



## **Trust Housing Association Ltd**

### **Tenant Participation Starter Pack**

1. Introduction
2. Draft Model Constitution
3. Tenant Participation Strategy
4. Tenant Focus Group Meetings
5. Registered Tenants' Organisations  
(East and West areas)
6. Membership of the Association
7. Guidance Note on the Role of the Chairperson
8. Guidance Note on the Role of the Secretary
9. Guidance Note on the Role of the Treasurer, Accounts and  
the Use of Grant Fund
10. Guidance on the Role of Committee Members

## 1. Introduction

The following information is set out to give your group some information on setting up a Registered Tenants' Organisation and the associated benefits.

### Background

The idea of Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs) comes from the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The aim is to give Tenants' Organisations, which meet certain criteria, a recognised role in the tenant participation process.

### What is a Registered Tenants' Organisation?

A Tenants' Organisation is a group of tenants who meet to discuss matters which affect their development.

The aim of a Tenants' Organisation is to promote the interests of all its members.



### Why start a Registered Tenants' Organisation on your development?

A Tenants' Organisation encourages all tenants on a development to meet and discuss any issues which may affect them or the development where they live.

- You can put forward your views as a group to Trust, local authority or other agencies
- You can arrange meetings to inform tenants about issues of concern eg benefits, budgeting
- You can arrange social activities, events and outings that may be of interest to your tenants

**A Registered Tenants' Organisation allows you to have your say and be heard.**

### **What can a Tenants' Organisation do for you?**

- Help solve problems on your development
- Communicate with staff, Trust and the wider community
- Organise social events and activities within the development and wider community
- Fundraise for the development and other chosen charities
- Offer friendship to tenants on the development

### **The next stage: how to get started**

- Meet up with other tenants who have shown an interest in setting up a Registered Tenants' Organisation
- Decide the aims of the proposed organisation e.g. organise social activities and be involved in decisions which affect your development
- Organise a Steering Group of three or four tenants who are willing to work towards electing a Committee
- Contact your Co-ordinator or Tenant Participation Officer who will be able to provide you with more details about how to set up a Registered Tenants' Organisation including a copy of a Constitution that may be used

### **Will Trust recognise our Association?**

Yes we will, providing that your Organisation has adopted an appropriate Constitution, as we need to be sure that your Tenants' Organisation is genuinely representing the interests of the majority of tenants on your development.

### **Where to go for help and assistance?**

- Your Co-ordinator
- Your nearest Area Office (addresses below)
- Outside agencies such as Tenant Involvement in Grampian, Highland and Islands and Rural Areas (TIGHRA) on 01467 672233 or Fairfax House, 64 Market Place, Inverurie, AB51 3XN
- RTOs which are already in place (please contact Diane MacDonald for contact details)

## **Key points to remember**

- Start with issues affecting your development
- Keep everyone on the development informed as to what is happening
- Find out what your tenants can contribute in terms of skills and experience toward your Registered Tenants' Organisation
- Listen to all viewpoints
- Remember that support is available from Trust staff and other RTOs
- Don't forget to have fun!

### **Head Office and East Regional office**

Trust Housing Association Ltd  
12 New Mart Road  
Edinburgh  
EH14 1RL

Tel: 0131 444 1200

### **West Regional office**

Trust Housing Association Ltd  
First Floor  
Pavilion 5  
Watermark Business Park  
345 Govan Road  
Glasgow  
G51 2SE

Tel: 0141 227 1994

### **Arran office**

Isle of Arran Homes  
Springbank  
Brodick  
Isle of Arran  
KA27 8BE

Tel: 01770 303700



group shall be known as a “Steering Group”. The Steering Group must consult with all tenants on key issues and proceed with the majority decision.

- v) In certain circumstances tenants may feel that they are not able to speak up for themselves. In these situations tenants can seek the possible support of another person such as a family member or friend, provided the other members of the Organisation agree to this clause generally being acceptable.

