



MOLENDINAR PARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Adopted: 20 March 2018
Date of Next Review: March 2023

Molendinar Park Housing Association
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Glasgow G31 1AD

Registered in Scotland 2400 R (S)
Registered Scottish Charity SC043725
Registered Property Factor PF 000125

STRATEGY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document outlines Molendinar Park Housing Association's (MPHA) strategy in relation to tenant participation and involvement.
- 1.2 The Association recognises the importance of effective tenant participation both for the organisation and for individual tenants. In developing our strategy the Association believes that the benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:
 - better service delivery and improved value for money;
 - opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills;
 - better communication between staff and tenants;
 - better links between the Association and our community;
 - informed and knowledgeable 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;
 - Increased job satisfaction for staff.
- 1.3 The Association recognises that there is no single means or best method of consulting with its tenants and will attempt to use methods of participation and engagement which best suit the identified needs and aspirations of those occupying our properties.
- 1.4 This strategy is intended to be an evolving document. The development and continuous review of this strategy will recognise the crucial role tenants and residents have to play in the future development of the Association's activities.
- 1.5 The Association acknowledges that owners are not covered by the Tenant Participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 but we regard them as being an integral part of our approach.
- 1.6 The Association recognises that participation can range from the basic provision of information to tenants being in control. This strategy strives to be a practical document and also recognises that we should respect the right of tenants not to become involved in the affairs of their landlord
- 1.7 MPHA is an equal opportunities organisation. We abide by the terms of the Equality Act 2010 which incorporates all of the main pieces of discrimination

legislation. No person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than any other persons or groups of persons because of their sex, marital status, family circumstances, race or national origins, disability, age, religion, political orientation or sexual orientation. To ensure equal access to the information contained in this policy we are happy to provide copies free of charge in Braille, in large print, translated into other languages or put onto audio tape.

2. Aims and Objectives of Strategy

2.1 Our strategy aims to:

- Give tenants real opportunities to become involved in the decision making process of the Housing Association
- Offer a range of options for becoming involved through long term and short term methods on an individual and collective basis
- Ensure that the Management Committee is well-informed about the opinions and expectations of tenants and that this information informs decision-making
- Comply fully with all legal, regulatory and good practice requirements with regard to tenant participation.
- Ensure tenants are adequately resourced and supported in order to enable them to fully take part in the participation process
- 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.

3. Legal Requirements, Regulatory Framework and Good Practice Guidance

3.1 Section 53 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on landlords to develop a Tenant Participation Strategy. This Strategy meets with that statutory requirement. 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

3.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC), effective from 1st April 2012. The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes for all social landlords when performing their wide range of activities. The Scottish Housing Regulator monitors associations' performance against the Charter through their regulatory assessments. The

Association will comply with the following Charter requirements most relevant to this policy:

- Outcome 1: Equalities – 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.
- 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.

3.3 The Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management that were published by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2012 place great importance on tenant and service user evaluation. In particular, Standard Two states:

“The RSL is open 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”.

3.4 In addition, this strategy complements the priorities of good practice guidance such as the National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation and the Scottish Government’s Guide to Successful Tenant Participation.

4. Key Principles

4.1 The key principles for effective tenant participation are a reflection of those included within the National Strategy for Participation "Partners in Participation".

- To enable a process of joint agenda setting involving tenants from the outset
- To ensure developing tenant participation is a continuous process
- To ensure adequate and appropriate timescales are in operation
- To recognise the independence of Tenants Groups
- To ensure flexible working relationships between landlord and tenant
- To provide adequate resources for Tenants Groups and Registered Tenant Organisations

- To provide equal opportunities to participate for all our tenants

5. Communication

5.1 The Association recognises that good communication is crucial to effectiveness of our participation strategy. The Association is therefore committed to ensuring that:

- All literature and communication with residents should be clear, concise and easy to understand. Printed material will 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.
- The Association has an Openness and Confidentiality Policy, which describes further how the Association will communicate.

6. Structures and Methods of Participation

6.1 The strategy outlines a range of mechanisms 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.

Membership of the Association/Management Committee

6.2 Membership of the Association and through this, eligibility to stand for election to the Management Committee represents the simplest and most direct avenue for participation in MPHA. Membership costs £1 for life and is automatically open for all tenants, factored owners and residents in our communities.

