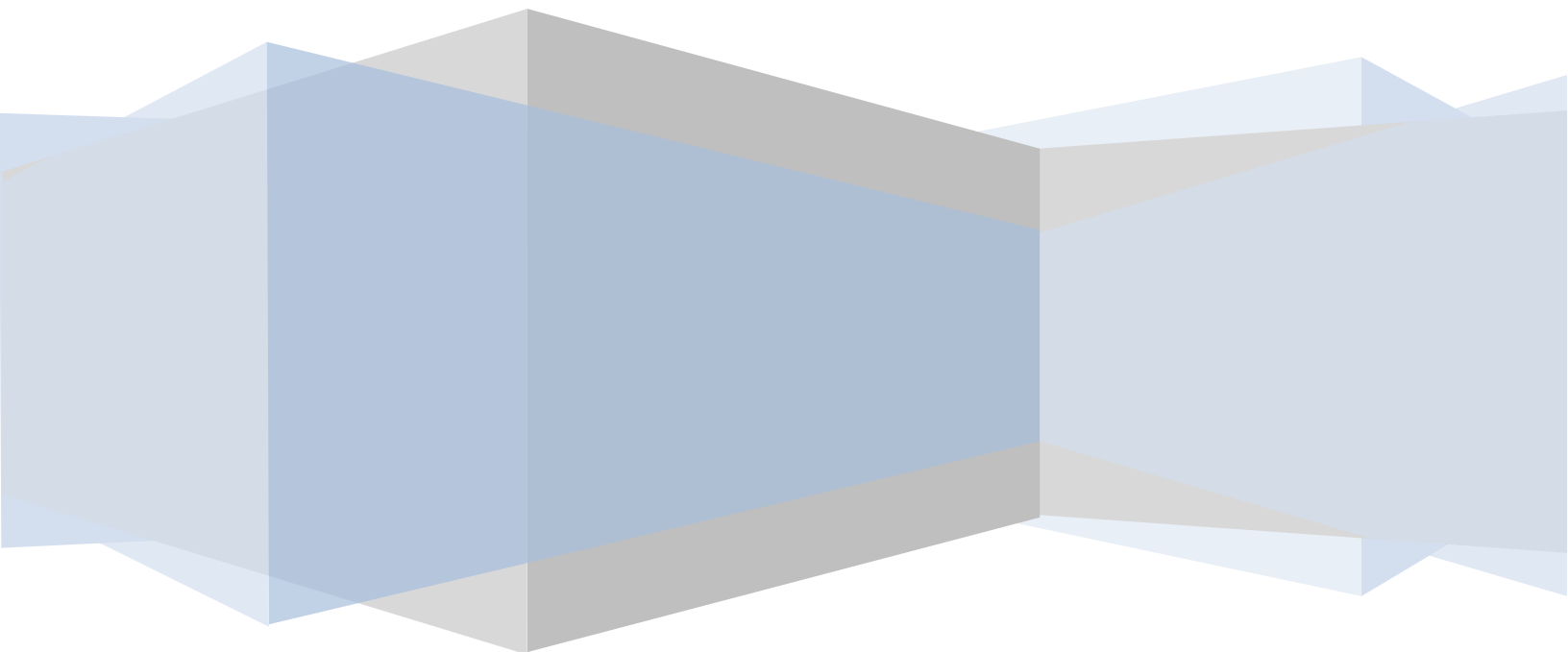




TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2020-2023

August 2020



All Policies are available on tape, in braille and in translation into most languages. Please ask a member of staff if you would like this policy in a different format

Date of Policy Review: August 2020
Date of Committee Approval: 18 August 2020
Date of Next Review: August 2023

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR STANDARDS	<p>STANDARD 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.</p> <p>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. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.</p> <p>STANDARD 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.</p> <p>STANDARD 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.</p> <p>STANDARD 6: The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.</p>
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Tenant Participation Strategy 2020-2023

The “National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999)” defines tenant participation as:

“tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies; housing conditions; and housing (and related) services. It is a two-way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas, and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and service.”

1. Introduction

Cathcart & District Housing Association is committed to providing good quality information and involving tenants in decision making. This strategy demonstrates our ongoing commitment to develop tenant participation and details an action plan to ensure this strategy is delivered, monitored, and reviewed. The Strategy will explain to tenants, staff, and Committee members, how tenants can get involved and influence housing services. This Strategy will cover the period from 1st September 2020 to 31st March 2023.