#### 4. Committee

- i) The Committee will be elected from the Organisation’s Membership to carry out the business of the Tenants’ Organisation.
- ii) The Committee will meet every { \_\_\_\_\_ } weeks and there will be a minimum of { \_\_\_\_\_ } committee meetings annually.
- iii) The Committee will be made up of the Chairperson, **Vice-Chairperson (optional)**, Secretary, **Social Secretary (optional)**, Treasurer and a minimum of { \_\_\_\_\_ } general members. These office bearers will be elected at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.
- iv) The Committee will be elected from an AGM of the Tenants’ Organisation. Vacancies on the Committee may be filled by co-option of member(s) from a General Meeting. Co-opted members will have full voting rights on the Committee. Changes to Committee Membership and Office Bearers should be notified to the Tenant Participation Officer.
- v) All Committee meetings will be minuted and the minutes will be available to all members of the Organisation on request.
- vi) In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson will have the casting vote.
- vii) In the Chairperson’s absence, the { \_\_\_\_\_ } will assume full powers.
- viii) Each member will be entitled to one vote.
- ix) Committee members will seek to ensure good communication within the Committee. Any potentially relevant information will be brought to the attention of the office bearers.
- x) Any member of the Committee, who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without tabling their apologies for non-attendance, will be deemed to have resigned and the Committee will seek a replacement.

## 5. Annual General Meeting

- i) An AGM will be held every year at which the Committee will report on its activities; present a statement of accounts and then resign. **{you can decide whether all, half or one third resign every year}**
- ii) **Resignation will be decided by length of service, or where there are more than four members due to resign, by drawing lots.**
- iii) Resigning members may immediately stand for re-election.
- iv) The AGM will elect Committee members, vote on any recommendations and motions and any adjustments to the Constitution.
- v) The Secretary will locally advertise details of the AGM not less than 14 days before the meeting.
- vi) Nominations for the Committee members should be given to the Secretary 14 days before the AGM and will also be taken from the floor. If more members stand for the Committee than are spaces available, a vote will be taken.
- vii) Committee members will elect office bearers at their first meeting.
- viii) Members will have one vote per **{\_\_\_\_\_ household / person}**.

## 6. Other General Meetings

- i) All General Meetings will be open to all members of the Organisation. There will be at least one General Meeting per year in addition to the AGM, the number of General Meetings held to be decided by the Committee.
- ii) A Special General Meeting will be held if 25% or more tenants submit, in writing, a request for such a meeting, stating the reasons, to the Secretary, who shall arrange a meeting to take place within 14 days.
- iii) The Secretary will publicise General Meetings at least 14 days in advance. Items for the agenda should be submitted to the Secretary 10 days before the meeting.
- iv) Representatives from other Organisations may attend meetings by invitation of the Committee.
- v) All General Meetings will be minuted and made available to all members on request.
- vi) Members will have one vote per **{\_\_\_\_\_ household / person}**.

## **7. Quorum**

No General Meeting or Annual General Meeting will take place if less than 25% of the members are present. No Committee Meeting will take place if less than 33% of Committee Members are present.

## **8. Confidentiality**

- i) No member of the Organisation shall speak or correspond on behalf of the Organisation without the permission of the Committee. Spokespersons may be appointed from time to time.
- ii) Organisation members will respect the need to observe confidentiality.

## **9. Changes to the Constitution**

- i) The Constitution may only be altered at the AGM or at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- ii) Any proposed changes to the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.
- iii) Any changes to the Constitution must be agreed by a majority of two thirds of those members present.

## **10. Dissolution of the Organisation**

- i) The Organisation may only be dissolved by a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- ii) Such a meeting shall be advertised at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.
- iii) A resolution to dissolve the Organisation shall only take effect if agreed by two thirds of those members present at the meeting.
- iv) If such a resolution is confirmed, the Committee will be required to settle any legal debts and liabilities of the Organisation. Any remaining assets shall be given or transferred to such other charitable organisation(s) having aims similar to the aims of the Organisation, as the Committee may determine.

## **11. Financial Information**

- i) The Treasurer must give a financial report at every meeting.
- ii) At the AGM the Treasurer must present an audited statement of accounts.
- iii) The Treasurer cannot spend more than {\_\_\_\_\_£50} on any single transaction without the consent of the committee.

- iv) In the event of dissolution, all funds to which there is no prior claim shall be given or transferred to such other charitable organisation(s) having aims similar to the aims of the Organisation, as the Committee may determine.
- v) All funds shall be deposited into a bank account. Three Committee members including the Treasurer shall be nominated as signatories and withdrawals shall require signatures from any {\_\_\_\_\_ **two of the three**}. No two signatories will be permitted from the same household.
- vi) A statement of accounts must be made available and be presented to Trust Housing Association on request.

**12. Standing Orders**

- i) All contributions should be addressed to the Chairperson.
- ii) Only one person should be speaking at any one time and there shall be no private discussion.
- iii) The ruling of the Chairperson on any question regarding procedure at meetings shall be final unless two thirds of those present dissent from the Chairperson’s ruling.
- iv) Should the Chairperson be unable to attend any meetings, the position shall be filled by the **Vice Chairperson/Secretary**.
- v) Discussion should be kept to the subject in hand and not wander from the point.
- vi) The Committee will aim to reach decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible there will be a vote.
- vii) Voting shall be conducted by a show of hands and a simple majority shall prevail except where otherwise provided in these rules.
- viii) The Tenants’ Organisation cannot operate or take decisions out with its remit.

