



## **Tenant Participation Strategy**

**2019-2021**

**Approved: August 2019**  
**Review Date: August 2021**

**This policy applies to**

- |                                     |   |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Housing         | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Living   | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horizon    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larkfield | <input type="checkbox"/> West Highland | <input type="checkbox"/> Lintel Trust  |

**Policy Summary**

Larkfield Housing Association recognises that tenants are central to the success of our business.

This strategy sets out how Larkfield will engage with our tenants to ensure we are meeting our legal obligations as well as ensuring better service delivery and improved outcomes for our tenants which give value for money.

**Equalities**

This Policy will be applied in accordance with Larkfield’s Policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken to review this updated policy, and no adverse impacts to individuals with protected characteristics were identified. If an adverse impact is identified, upon implementation of the policy, an adjustment will be made, and the policy reviewed accordingly.

**Privacy**

A privacy impact assessment screening has been carried out and confirmed that no further action is required in line with the current Data Protection legislation

**Policy Owner**  
Area Manager - Larkfield  
Housing

**Review Manager**  
Sharon Rowatt

**Approved By**  
Larkfield Board

<b>Revision History</b>		
Date	Version Number	Comments
6 <sup>th</sup> August 2019	1	

## CONTENTS

<b>POLICY SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>EQUALITIES</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>PRIVACY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. HOW THE STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>5. BENEFITS OF TENANT PARTICIPATION AND SCRUTINY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>6. LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES AND SERVICES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>7. WHAT CAN I GET INVOLVED IN</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>8. GIVING TENANTS FEEDBACK</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>9. TRAINING AND RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>11. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE STRATEGY</b> .....	<b>9</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Larkfield Housing Association recognises that tenants are central to the success of our business. This strategy is effective for the next 3 years and the Association has set aside a Tenant Participation budget to allow the strategy to be taken forward. In terms of progress, the strategy will be reviewed by the Housing Management and Maintenance Sub Committee and subsequently reported to the Committee of Management to assess the overall effectiveness and any changes that may be required, in consultation with tenants.

To ensure our commitment to Equality and Diversity are met, the Association will continue to work with a wide range of voluntary and statutory groups across Inverclyde and engage and seek their views on a range of issues. We will continue to work with Inverclyde Housing Association Officers Forum and share our experiences on issues affecting tenants across Inverclyde.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Tenant Participation is about 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.

It is a legal requirement for all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to do this as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Tenants have the right to be consulted on:

- The tenant participation strategy
- Rents and service changes
- Changes to policies and service standards relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was first brought into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 and updated in 2017. The charter was developed by tenants for tenants and sets out the outcomes and standards that Larkfield and all landlords in Scotland are expected to meet and the levels of services tenants should expect from their landlord. The charter covers 16 key areas including participation and communication and provides the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report all social landlords' performance.

The Scottish Housing Regulator expects that Tenants are at the heart of their organisation. How the Association's performance will be monitored every year by the Scottish Housing Regulator and during October every year all tenants are issued with an Annual Report Card on how we have met our 16 outcomes. You can find out

more about the Associations performance and compare us to other landlords at <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/landlord-performance>

The charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator require that the Association has arrangements in place to make sure tenants can scrutinise and help us improve our performance and influence decisions about our policies and services. We will set local service standards with you on for example repairs timescales and customer care.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

The Association's Tenant Participation policy has 4 main aims:

- To ensure that tenant control and responsiveness to tenant needs are key values running through all the Association's work.
- Comply with tenant participation and consultation statutory requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- To ensure that, wherever possible, tenants can influence decisions and exercise choice over services from the Association, both, individually or in groups.
- Help Larkfield achieve excellent performance towards the outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and support independent tenant scrutiny of Larkfield's performance.
- Consult tenants on locally agreed targets and definitions required by the Annual Return on the Charter
- To encourage active tenant/resident participation, a large representative membership and a continuing supply of new committee members from within Larkfield to contribute to an effective Housing Management service within the area.

Our strategy aims to provide opportunities for the association to work in partnership with tenants and other service users to help us improve our services. We have a budget to fund our tenant participation activities.

