



Tenant Participation Strategy

Strategy

Wellhouse - The Place to Be

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Reviewed by: Housing and Customer Services
Manager

The strategy is available on the Association's website. Customers will be provided with a copy of this strategy on request. We will provide this policy in specific formats as requested, for example; tape, Braille or another language.

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1. Introduction

Wellhouse Housing Association has a legal duty to have in place a Tenant Participation Strategy and to consult its tenants on a range of issues.

At Wellhouse Housing Association, we believe everyone has a role to play in shaping and delivering the services we provide.

This Tenant Participation Strategy recognises this. Although we will use the terms tenant or tenants throughout this document, it is not just tenants who can have a part to play in working with us. So where appropriate the term tenant or tenants may also include Wellhouse residents or other service users, such as housing applicants or those affected by homelessness.

Tenants have the power to highlight areas for improvement, suggest solutions and help staff implement them.

Staff will work with tenants, listen to their feedback, provide information, and support and deliver on what has been agreed. This strategy sets out how we will achieve this together.

We recognise that we need to improve on our tenant engagement and participation and have committed to the Scottish Government's Next Steps Programme and will be working with the Tenant Participation Advisory Services (TPAS) Scotland and our tenants to develop and deliver on an agreed action plan.

The strategy is linked to our Tenant Participation Action Plan, that sets out an ambitious and exciting plan for the years ahead. We want:

- to strengthen the opportunities for tenants to get involved
- to continue developing the different ways tenant and landlord can communicate
- to embrace available technology to ensure that all tenants have the appropriate access to the information they need and to participate

The action plan is attached to this strategy, and it sets out these goals in more detail.

This will be continually reviewed, revised, and updated as it progresses.

2. Aims and Objectives

Through our tenant participation strategy, we aim to:

- build and strengthen opportunities for tenants to be actively involved in our service delivery
- develop engagement opportunities and partnership working
- foster a positive engagement ethos
- strengthen and develop communication methods

Active tenant involvement can help us to meet our objectives of:

- Understanding our tenants needs
- Improving our service standards

- Improving tenant satisfaction
- Delivering affordability and value for money

3. Defining Engagement and Participation

Tenant engagement and participation involves a range of processes designed to encourage tenants to become actively involved in how we deliver our services.

This can include things such as informing tenants, listening to their thoughts and ideas, seeking input from them, through to active involvement by supporting empowerment.

This strategy will set out the opportunities for tenants to be involved in our activities in a variety of ways on this spectrum.

4. General Principles

We want to ensure tenants have as wide a range of opportunities as possible to engage with us. This can be something simple like completing a short survey to more detailed involvement, such as being a representative on our Board. Tenants will be given the opportunity to engage, regardless of how they wish to do so and to what extent.

We want to ensure that every tenant, regardless of their health and wellbeing, receives information and guidance in a way that suits them. This includes documents, such as this strategy, being readily available in a range of formats.

We want tenants to feel connected to us, so it is vital that we begin working together to achieve our shared objectives and deliver better, more responsive services. This comes through strong communication and respect for each other.

We aim to help tenants with information and advice when they need it. In turn, we look for tenants to help us to deliver the services they need. We will provide training and support for tenants to get involved, as well as for staff, to help build an ethos of engagement throughout the Association.

We always look to learn from what we have done previously. Tenants can also learn and be involved in how we operate and help shape the standards and goals for the future.

5. Compliance with Standards

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), Wellhouse Housing Association will comply with legislation and the regulatory requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support Tenant Participation and introduced requirements for Landlords to have a Tenant Participation strategy. 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. It focuses landlord activity on services that are important to tenants and other customers and encourages a culture of involving tenants in the design, delivery and performance of services.

The Tenant Participation Strategy has been guided by the Scottish Government's Guide to Successful Tenant Participation (2019) and Charter requirements.

5.1 Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (updated March 2017) sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

For tenant participation there are two specific outcomes that we need to focus on:

2: 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**

And

3: Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- **Tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in, and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.**

To assess us for how well we are doing with these, the Scottish Housing Regulator reviews how our tenants respond to the following two questions:

Indicator 2

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.