Chairperson Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Tenant Participation Strategy



# Tenant Participation Strategy

2008-11



Tenant Participation

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## **1. Introduction & Background**

Trust Housing Association was formed in 1973. The Association owns and manages around 2400 properties across Scotland. The properties which the Association owns and manages comprise mainly: sheltered, very sheltered, supported, amenity and care housing for older people. The Association's stock also includes a smaller number of general needs properties on Arran and elsewhere. The properties on Arran are managed by Isle of Arran Homes, a subsidiary of Trust Housing Association.

### **Our Mission**

To provide quality homes and services that promote independent living

### **Our Values**

- Caring
- Service Excellence
- Quality
- Value for Money
- Professional

### **Our Key Goals**

1. Customers First
2. Provider of Choice
3. Prepared for Change, Ready for Opportunities
4. Employer of Choice
5. Effective Communication, Leadership and Direction

### **Chief Executive's Introductory Statement**

At Trust Housing Association we aim to put our tenants, customers and service users at the heart of everything we do. Our first key goal is 'Customers First'. This Strategy document is hugely important to the Association's Board, staff and, above all, tenants. We welcomed the results of the independent review carried out in 2007/08 and have used the recommendations to build on our already solid foundations in terms of participation and communication.

We can only succeed if we deliver services that people want. Involving our customers is the key ingredient in getting those services right - participation means listening to what our tenants tell us.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

The Association aims to involve its tenants and customers in meaningful and varied ways that best suit them. The Association recognises the benefits of tenant participation and will look to involve tenants and encourage tenants to become involved. The Association's approach to tenant participation is to push beyond the minimum legal requirements to establish participation that is useful, meaningful and enjoyable for all of those involved.

A number of specific targets are set out for measurement under section 6.

More generally we will seek at all times to adhere to our Customer Care Principles and Service Standards on 'Getting Involved'. These are:

- Offer a range of opportunities for tenant participation
- Assist tenants to set up new groups, support you to arrange your first meeting and offer ongoing support as required
- Promote and support the formation and registration of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)
- Promote and support the formation of Tenant Focus Groups, involve them in the development and review of policies and procedures and pay out of pocket expenses to participating tenants
- Promote and support tenant involvement in areas of interest to them including the production of our tenant newsletter, annual conference, etc
- Promote increased tenant membership of the association and to encourage and support tenant members to stand for election to the Board of the Association
- Advertise and promote Board meetings on our website, at our offices and in our newsletters

## **3. Defining & Framing Tenant Participation**

### **Definition of Tenant Participation**

"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” (Taken from the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations’ Raising Standards in Housing guidance).

This strategy relates to Tenant Participation, however, the Association has a number of types of customer including service users and care home residents. The Association will apply the principles and practices outlined within this strategy to all of these groups.

### **Relevant Legislation**

The Association is required by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to consult tenants and registered tenants’ organisations on:

- Policies in relation to housing management and repairs where proposals are likely to affect tenants
- Standards of services in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance
- Tenant participation strategy
- Any proposal to transfer houses to another landlord.
- Rents

### **Performance Standards**

This strategy, and the Association’s approach to tenant participation in general, fits with the following performance standards (these standards are guiding standards for housing providers jointly published by the Scottish Housing Regulator, COSLA and the SFHA):

#### **GS2.2 Tenant Participation**

We have published and are implementing a sound strategy for encouraging and supporting tenants, residents and service users to participate actively in all areas of our work. We support tenants to take an active interest in managing their homes.

#### **GS3.1 Responsiveness to Service Users**

We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work. We treat people with respect and are responsive to their views and priorities.

#### **GS3.2 Information and Advice**

We provide or secure effective information and advice, in line with the national standards for housing information and advice services.