### **4. How the strategy was developed**

Our strategy was jointly developed by the Association and tenants through a working group of tenants and staff, the draft strategy was available for comment on our website and Facebook page. We have a tenant participation action plan created by what tenants said in our participation activities and our satisfaction survey. Tenants views from events and activities feed into and update our action plan.

Our policy is to commission an independent consultant to carry out a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey every three years. The most recent survey was completed in January 2019. 60% of our tenants were surveyed on a range of housing and tenancy related matters. An action plan to take forward the results from the survey has been developed and will be implemented over the course of the year.

In addition to the full survey we seek feedback via our new tenant surveys and tenant open days and community events.

The contributions and ideas from each of the participants contributed to the development of the strategy and the action plan attached at the rear of the report.

## **5. Benefits of Tenant Participation and Scrutiny**

Tenant participation gives tenants and tenant organisations a meaningful role in the decision-making process. It allows tenants to influence the service they receive and improve their community.

There are several advantages to tenant participation:

- Better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants which give value for money
- Working together for common goals with respect and understanding
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood
- Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement these recommended improvements
- It helps committee members represent tenants by opening new ways of communicating
- It can benefit the community when people are involved in the running of their homes. Tenants and resident's groups often run social events as well as dealing with housing and related matters

## **6. Links to other strategies and services**

The Association has Tenant Participation at the heart of everything it does. This strategy is incorporated within the Association's Internal Management Plan, Equality and Diversity Policy and day-to-day service delivery. Tenant Participation does not exist in isolation but as an integral part of the way Larkfield Housing Association operates.

## 7. What Can I Get Involved In

Larkfield Housing Association will use a range of methods to keep tenants informed. The Association will:

- Inform tenants/residents of our work through our quarterly newsletter. One of these will summarise the Annual Report. The full Annual Report will be issued to all tenants and available on request to other persons or organisations.
- Consult with tenants each year about the proposed budget and proposed rent increase.
- Publish our Annual Report on the Charter.
- Consult with tenants each year on any proposed Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Make information on all current policies freely available.
- Undertake extensive consultation on all proposed major policy changes, including rent-setting policy.
- Issue all tenants with a tenant's handbook. All new tenants will also be issued with a handbook as well as a copy of their Tenancy Agreement and where possible introductory/welcoming meeting with a member of the Committee to explain the Association's work/policies and encourage membership of the Association.
- Hold tenants' meetings or focus groups on an area or block basis as appropriate to inform tenants about major maintenance and repair programmes. Wherever practicable, individual tenants or groups of tenants will be offered choice in items to be prioritised in major maintenance and repair programmes.
- Provide information to tenants and residents in the form of quality leaflets/handouts detailing improvement works etc. within the area. Provide questionnaires or telephone surveys to encourage feedback on these issues.
- Ensure regular updates on the work of the Association are posted on our website and Facebook page for tenants and residents to view.
- Use our complaints procedures to improve service delivery
- We will consult our tenants on our annual assurance statement

- We will encourage tenants and residents to become members of Larkfield Housing
- We will continue to encourage our tenants and residents become a committee member

### **Tenants and residents' Groups**

Registered Tenant Organisations are independent organisations set up to represent tenant's interests on housing and related matters. Larkfield Housing Association has a system in place for registering tenant's organisations. We will provide this to anyone interested in setting up a new tenant's organisation or for existing organisations that wish to become registered.

Larkfield Housing Association will provide support for tenant organisations that become registered. This usually consists of a small annual budget to cover administration costs. We will also provide training for your group and free use of rooms for your group to hold meetings

### **Getting registered**

To become registered, you must fulfil certain criteria. You must:

- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is publicly advertised;
- Elect office bearers, including a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary;
- Adopt a constitution;
- State the geographical area your group covers;
- Provide contact details; and
- Recognise equality and diversity issues

We will offer advice, support, training and assistance to any group to help them meet the requirements above. Once your group becomes registered its details will be added to a register of tenant organisations, which is held in our offices and publicly available for consultation.

### **Appeals**

A tenant's group can appeal any decision by Larkfield Housing Association:

- Not to register their organisation;
- To remove them from the register; or
- Not to remove them from the register

We will consult with any existing tenant/resident organisations at regular meetings. If you would like details about how to set up a tenant group please contact our Housing Manager, Sharon Rowatt, at our office or telephone 01475 630930.

