

Tenant Participation Strategy (2)

AS WITH ALL OF THE ASSOCIATION'S POLICIES and PROCEDURES, THIS GUIDE, IN FULL AND IN PART, CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN SUMMARY, ON TAPE, IN BRAILLE, AND IN TRANSLATION INTO MOST OTHER LANGUAGES –

**PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU WOULD LIKE
A VERSION IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT**

Approved By	Committee of Management at the meeting on 6 th April 2011
Last Review	March 2018
Next Review	March 2023
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy is aimed at the promotion and facilitation of Tenant Participation amongst those tenants served by the Housing Association. It has been developed out of a much more comprehensive approach to Tenant Participation tried for several years and largely deemed to have been rejected by tenants of the Association.
- 1.2 It has also been informed by several years and types of tenant surveys, seeking to ensure that the approach is best suited to tenants' needs and wants. It has been the subject of internal audit exercise that accords with the approach now taken and has been considered by the Tenants Information Service as "fit for purpose".

2. Tenant Participation

- 2.1 Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association (WSHA) introduced a Tenant Participation Strategy in 2003, reviewed in 2005 and modified in practice since. The Strategy introduced the concepts of a Residents Forum and a Consultation Register (the latter, intended as a sounding board for policy reviews).
- 2.2 Neither of these concepts was readily embraced by tenants and a series of surveys since 2005 has confirmed that the greatly preferred method of consultation is through newsletters or direct mailings while repeated advertising of the ability to participate in Registered Tenant Organisations has received no support.
- 2.3 However, given the nature of this organisation, that is a community-ownership housing association, the view taken is that joining the Committee of Management represents the most direct form of participation that tenants can enjoy. Consequently, while making clear that the Association will readily support any other practical and legal form that tenants may wish, **WSHA constantly advocates joining the Committee as the best form of participation open to tenants.**
- 2.4 The Association will therefore continuously advertise its support of Tenant Participation as a concept. It will feature in all regular newsletters (at least four each year) with tenants being reminded that whichever forms receive appropriate support will be instituted and aided. Continuous or periodical satisfaction surveys will also seek the views of tenants on how they would wish to participate.

3. Forms of Participation

3.1 While several forms of participation have already been mentioned within this Policy, it is appreciated that not everyone will be familiar with what they might involve. This section therefore cover some of these which, if explained a little then may be of interest to tenants.

3.2 *Residents Forum*

The forum would be open to all tenants and residents who receive a service from the Association who wished to volunteer to attend. The concept of this is that the forum would develop a formal remit and meet once or twice a year to discuss housing and community issues and to act as a sounding board for new procedures and ideas. These would then be considered as part of the Association's continuous planning process and be reflected, where appropriate, in the development of policies and procedures.

3.3 *Consultation Register*

This is where tenants would agree to be on a register and when housing or community issues arise and policies are developed or reviewed, they would be formally invited to provide their views. As above, these would then be taken into consideration as appropriate.

3.4 *Registered Tenants Organisations*

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 makes provision for tenants to form organisations that will promote their interests and to be supported in this by housing associations. WSHA recognises its responsibilities under this legislation and will therefore provide financial and administrative support to facilitate this.

As the name suggests, any such group must register with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association and has to be formally constituted with all groups having open memberships and complying with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy. WSHA has a legal duty to respond to any issues or concerns raised by a Registered Tenants Organisation and will attend, on request, any meetings held.

3.5 *Joining the Committee of Management*

As indicated, it is held by Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association that the best form of actual participation for tenants is to become a member of the Committee of Management.

To become a Member of the Committee you first need to be a general member of the Association. This costs £1 for life and then entitles you to attend Annual General Meetings and to vote for those standing for election to the Committee or to stand for election yourself. And full support is provide from WSHA staff while training is available not only in directly housing related matters but in many subjects that will enhance your abilities to operate on the Committee and which many Members find contributes to their personal development and broader skills. In short, it is worthwhile for individual Members, makes a real contribution to the Community and is a genuine form of local control.

3.6 *Other Forms of Participation*

There can of course be more ways in which tenants can participate such as merely contributing to the Association's satisfaction surveys. Not only do these give an indication of what tenants think of services but they also directly ask about participation and how tenants would prefer to be consulted (e.g. public meetings, newsletters, direct mailings, etc.) And the Association will always take note of these views in its approach to Tenant Participation, responding as appropriate.

4. **Equal Opportunities Testing**

- 4.1 In accordance with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy, this Policy has been consciously considered to judge whether there is any likelihood that its presentation or operation could in any way lead, no matter how inadvertently, to discrimination. The conclusion of this exercise is that it is believed that the Policy should operate in a non-discriminatory way.

5. **Arrangements for Review**

- 5.1 This Policy will be reviewed every five years, or earlier, if this is required by legal, regulatory or best practice requirements.