



Policy Name	Tenant Participation
Policy Category	Governance
Policy Number	G22
Date to Committee	December 2021
Previous Review	April 2017
Next Review Date	December 2024
Linked to other Policies	G09 - Equalities
Consultation	Staff, residents

This document will be made available in different languages and formats on request, including Braille and audio formats.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowes Housing Association recognises that our success as a landlord with satisfied customers is dependent on working in partnership with tenants, owners, communities and their representatives.

Participation is defined by the Government's National Strategy for Tenant Participation as:

"Tenant Participation is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about:

- Housing Policies
- Housing Condition
- 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 services.”

Knowes Housing Association is committed to promoting the involvement of our tenants across all areas of our service. We understand that individuals will wish to be involved at varying levels and to address this we will ensure that there are various choices with regard to how individuals can have a say in the services that we provide at a level they are comfortable with.

In this Policy it is assumed that ‘tenant’ participation also covers other groups such as local residents and owner occupiers living in the Faifley and Duntocher area.

The Policy also takes account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) the purpose of the Charter is to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

We aim to encourage residents to actively become involved in housing related issues which affect them and we will take into consideration their views so that we can improve the living standards of residents within Faifley and Duntocher. Furthermore, we will proactively involve traditionally excluded groups through using a positive, respectful and non-discriminatory approach.

Our objectives include building a stronger sense of community, reducing social problems and building better links between Knowes and the community, which should lead to more satisfied residents and better service delivery.

The needs and priorities of our tenants and other people who use our services are a central concern for Knowes. The views of people using these services is a rich source of information that will be used to identify areas where we need to improve.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

By having a written Tenant Participation Policy, Knowes can facilitate a two way process whereby residents are consulted on issues which affect them and their views are taken into consideration. By doing this we can provide better service delivery whilst complying with legislation and good practice guidance.

Without a Tenant Participation Policy, the Association is at risk of not effectively engaging with the community and not providing them with the opportunity to influence their own living conditions. The absence of a Policy could also create a risk of not meeting the standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

4. LEGAL & REGULATORY CONTEXT

The Policy complies with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore the Policy takes into account the Scottish Social Housing Charter and good practice guidance from TPAS and TIS.

5. EQUALITIES STATEMENT

Knowes Housing Association Ltd is committed to tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual or marital status, racial grounds or grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. To this end no person will be discriminated against through application of this policy.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for taking the strategy forward lies with the CEO and subsequently the Corporate Services Compliance Officer. It is important to note that tenant participation will be embraced and encouraged by all staff members and the Management Committee.

7. INVOLVING EXCLUDED GROUPS

We will promote equal opportunities in all mainstream tenant participation activities and also provide specific initiatives aimed at traditionally excluded groups. We attempt to achieve the involvement of these groups by using existing networks, building trust and credibility. We will use different formats for information, provide transport to and from events, have disabled access at events we hold and work with the local schools and community organisations.

8. RESOURCES

We will make a comprehensive assessment of the resources we require for successful tenant participation. Good practice suggests that landlords should provide support and resources to tenant groups, such as providing access to our meeting rooms and premises, administrative support, funding and access to independent advice where appropriate.

9. MONITORING

We will provide feedback to those residents whom we have consulted with and those who have responded to our surveys. We will use the feedback we receive to improve our practices.

The Management Committee will receive reports on an ongoing basis regarding the strategies implemented in response to the feedback/suggestions for improvement we receive from our customers.

10. BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

There are a number of benefits in taking an active approach to participation and these include:

- Better service delivery and increased value for money.
- The Management Committee and staff being able to make informed decisions and set priorities.
- Increased tenant satisfaction.
- Better communication between staff and tenants.
- Improved links between the Association and the local community.
- The opportunity of personal development for tenants, some of whom may go on to become Committee Members.

11. CONSULTATION

The Association will consult with tenants on the following as a minimum:

- The annual rent increase
- The Association's maintenance plans
- Policy reviews
- Choices of materials, colours, locations etc in relation to all maintenance projects

In addition to the above consultation, satisfaction surveys will be undertaken as follows:

- All tenants, full survey covering all aspects of the services provided by the Association every 3 years.
- Day to day repairs, 25% of all repairs completed.
- Medical Adaptations, 100%
- Maintenance projects, 100%
- Allocations, 100%
- Owner occupiers every 3 years
- New Tenants, 100%

12. COMMUNICATION

The Association will involve our service users in a number of ways and by a number of different methods. It is not feasible to select only one method of communication as different results are required depending on the subject matter. In some cases providing information is all that is required, however in others a meaningful dialogue needs to take place.

The information the Association provides will be meaningful, accurate and in plain English and on request our documents or policies can and will be translated into Braille or onto audio cd. Any requests for information being translated into other languages will be accommodated.

As a minimum we will use the following tools of participation and provide the following information:

- Quarterly newsletters delivered to all tenants and factored owners in Faifley & Duntocher.
- A Customer Engagement Strategy is in use to ensure that our services are designed, developed and delivered with the needs and expectations of our customers in mind.
- Leaflets available at the public counter, from Housing Officers and the Corporate Services Compliance Officer. These leaflets will vary from details on a Policy to advice on Housing Benefit or how to make a complaint, comment or suggestion.
- Every applicant will be provided with an information pack.
- Every tenant will be supplied with a Tenants Handbook when they complete their Tenancy Agreement. This will explain conditions of tenancy and provide other useful information relating to their tenancy and the Association.
- Exhibitions and/or notices will be displayed when appropriate providing relevant information. This can range from advising that the office is to be closed for staff training, to a site notice advising of an ongoing development in conjunction with other agencies, e.g. the Scottish Housing Regulator and architects etc.
- Our website, Facebook and Twitter pages will be kept updated with useful information and news.
- We will consult with the tenants on various issues throughout each year; this will be via the preferred method of consultation.

- We will consult with tenants and owners and allow choice in our maintenance works.
- We will consult with minority groups and encourage them to become involved.
- We will issue satisfaction surveys for various areas of our work.
- We will make use of hosting open days for relevant subject matters.
- The CEO and senior staff will engage with the Committee at Committee meetings throughout the year.
- We will issue all share members with our Annual Report.
- We will hold an AGM at which members and other interested residents will be informed of the Association's activities. These meetings can also be used to consult with our members on specific activities.
- We will publish our performance figures in reception, newsletters and web site.
- We will monitor complaints and communicate the result of these.
- We will promote our Community Working Group and encourage our tenants to participate.
- We will engage with the wider community and promote good neighbourliness, partnership and co-operation.
- We will send a representative to Community Council meetings.
- We will have street stalls at local events.

13. POLICY REVIEW

- 13.1 This policy will be subject to regular review to assess its effectiveness and will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required.