Cathcart & District Housing Association’s approach to tenant participation is underpinned by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Section 53 of the Act created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation.

Effective participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive, and it helps CDHA deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities. Effective participation is, therefore, an important component of meeting the expectation to continuously improve landlord performance.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the strategy are as listed below. These have been developed taking account of the views of tenants, staff, and Committee.

- To encourage greater participation in all aspects of the Association’s operations
- To encourage participation from as diverse a range of tenants as possible i.e. various ages, ethnicities, people with disabilities etc
- To provide good quality information to tenants of CDHA
- To continue to communicate well with tenants on appropriate matters
- To use a greater variety of consultation methods where appropriate
- Development of skills and knowledge among tenants
- To improve overall customer satisfaction

3. Information

The following list is just some of the information the Association will make available to tenants:

- Newsletters
- Annual performance reports
- Copies of relevant policies and procedures, accounts, flyers, and leaflets
- Tenants handbook
- Details of local events displayed on our notice board/Facebook page
- Welfare Rights and Money Advice service
- Applying for housing/internal transfers
- Help, advice, and support agencies
- Staff changes
- Committee changes
- Tenant satisfaction survey results
- Relevant information accessible on the Tenant Portal

This list is not exhaustive.

4. Participation

Current avenues for participation are set out below:

4.1 Share Members

Cathcart & District Housing Association encourages all tenants, sharing owners, factored owners, and service users to become members. Membership is also open to members of the wider community, as well as local groups and organisations who share an interest in our aims and activities or have a special skill to bring to CDHA.

Benefits of being a Share Member include:

- You will be a lifetime shareholder
- You will be invited to attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any Special General Meetings
- You can vote on any relevant matters as well as the election of the members to serve on our Committee
- You can stand for election to the Management Committee yourself, or nominate other members for election

4.2 Management Committee

CDHA is led by a Management Committee made up of a maximum of 15 local tenants & residents and other individuals with an interest and or skill that suits the aims of the Association. Each Management Committee member brings particular skills and experience to the governing body. The Management Committee are tasked with making the key decisions about the Association's direction and provide challenge and oversight of the staff team to ensure that all decisions and services are provided and delivered in the best interests of our tenants and customers. The Management Committee meet monthly.

4.3 Registered Tenant's Organisations (RTO's)

The Association will be happy to encourage and assess applications for groups of tenants to form RTOs. However, it is apparent from past experience that residents in the area who wish to participate tend to join the Management Committee. The Association will, of course, view the setting up of any RTOs positively and will give appropriate financial and administrative support.

Given that the level of resources (in terms of the time and staff levels we have available) is finite and we therefore have to prioritise all the important elements that form our tenant participation strategy, it is viewed as more productive to concentrate on other aspects of TP. However, we will endeavour to encourage RTO's wherever possible in our newsletters or with interested parties.

4.4 Individually

Tenants can take part in surveys using various methods such as telephone, email, face to face, letter and online using our tenant portal. Tenants are encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions. CDHA also have a Facebook page where tenants are encouraged to like and follow. Tenants can leave reviews and post comments where appropriate.

On the tenant portal, tenants will be able to:

- Check rent balance
- Update contact information
- Request non-urgent repairs
- Answer surveys
- View documents
- View our latest newsletters

5. Consultation

Cathcart & District Housing Association has always been committed to consulting with tenants on changes to services that have a direct impact on them. The Association wishes to develop a strategy that most reflects the wishes of our tenants.

CDHA carry out regular tenant satisfaction surveys and the information gathered feeds into the review of this strategy.

At first, the strategy may seem modest. However, this is based on the principle that it is much better that our formal strategy is realistic and achievable, as opposed to containing far too many different elements that, even at the outset, we know we are not going to achieve. It should also be noted that this is the approach recommended by the Scottish Housing Regulator in the publication from their national TP team.