## **General Principles of Best Practice**

Good principles for tenant participation which the Association will attempt to put into practice are as follows:

- Tenant participation requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, board members and officers at all levels, working together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and services.
- Tenant participation is a continuous process where information, ideas and power are shared, common understandings of problems looked for and consensus reached.
- Good tenant participation requires all parties to contribute to the agenda. All participants require to have all the information needed to consider issues properly; information must be clear, timely, accessible and take account of equal opportunities.
- Processes of decision making should be open, clear and accountable.
- Adequate time should be given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly and to work out a common view before meeting with landlord representatives.
- The independence of tenants' organisations should be recognised.
- Good working relationships evolve over time and should be flexible to adapt to local circumstances.
- Tenants' organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
- Tenant participation must meet the requirements of the legislation surrounding equal opportunities. Good practice means removing the barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, geographic location, particular needs, language difficulties, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

## **Related Documents**

### **Corporate Strategy 2008 – 2013**

(The Corporate Strategy is a forward plan for the Association outlining goals and objectives to be achieved from 2008-2013)

There are a number of relevant departmental objectives within the Association's Corporate Strategy. These are:

- To Promote Tenant Participation (ref HS04)
- To Deliver a High Quality of Service & Information to Service Users (ref HS07)
- To Promote Service User Participation (ref CS06)
- To Provide Services to all by Involving Tenants and Communities in Decisions that Affect Them (ref IH03)

### **Customer Care Principles and Service Standards**

The Principles and Standards relating to tenant participation are listed under Section 2 'Aims and Objectives'.

## **4. How the Strategy was Developed**

A detailed and independent review was conducted by tenants' organisation TIGHRA. This review consisted of an examination of the Association's policies, procedures and documents, workshop sessions with tenants, staff and Board members as well as surveys conducted with staff and tenants. The outcomes and recommendations of this review process have been incorporated within this strategy and within the Association's approach to tenant participation overall.

## **5. Consultation, Participation and Information**

### **Who Can Participate?**

The Association recognises the benefit of wide-ranging and diverse tenant participation. As such, we encourage tenants from all our service areas (including general needs and amenity) to become active in terms of meaningful participation. We will encourage all of our tenants to become involved, become members of the Association and to join or establish Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs).

## **Focus Groups**

The Association recognises the importance of providing a forum through which tenants can meet and discuss issues of importance to them. As such, we organise and support our RTOs to meet at regionally based focus group meetings.

A number of meetings take place each year in both the east and west of the country. The Association supports tenants in the administration and chairing of these meetings as well as providing financial assistance and travel.

Tenants attending these meetings receive presentations from staff and others, are consulted on policies, procedures and strategies and are given the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the tenant body as a whole.

The Association is committed to the ongoing use of these focus groups as an integral part of tenant participation for Trust tenants.

## **Register of Interested Tenants**

The Association recognises that there are individuals who are interested in participating but who do not wish to join or form an RTO at this stage. Whilst the Association will give priority to RTOs a register of interested tenants will also be developed. This will help the Association to encourage alternative forms of participation.

## **Areas for Consultation and Participation**

The Association will attempt to involve all tenants, residents and service users in all aspects of service delivery affecting them – the following list is not exhaustive but sets out some of the most commonly occurring areas of the Association's work where participation will routinely occur.

- Housing management
- Repairs and maintenance
- Modernisation
- Allocations and lettings
- Rents and service charges
- Performance – standards of services
- Tenant participation
- Proposals for changes to policies
- New development

## **Consultation & Participation**

The Association recognises the importance of using methods of consultation and participation that best suit tenants. Tenants have highlighted their preferred methods through the focus group meetings; these are included in the list below.

The following will be used where appropriate:

- Comments / complaints / suggestions
- Satisfaction slips for reactive maintenance
- Surveys / questionnaires
- Face to face contact with tenants
- Development meetings
- Open meetings
- Open days
- Surgeries
- Focus groups / panels (perhaps time limited to look at particular issues)
- Tenant satisfaction surveys
- Registers of interested tenants
- Regional meetings
- Annual meetings
- AGM (for tenant members)
- Policy forums

## **Information**

The Association will provide all new and current tenants with a variety of information on areas such as complaints, terms of tenancy, rent setting, tenant participation, etc.

The following methods will be used where appropriate:

- Newsletters
- Website
- Letters
- Handbooks
- Leaflets
- Surveys / questionnaires
- Posters (on notice boards etc)
- Local press / radio

## **Providing Feedback**

We recognise the importance of giving tenants feedback following consultations and will keep tenants up to date with how the views and opinions they have shared with us are being used to shape service delivery.

We will use a number of methods to do this including (these methods are those that tenants highlighted as the most appropriate through their focus group meetings):

- Trust Talk newsletter
- Letters
- Trust website
- Focus Group Meetings & minutes of meetings
- Annual Report
- Annual Tenants' Conference

### **Awareness Raising**

We recognise the need to raise awareness and promote tenant participation and involvement. Each new tenant is provided with a handbook containing information on tenant participation and membership of the Association. We will explore other methods through which to promote tenant participation such as the provision of a promotional DVD.