Indicator 5

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.

The outcomes for every landlord in Scotland can be found on the SHR's website:

[National reports on the Scottish Social Housing Charter | Scottish Housing Regulator](#)

Around October each year we provide information to our tenants in our Landlord Report to Tenants on our performance against the Charter Indicators.

6. Strategic Priorities

The first strategic priority identified in our business plan is:

Consolidation and Continuous improvement

We will focus mainly on our core activities as a social landlord and property manager. In doing this, we will seek continued improvement in our performance, invest in our tenants' homes, increase our community engagement activities, and get to know our customers' aspirations and priorities better

To achieve this, our business plan sets several strategic objectives. The most relevant to this strategy are:

1. DELIVER EXCELLENT SERVICES
2. PROVIDE QUALITY HOMES
3. ANTICIPATE, UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO LOCAL NEED

7. Participation

Wellhouse has a range of engagement opportunities for tenants to have their say:

- **Membership**

Tenants can sign up to become members of the Association. This gives them the opportunity to attend and vote at the Annual General Meetings and apply for vacant Board positions

- **Registered Tenant Organisations**

Tenants can form a registered tenant group in their area

- **Register of Interested Tenants**

Tenants can sign up to this register to be contacted for the views on issues or changes that may impact on their tenancy. This is particularly useful for those who wish to engage from home

- **Consultations**

We consult tenants and other customers on a range of issues including the annual rent increase and proposed policy changes

- **Surveys**

We use an independent company to conduct a quarterly survey of our tenants with regards the Charter satisfaction indicators. We also issue local surveys to tenants on a range of topics, including rents and repairs.

As part of this strategy and action plan, we will be looking at how we can broaden the opportunities for tenants to engage with us and provide their views to us, as well as reviewing the effectiveness of our current methods.

8. Communication

Here are just some of the different methods we will use to communicate with tenants:

- **Website**

Our website, www.wellhouseha.org.uk, should contain all the information a tenant would need. In addition, it serves as a platform for updates and background information on us

- **Newsletters**

Wellhouse tenants receive a quarterly newsletter. This is a great way to receive updates and share information. Other customers can access our newsletters on our website

- **Annual Landlord Report to Tenants**

Around each October, we update our tenants on our performance against the Charter. Again, other customers can access this on our website

- **Annual Report**

Around each September, we update Association members on our organisation's performance, including our statutory accounts. These again can be accessed on our website

- **Everyday Communication**

Be it a phone call, text, email, letter, or visit - it is important that the information we share is accurate, easy to understand and delivered in a timely and helpful manner. We will use face to face and online opportunities for tenants to share their views

9. Training

It is important that tenants are given the guidance and support they need for them to be confident in bringing their knowledge and skills when engaging with us.

Wellhouse Housing Association will ensure that training and skills development opportunities will be available to participants.

10. Funding and Support

We want to ensure that there are no barriers to engagement within the Association. This includes, among others:

- Arranging transportation to meetings where necessary
- Making meeting or event venues fully accessible
- Providing hearing loops when needed
- Providing large print documents

- Providing text in different languages or formats

We have a budget specifically for developing and promoting tenant participation within the Association.

We are also taking part in the Next Steps programme to develop and improve our tenant participation. This is a free support programme funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by TPAS Scotland.

11. Consultation

We aim to deliver excellent services, which respond to local needs and reflect what is most important to our customers.

To do that we need our customers to tell us how well our strategies are working and help us to make changes that will improve it. In line with this strategy:

- We make it easy for customers to give us their comments and views - face to face, by telephone, e-mail, online or in a letter.
- We commission formal independent tenant satisfaction surveys on a continuous monitoring basis carried out every three months.
- We consult our Customer Opinion Panel
- We publish the targets we set
- We publish how we have performed against those targets

We use customer feedback when we are reviewing our strategies.

12. Review Timeframe

This strategy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, in response to a change in legislation or circumstance. The attached action plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

13. General Data Protection Regulation

The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own GDPR Policy. Information regarding how data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in Wellhouse HA's privacy notice.