We will consult all tenants on:

- Any issues affecting their tenancy
- Changes to rents and services
- The repairs service
- How we will deal with problems
- How we will communicate with tenants
- How tenants and residents can participate
- Any changes to the tenancy agreement
- Changes to key policies

6. Review of Strategy

In our efforts to ensure that tenants receive up to date and meaningful information we will continue to:

- Send out newsletters 3-4 times a year
- Newsletters are used to provoke feedback from tenants on current matters e.g. rent increases, public meetings, newsletters, planned maintenance, community issues, policy reviews etc
- Newsletters are also designed to generate tenants and prospective tenant involvement in policy reviews. This includes the review of this strategy as well as the allocations policy and the neighbour relations policy
- Publish results of the tenant satisfaction survey in our annual performance report
- AGM's have been reasonably well attended in the past. We plan to use this venue as a platform to gain feedback from tenants in future years
- Organise SGM's to inform members and tenants on important matters such as changes to the Model Rules and to also seek approval of these changes.
- Regular reminders are placed in the Association newsletters with a view to encouraging tenants to become involved in the Management Committee
- Regularly update our website and Facebook page

- A review of the Tenants Handbook was undertaken in 2016 and issued to all tenants
- Each tenant receives the Tenant's Handbook at the sign-up stage

7. Monitoring and Review

This strategy will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Outcomes in relation to targets set will be reported to the Management Committee in April each year. The Strategy will be comprehensively reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix 1

1. In general, do you find our newsletters informative? Yes No D/K
2. In general, do you feel that we consult you about matters that affect you and your tenancy, for example, repairs, allocations, rents? Yes No D/K
3. Do you know that you can stand for election to the Management Committee? Yes No D/K
4. Would you consider joining the Committee? Yes No D/K
5. Which of the following appeal to you as a means of keeping you informed/consulted on matters that affect your tenancy? (select all that apply).
- Regular Newsletters Yes No D/K
- Door-to-door surveys Yes No D/K
- Drop-in Days (Open Days) Yes No D/K
- Telephone Surveys Yes No D/K
- Public Meetings Yes No D/K
- Area Committees Yes No D/K
- Focus Groups or Working Parties Yes No D/K
- Management Committee Yes No D/K
6. On which of the following general areas would you like to be consulted?
- Allocation of housing
- Rent Arrears
- Day-to-day Repairs
- Major Repairs
- Rent levels
- Estate management
7. Would you find any of the following helpful?
- Large print
- On tape
- In Braille
- Translated
- Please specify..... Any other at all
8. Do you or your partner work more than 16 hours per week? Yes No
- If yes, are you in receipt of Housing Benefit? Yes No

**Cathcart & District Housing Association Ltd
Tenant Participation Strategy – Work Plan**

Proposed Action	Task	Lead Officer(s)	Timescales
Improve electronic communication with tenants	Gather tenant emails and input this onto Home Master housing system	All Staff	Ongoing
Roll out tenant portal to CDHA tenants	Set up tenants with active email addresses on the tenant portal	Housing Management	Ongoing
Promote participation to new tenants at the sign-up stage	Inform new tenants during sign up of the different ways they can participate e.g. become a member, opportunities to join the Management Committee etc	Housing Management	Ongoing
Survey tenants to find out if they are happy with the format, content, and length of the newsletter	Continue to send out quarterly newsletters	Director	Quarterly
Survey tenants to find out if public meetings would be a popular choice to imparting information	Include in survey form	Director	Three-yearly
98% of tenants surveyed in the 2020 TSS were satisfied that CDHA were good at keeping them informed. Continue to communicate well with tenants to keep tenants satisfied and well informed	Continue to inform tenants using various methods including annual performance report, website, newsletters, tenant portal	Director	Ongoing
The Association currently has no RTO's.	Place regular reminders in newsletters with a view to encouraging local people to set up RTO's. Remind tenants of what support we offer.	Corporate Services Officer	Ongoing

We want to encourage tenants to participate in a way which suits them. It was on this basis that members approved the TP Strategy.	Continue to investigate and promote as many ways as possible of allowing and encouraging tenants to participate e.g. in person, comments and suggestion box, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, AGM, public meetings, web site etc.	Director	Ongoing
We want tenants to know what their rights are in respect of tenant consultation and information. We want tenants to know how they can participate, should they wish to do so.	Following on from the issue of the Scottish Executive leaflet, more information has been provided in the Tenants Handbook. Reminders about rights to information and consultation should continue to be publicised on the association website and in newsletters	Director	Ongoing
The Association is keen to attract younger members onto the Management Committee	Identify and approach younger tenants when committee vacancies become available	Director/Committee	As appropriate
Succession planning	Identify and approach tenants and members with relevant skills and experience when committee vacancies become available	Director/Committee	As appropriate
Staff training	Consider staff training needs on tenant participation	Senior Officers	Through appraisal and induction
Publicise any major changes that affect tenants	Communicate changes to all tenants through letter, email, website, tenant portal and Facebook page	Senior Officers	As appropriate