### **6. Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Association recognises the difficulty of adopting appropriate measures for effective tenant participation targets and outcomes. The Association is therefore committed to working with tenants and tenants' organisations to mutually agreed targets and outcomes.

The Association will work towards the following targets and objectives:

- Issue a minimum of 3 newsletters during the financial year
- Ensure appropriate opportunities are provided to tenants via the mechanisms set up to participate in review of the policies outlined within the Corporate Strategy
- Ensure development meetings are held as set out in this strategy
- Provide support to tenants to facilitate the setting up of the regionally based meetings
- Set up and maintain a database of tenants interested in tenant participation
- Provide support for all groups wanting to become Registered Tenants Organisations
- Ensure expenditure on tenant participation is closely monitored and reviewed to ensure that this meets the needs of the tenants outlined within the strategy
- Hold a minimum of 2 meetings a year with each focus group

- Consult the focus groups on relevant policies
- Hold an annual conference for tenants
- Conduct annual development meetings at each staffed development
- Each staffed development to be visited by a Board Member as part of a rolling programme

## **7. Isle of Arran Homes**

Trust Housing Association owns and manages through Isle of Arran Homes around 250 properties on the island of Arran. The properties here are managed by staff from a local office in Brodick.

Isle of Arran Homes has a separate sub-committee – which has places for up to 5 tenant representatives nominated (and elected) by tenants.

An Isle of Arran Homes RTO was registered in February 2008.

Tenants have been consulted on the most appropriate structures for tenant participation within Isle of Arran Homes. The mechanisms for tenant participation are:

- A Registered Tenants' Organisation
- Office open days / evenings or surgeries
- Tear off slips in newsletters
- Attendance at Trust regional sessions

## **8. Registered Tenants Organisations**

The Association will publicise widely and on a regular basis to tenants the mechanisms for and benefits of becoming registered tenants organisations.

A start-up pack is available from Head Office or through the Association's Tenant Participation Officer (TPO). Resources and support will be made available to those groups interested in registering including an initial grant with ongoing annual grants and support from the TPO.

The criteria for registration of tenants' organisations are set out below.

The organisation must have a publicly available constitution which sets out as a minimum:

- The organisation's purpose (a housing / wider action remit must be clear)
- How people can become members (membership and participation must be open to all tenants / residents in its area of operation)
- How members will be informed and involved in decisions
- How funds will be managed
- Commitment to equal opportunities

### **Mechanisms for Registration**

The Tenant Participation Officer (TPO) will meet with groups seeking to become registered tenants organisations to discuss the above requirements and assist the group in meeting these criteria. Development-based staff support will be provided as required to assist the group towards becoming registered (for example providing model constitutions, membership policies, advice on equal opportunities, training and independent advice).

A formal application (see pro forma at Appendix 1) will be completed by the members of the group and submitted to the TPO. The application will then be checked to ensure that the minimum registration criteria are met. If the criteria are not met in some way the groups will be advised of this and what they can do in order to comply – support will be provided by the Association as necessary.

Provided the registration criteria are met the application will be submitted to the Association's Operations Sub Committee for approval. After a group becomes registered the Association will ensure annually that the group are still functioning as an RTO and will keep up to date with who the current committee members are.

The Association will maintain a register of registered tenants' organisations available for public inspection in the Association's offices and will promote registered tenants groups by means of: advising all new tenants on signing their tenancy of RTO's within developments, the handbook, newsletter, leaflets.

### **Removal from the Register**

Registered tenants organisations can be removed from the register under the following circumstances:

- the tenants organisation no longer meets the registration criteria
- the group ceases to exist or operate

- there is mutual agreement between the landlord and the organisation

Where a group is de registered this will only occur after assistance and support have been offered to the group by the Association. If after a period of 3 months it is evident that the group either no longer is viable / can be sustained it will be de registered and will be reported to the Association's Operations Sub Committee.

## **Appeal**

Where a RTO is refused registration or has its registration removed, on the basis that it doesn't meet the stated criteria, it has the right to appeal.

Initially this appeal should be in writing to the Head of Housing Services. If there is no satisfactory outcome the appeal would then be considered by the Operations Sub Committee. The appeal procedure will be completed within 3 months from the date of the initial appeal.

If there is still no satisfactory outcome there is the right of appeal to the Scottish Housing Regulator (after the Association's internal appeals procedure has been exhausted).

## **9. Informal Participation and Involvement**

The Association recognises the value of tenant participation as an ongoing process which evolves over time. It is recognised that for a variety of reasons tenants may not be in a position to become registered tenants organisations, may not wish to register or may not wish to register initially.