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

a) Existing Tenants Not Already Members

6.3.1. The Association will provide regular information within its newsletter and website promoting membership and encouraging tenants to join the Association.

b) New Tenants

- 6.3.2. 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.
- 6.4 Members will be encouraged to stand for election to the Management Committee. The relevant newsletter issued prior to the AGM will publicise that the AGM is taking place and will actively encourage members to stand for election. This information will identify the specific experience, knowledge and skills that the committee is looking to recruit.
- 6.5 Effective participation and consultation will depend on all tenants being made aware of relevant policies, service reviews and all relevant new initiatives and events.
- 6.6 The key methods by which we will achieve this are:
- Newsletters -The Association uses its newsletters to give a summary of key issues/proposed changes and to encourage feedback from tenants in order to promote greater involvement in the Association.
 - Annual Reporting -Each year we will produce an Annual Report that draws together the key information about our performance and activities from the previous financial year. The report will be distributed to all residents/members prior to the Association's AGM.
 - Report on our performance in complying with the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
 - Resident Survey-The Association carries out regular surveys of its residents. It will also carry out surveys to ascertain specific information as appropriate which will help the Association in planning its future service provision e.g. new tenants' satisfaction with home, adaptations, etc.
 - Tenants Handbook-The tenant's handbook provides updated, comprehensive information on the Association's services and functions. It will provide specific information for new tenants on participation opportunities.
 - Leaflets-Leaflets are used mainly to provide summary information of the Association's policies or explain how procedures work eg. making a complaint.
 - Written Consultative Drafts-Where appropriate they may be sent to all residents inviting comment.
 - AGM-We hold an Annual General Meeting that is open to all our members each year. At the AGM we will report on our activities during the year and provide information about our performance and annual accounts.
 - Focus Groups-Focus Groups provide an opportunity for small groups of tenants and local residents to meet in order to give their opinions on a range of subjects.

- Working Parties-Working parties may be formed to consult on specific issues where appropriate.
- Public Meetings-Such meetings may be held for a whole area or only for street/close meetings where appropriate. We will try as far as possible to ensure feedback is also provided to tenants on issues raised at such forums.
- Open Days/Evenings-We appreciate that people have busy lives and that people are often unable to attend a meeting with a fixed time. The Association will consider holding open days/evenings to allow people to drop in and talk to appropriate staff on issues of concern at a time which suits them.
- Website-The Association has developed a website as a means of communicating with our residents and seeks to make this a two-way communication. We will promote the use of e-mail for responses to consultation.
- Interviews-Tenants often meet our staff face to face. Staff will be encouraged to use these opportunities to get feedback on our performance or policies and to highlight opportunities for tenant involvement.
- Satisfaction Surveys-Feedback is sought on all repair work regarding the quality of work, attitude of tradesmen, timescale to carry out work and any comments. A survey form is sent to the tenant inviting feedback in all cases.
- Supporting Community Groups and Initiatives-We will support the formation and operation of local groups that meet the needs and demands of our community. Our support will be driven by the views of our tenants and residents and we will seek their support (e.g. by volunteering) to ensure the success of the projects. Our support may be financial or may be through the provision of resources such as staff time/expertise.
- Participating in and Supporting Community Events-We will support community events, such as galas and Christmas parties in response to requests from the organisers and subject to available resources.

7. Registered Tenant Organisations

- 7.1 The Association recognises the right of tenants to organise themselves and to speak to the Association with a collective voice. The creation of "Registered Tenant Organisations" is a central concept to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which aims to give tenants groups a recognised role in the tenant participation process.

- 7.2 The Association recognises that in order to achieve registration, a Tenant Organisation has to meet a range of criteria as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Registration of Tenant Organisations) Order 2002.
- 7.3 The Association would therefore expect tenant groups to:
- Adopt a written constitution
 - Be open to anyone within the constitution's definition of membership irrespective of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation
 - Have elected as a minimum a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary
 - If seeking grant assistance, have established a bank account for the group
 - Agree to hold Annual General Meetings where office bearers are elected.
- 7.4 Full details of the criteria for Registration are available on request from the Association. The Association maintains a Register of Tenant Organisations (RTO's) and is available for inspection at our office.