## Consultation Register

We also have a consultation register for tenants that do not have time to attend meetings. This will let you know about important proposed changes to the housing service and will let you have your say either by telephone or by letter. To have your name added to the consultation register please contact our Housing Manager, Sharon Rowatt, at our office or telephone 01475 630930.

### 8. Giving Tenants Feedback

The Association is committed to providing feedback following all consultation processes. We will provide feedback through:

- newsletters
- individual tenant letters and
- our website
- our Facebook page

### 9. Training and Resources

The Association has set aside £5,000 within its annual budget for the duration of the Strategy to allow this Strategy to be implemented.

This will cover costs for:

- Training requirements for tenants;
- Meeting rooms;
- Providing lunch, teas and coffee;
- Out of pocket expenses;
- Consultation costs;
- Travelling expenses for tenants going to meetings;
- Costs for printing and posting newsletters and other information;
- Budgets for tenant organisations
- Access to IT and support networks
- Tenant participation conferences and good practice seminars
- Staff time
- Membership of Tenant Participation Advisory Service

Larkfield Housing Association is committed to making sure tenants, committee members and staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to get involved and the costs associated with training on Tenant Participation for staff and committee members will be met from the existing staff and committee training budgets. Training requirements will be reviewed on an ongoing basis through the staff appraisal process and Committee Training Needs analysis.

## **10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Larkfield Housing Association will actively encourage equal access to tenant participation from all sections of the community. We will take steps to ensure no groups are disadvantaged because of disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. When organising events, we will strive to ensure that:

- Meeting venues are barrier free;
- Information is available in different formats, such as large print, Braille, audio tape and community languages where required
- Meetings are held at times and locations that are convenient;
- Each registered tenant organisation includes a statement of equal opportunity in their constitution; and
- Registered tenant organisations that act in a discriminatory or offensive way are removed from the Association's Register.

## **11. Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy**

The Association will:

- Receive progress reports on the Tenant Participation Strategy at the Housing Management and Maintenance Sub Committees. Progress reports will be subsequently reported to the Management Committee to assess the overall effectiveness and any changes that may be required.
- Review the strategy as required, considering tenants aspirations regarding varying degrees of participation and to more accurately reflect change arising from the Tenant Participation process.
- Advise the Management Committee on future years Tenant Participation Strategies.
- Consider requests from any tenants group for Registration
- We will monitor our progress through our yearly Action Plan

## Privacy Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Carrying out a Privacy Impact Assessment [PIA] will be useful to any project – large or small – that:

- Involves personal or sensitive data about individuals
- May affect our customers' reasonable expectations relating to privacy
- Involves information that may be used to identify or target individuals

Please tick the applicable statement(s) below. Will your project involve:

1. A substantial change to an existing policy, process or system that involves personal information  Yes  No
2. A new collection of personal information  Yes  No
3. A new way of collecting personal information (for example collecting it online)  Yes  No
4. A change in the way personal information is stored or secured  Yes  No
5. A change to how sensitive information is managed  Yes  No
6. Transferring personal information outside the EEA or using a third-party contractor  Yes  No
7. A decision to keep personal information for longer than you have previously  Yes  No
8. A new use or disclosure of personal information you already hold  Yes  No
9. A change of policy that results in people having less access to information you hold about them  Yes  No
10. Surveillance, tracking or monitoring of movements, behaviour or communications  Yes  No
11. Changes to your premises involving private spaces where clients or customers may disclose their personal information (reception areas, for example)  Yes  No

*If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Privacy Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing a Privacy Impact Assessment.*

## Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Will the implementation of this policy have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics?

- |                                   |                              |  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Age                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Disability                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Gender reassignment            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Marriage and Civil Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Pregnancy and Maternity        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. Race                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. Religion or belief             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. Sex                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 9. Sexual orientation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

*If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing an Equality Impact Assessment*



If you need this information in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print or Community Languages please call **01475 630930**

Larkfield Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2509 R(S), Registered Office: 14 Lothian Road, Greenock PA16 0PG. It is a Charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SC032418; a Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: HCB 293; and registered as a Property Factor Id: PF000279. Part of the Link group © Link Group Ltd 2019.