In such circumstances the Association will provide appropriate support and assistance to enable the group to move forward to registration if it wants to do so. The Association will also actively promote the benefits of becoming a registered tenants organisation.

The Association will however recognise more informal groups of tenants who come together and will support these with the aim of promoting registration. Providing these groups can demonstrate to be representative i.e. hold well publicised meetings open to all tenants then the Association will seek to involve these organisations in a similar way to registered tenants organisations. The aim will be to promote the registration of any such groups over time.

## **10. Membership of the Association & Board Membership**

The association wants to encourage tenant membership and will do so by promoting membership in a number of ways including through the tenants' newsletter and annual development meetings.

The Association recognises the need to keep membership of the Board under review and to have representation which reflects the communities which the Association serves. The Association will aim to attract and retain new board members by advertising, training and development, encouraging potential members to attend board meetings, induction training and by using co-options.

## **11. Resources and Training**

### **Resources**

The Association recognises the importance of resourcing tenant participation adequately. It further recognises that by law it is required to carry out "an assessment of the resources required to implement the (tenant participation) strategy".

The Association is committed to providing resources for tenant participation in the following ways:

- Producing newsletters and information leaflets
- Providing Premises for meetings
- Providing Administrative support – i.e. assistance with typing, photocopying etc
- Providing Support to help build capacity and provide training (for tenants & staff)
- Providing annual / one off grants to tenants organisations to hold events
- Provide help with carer / travel and loss of earnings to ensure equal opportunities
- Providing Access to independent external advice
- Providing Starter packs to assist new groups become established
- Working in partnership with other agencies to facilitate tenant participation
- Providing Staff support
- Providing out of pocket and travel expenses as appropriate

## **Training**

The Association recognises the importance of targeted and appropriate training in the area of tenant participation and the importance of such measures in capacity-building.

Training will be provided, when identified as appropriate, to staff, tenants and Board members.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

The Association believes that effective participation should remove any barriers and ensure equality of opportunity regardless of age, disability, gender, location, language differences, race or sexual orientation.

The Association will take positive action to ensure that all our tenants are assisted to participate in the Association's activities including, but not exclusively, addressing issues relating to language and translation, mobility, hearing difficulties and visual impairment.

## **13. Strategy Review**

This strategy document will be reviewed on at least a three yearly basis or more frequently should this be required.

## Appendix 1 – Application to Register as a Tenants’ Organisation

Trust Housing Association Limited

### Application to Register as a Tenants Organisation

Please fill in all the parts of the form and return to the Tenant Participation Officer.

Name you wish to use for your Registered Tenants Organisation:

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The contact address of the Registered Tenants Organisation:

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Committee Members Details:

Name	Contact Address	Telephone No.	Position held if office bearer
			Chairperson
			Treasurer
			Secretary

Name	Contact Address	Tele. No.	Position held if office bearer

Area of Operation: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency of Meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach a copy of your completed Constitution.**

## Tenant Participation Strategy Action Plan

		<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Registered Tenants Organisations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support the formation and registration of Registered Tenants Organisations.</li> <li>• Provide a start up pack for Registered Tenants Organisations.</li> <li>• Provide start up and annual grants for Registered Tenants Organisations.</li> </ul>	By providing support and funding to new and existing registered tenants organisations we hope to increase the number of groups that we can consult with.	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing	TP Officer  TP Officer  TP Officer
<b>2</b>	<b>Focus Groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold 2 meetings per annum with each of the focus groups.</li> </ul>	Regular focus group meetings give us the opportunity to consult with tenants ensuring their views are considered.	Spring & Autumn	TP Officer
<b>3</b>	<b>Tenants Newsletter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and support tenant involvement in the production of the tenants newsletter.</li> </ul>	Tenants will be able to contribute to the content and layout of the newsletter ensuring it is an appropriate publication.	ongoing	TP Officer

4	<b>Tenants Conference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and support tenant involvement in the planning of the annual tenants conference.</li> </ul>	Tenants will be involved in the planning of the conference to ensure the event is relevant and appropriate.	Ongoing	TP Officer
5	<b>Board/Membership of the Association</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote increased tenant membership of the Association.</li> <li>Encourage and support tenants to stand for election to the Board of the Association.</li> <li>Advertise and promote Board meetings on our website, offices and newsletters.</li> <li>Maintain an annual programme of Board member visits to developments.</li> </ul>	It is important to the Association to have tenant members on the Board of the Association to ensure tenant representation. Board member visits to developments allow members to experience first hand the service provided and allow both staff and tenants to meet with members.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	TP Officer Head of Housing Services Head of Housing Services Director of Customer Services
6	<b>Tenant Satisfaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a range of Tenant Satisfaction Surveys.</li> </ul>	We will receive feedback from tenants on a range of services allowing us to determine the levels of satisfaction and address areas of concern.	08/09	Head of Housing Services

