers and contractors during Housing Improvement Work. They are provided with the necessary information and act as the voice of communities.

Mystery Shopping

Mystery Shopping is a form of market research which can be used by tenants to test the service and record their experience and impressions.

Scrutiny Groups / Panels

Scrutiny Groups / Panels are a group of tenants who work together to independently review services provided by their landlord to identify good practice and challenges and recommend proposed changes or improvements to the landlord.

Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and Questionnaires are a method of consultation used to seek views on landlord services, policies, or proposals.

Consultation Events

Consultation events can be held in person or online to seek views. They can be large scale events for all tenants or more localised events for people in a

specific community, for example where new houses or planned improvement works are being proposed.

Quality Circles

A Quality Circle is a small group of tenants who undertake inspections within blocks of flats, sheltered housing complexes, or specific streets to ensure a high standard of quality is being achieved.

Armchair Critics

Becoming an armchair critic provides tenants with the opportunity to review landlord policies and other documents and give their views from the comfort of their own homes.

*“Tenant participation is a way to give tenants and other customers’ **greater influence** and ability to hold their landlords to account. It provides an opportunity to develop partnership working between tenants, other customers, and landlords to deliver excellent services. It is also a right for all Council and Housing Association tenants in Scotland”.*

Tenants Information Service.