8. Promotion and Support of Tenant Groups

- 8.1 The Association recognises that the creation of groups can be both time consuming and difficult to achieve. To assist in the development of local groups where these are desired, the Association commits itself to the following:
- Make available practical guidance to individuals seeking to form such a group
 - Provide on request a model constitution for groups to use
 - Make premises available for group meetings
 - Assist in the production of flyers and posters to publicise their meetings
 - Assist in photocopying of minutes, etc.
 - Attend meetings when invited, subject to notice
 - Award an annual grant to each group, subject to the group meeting the registration criteria
 - Identifying clear points of contact for liaison between the group and Association
 - Promote opportunities for training and development
 - Provide information on the Association's structures, policies and procedures on request
 - Providing information on Standards of Service
 - Consulting groups on major changes in relevant policies

9. Appeals

9.1 A Tenant Organisation may appeal against the Association's decision to either:

- Not register the organisation;
- Remove the organisation from the Register; or
- Not remove the organisation from the Register

The appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Association's Complaints Policy. If the tenant organisation is not satisfied by the outcome of the internal appeal it may appeal formally to the Regulation and Inspection Division of the Scottish Housing Regulator who will consider the matter on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

10. Issues for Tenant Participation and Consultation

10.1 The Association is committed to consulting with tenants, either individually or collectively through a Registered Tenant Organisation or by means of any of the methods described at section 6 of this strategy on issues of housing service and policy. Specific areas for consultation will be:

- Allocations Policy (including transfers and mutual exchanges)
- Tenancy conditions and Agreements
- Rent levels, budgets and proposed rent increase
- Any proposed changes to housing repairs service
- Estate Management/regeneration works
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Rent Arrears Policy
- Performance Standards and Targets for housing management, repairs and maintenance
- Tenant Participation Policy and Strategy

10.2 In taking decisions, the Management Committee will specifically consider the implications for tenants and the feedback sought and received. Reports to the Management Committee will identify the impact of recommendations on tenants and will provide information about the consultation methods used.

11. Resources and Support

11.1 The Association will ensure that adequate funds are available for tenant participation, which will cover:

- Cost of printing and distributing newsletter
 - Cost of other information produced for residents
 - Cost of customer satisfaction survey(s) and any other feedback mechanisms (eg. post repair feedback)
 - Cost of any meetings held
 - Cost of support/training groups.
- 11.2 The Association's Service Delivery Sub-Committee will be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Association's Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- 11.3 The Association will also provide funding for Registered Tenant Organisations and various consultation exercises carried out as part of the Strategy.
- 11.4 The size of the Association does not justify employing a dedicated staff member for this purpose but the Director/ [to be completed] will be the main liaison officer between tenants and the Association with regards to implementing and monitoring the Strategy. Tenant participation is often seen as the sole domain of housing management staff. This is clearly not the case and it is therefore important that all Association staff are made aware of, and assist in the implementation of the Association's commitment to effective tenant engagement. . The Association will ensure that all staff receive the appropriate training in relation to tenant engagement .

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 12.1 This Tenant Engagement Strategy will be subject to continual review and is intended to grow and evolve over time as circumstances change.
- 12.2 We will collect a range of information and feedback to enable staff, tenants and residents to assess the success of the Strategy in meeting its aims and objectives. We will consider and review:
- How participation took place ie. methods used and number of people who participated?
 - On what subjects and topics did consultation and participation take place?
 - What arrangements were made to ensure there were equal opportunities to participate?
 - What feedback was received from tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations
 - How were the results of participation reflected in the outcome?
 - Satisfaction levels of participants with regard to opportunity for involvement and with quality of information provided
 - How much did consultation and participation cost?

- When and how will the strategy be monitored and reviewed?
- What were the timescales for participation and consultation?

12.3 The Association will formally review its Tenant Engagement Strategy, in consultation with registered groups and tenants on a 5 yearly basis.

This Strategy was agreed by the Management Committee on 20 March 2018.