<b>7</b>	<b>Policies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult tenants on all relevant Policies.</li> </ul>	Policies will be developed that reflect the views of tenants.	Ongoing	Head of Housing Services
<b>8</b>	<b>Tenant Consultation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce 3 newsletters per annum.</li> <li>• Explore other methods through which to promote Tenant Participation.</li> <li>• Hold annual meetings in all developments.</li> <li>• Maintain a register of interested tenants.</li> </ul>	By developing a range of methods with which to consult with tenants we will maximise the opportunity to hear tenants views. Regular newsletters will ensure that tenants are kept fully informed.	July, November, and March 08/09  Ongoing  08/09	Head of Housing Services  TP Officer  Head of Housing Services TP Officer
<b>9</b>	<b>TP budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor Tenant Participation expenditure.</li> <li>• Provide out of pocket and travel expenses for TP events.</li> </ul>	It is important that expenditure is monitored to ensure the budget is set appropriately. Expenses are refunded to encourage maximum participation.	Ongoing  Ongoing	Head of Housing Services  TP Officer

#### **4. Tenant Focus Group Meetings**

Tenant Focus Group meetings are held in the Spring and Autumn of each year and are open to representatives from Registered Tenants' Organisations (normally up to four people).

Meetings are held in the East and West areas. The meetings are normally held at Trust's developments in these areas on a rotational basis.



Issues such as policy changes are discussed at these meetings and they also give tenants the opportunity to raise any general topics they may wish to talk about. The meetings also give RTO members the chance to visit other developments and meet tenants from other developments in their area.

The Association will pay any reasonable costs for travel to and from the meetings and will also help with travel arrangements, if required. A buffet lunch is also provided.



## 5.1 REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS – East Area

Name of Group	Address	Phone Number	Date of Registration
Kirkriggs (Social) Committee	Kirkriggs Court Lour Road Forfar DD8 2DN	01307 468 319	12 April 2007
Cornmill Court Tenants' Organisation	Cornmill Court St Johns Street Galashiels TD1 3JY	01896 757 380	5 July 2007
Kirk Loan & Murray Cottages Tenants' Organisation	17 Kirk Loan Edinburgh EH12 7HD	0131 334 2171	6 December 2007
Bingham Tenants' Organisation	60 Bingham Drive Edinburgh EH15 3JS	0131 669 8110	6 December 2007
South Garden Tenants' Organisation	South Garden Crofts Road Lauder TD2 6RJ	01578 722 631	6 December 2007
Viewforth Court Residents' Committee	Viewforth Court Burntisland Road Kinghorn KY3 9RZ	01592 891 452	28 February 2008

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Date of Registration</b>
Stockaree Tenants' Organisation	38 Deanhaugh Street Edinburgh EH4 1LZ	0131 332 0067	14 August 2008
Inverness Trust Residents' Association (INTRA)	18-88 Lower Kessock St Lower Kessock Inverness IV3 8ER	01463 712 127	26 February 2009
Abbeyhill Tenants' Organisation	82 Montrose Terrace Abbeyhill Edinburgh EH7 5XW	0131 661 1793	4 June 2009
West Lodge Tenant Group	West Lodge Gardens Alloa FK10 2HX	01259 721 680	5 November 2009
Whitelaw Court Tenants' Organisation	Whitelaw Court Dunfermline KY11 4SJ	01383 739 486	3 June 2010

Full details of all Registered Tenants' Organisations are available from the Tenant Participation Officer

## 5.2 REGISTERED TENANTS ORGANISATIONS – West Area

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Date of Registration</b>
Forrestfield Gardens Social Club	Forrestfield Gardens Caldercruix ML6 8NZ	01236 842 272	02 June 2005
Strachur Tenants Organisation	Manse Gardens Strachur Argyll PA27 8DS	01369 860 204	02 June 2005
Dunrobin Gardens Social Club	Dunrobin Gardens Airdrie ML6 8BB	01236 731 606	02 June 2005
Millar Park Tenants Association & Social Club	4 Millar Park Wellhall Road Hamilton ML3 9BD	01698 285 077	20 February 2006
Carmunnock Tenants Committee	105 Waterside Road Carmunnock G76 9DU	0141 644 3944	12 April 2007
Lindsayfield Tenants' Association	61 Germiston Crescent Lindsayfield East Kilbride G75 9LL	01355 590734	12 April 2007

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Date of Registration</b>
Kirk Care Social Club	1 Hunthill Road High Blantyre Glasgow G72 9SS	01698 712 697	12 April 2007
Mission Place Social Club	14 Mission Place Motherwell ML1 1EG	01698 277 755	5 July 2007
Silver Threads Social Club	1 Church Place, Erskine View Old Kilpatrick G60 5JB	01389 873 497	5 July 2007
Greenbank Court Tenants' Organisation	Greenbank Court Langholm Dumfriesshire DG13 0LB	01387 381 056	5 July 2007
Houldsworth Court Tenants' Organisation	Houldsworth Court Campbell Street Wishaw ML2 8HQ	01698 356 895	28 February 2008
Ravens Court Social Club	Ravens Court, Camp Street Motherwell ML1 1UF	01698 261 253	14 August 2008
Ashgrove Court Tenants' Organisation	Ashgrove Court Newton Stewart DG8 6TJ	01671 403 880	26 February 2009
Pollokshaws Social Committee	40 Shawholm Crescent Pollokshaws G43 1NZ	0141 632 6164	5 November 2009

Name of Group	Address	Phone Number	Date of Registration
Dowanhill Tenants' Organisation	3/4 Crown Terrace Dowanhill Glasgow G12 9HA	0141 334 1360	3 June 2010
Ashcroft House Social Fund	250 Ashcroft Drive Croftfoot Glasgow G44 5QG	0141 631 1782	28 October 2010

6. Membership of the Association

## Trust Housing Association



## Membership

Trust Housing Association is a membership organisation. We are keen to attract and retain a wide membership. This assists the democratic process and broadens our base in the communities we serve.

Anyone can apply for membership. If approved, new members are asked to make a one-off payment of £1 for a share in the Association.

Members receive information about the Association's activities, are invited to attend any general and special meetings and may stand for election to the Board of Management.

Details on applying for membership are available through our Head Office on 0131 444 1200.



## **7. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Chairperson**

Success of a meeting can depend on how it is chaired. The Chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done – not the person who does everything.

There are two basic jobs of the Chairperson:

1. Guide the Organisation to achieve its aims
2. Chair the meeting of the Organisation

Some of the duties of the Chairperson are as follows:

- ❖ Know the Constitution
- ❖ Liaise with the Secretary on the agenda and meeting arrangements
- ❖ Welcome members and introduce guests
- ❖ Ensure fair discussion
- ❖ Stop anyone taking over, dominating discussions
- ❖ Sum up problems, points decisions
- ❖ Keep order / ensure a chance for all to have their say
- ❖ Get through the agenda on time
- ❖ Help prepare agendas
- ❖ Ensure decisions are carried out

A Chairperson should always have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meeting, agenda, minutes, reports
- Notepad / pen
- Folder to keep paperwork
- Chairperson's Hammer (to keep order if everyone is talking at once)
- Watch (to ensure meeting keeps on time)



## **8. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Secretary**

A good Secretary must be reliable and efficient. He/she will pay strict attention to matters of detail and ensure incoming letters receive prompt replies.

It is important that the Secretary's name, address and telephone number are well publicised to landlords and organisations that want to make contact with the Committee.

### **Before a meeting**

- ❖ Arrangements and an agenda for the meeting should be prepared in consultation with the chairperson
- ❖ A suitable venue for the meeting should be arranged and speaker arranged if necessary
- ❖ A notice of the meeting and agenda should be sent to all Committee members so that they will receive them at least a week before the meeting is arranged. Agendas should be sent out for all meetings, even if they are held at the same time and place each week or month
- ❖ The Secretary must keep a complete, approved and signed up to date set of minutes
- ❖ Ensure that all correspondence has been dealt with, and when necessary, obtain replies for the next meeting
- ❖ Keep an accurate filing system

### **After the meeting**

- ❖ Keep a record of everyone attending the meeting or collect their signatures in an attendance book. Apologies for absences should also be recorded
- ❖ Ensure that a quorum is present before any business is done

- ❖ Read the minutes of the previous meeting (unless already sent out) and obtain the Chairperson's signature for the official copy
- ❖ Read out all correspondence received and report any action taken since the last meeting
- ❖ Ensure that the Chairperson is supplied with all the necessary papers and information relevant to the meeting

**The Secretary should have:**

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meetings: agendas, minutes, reports
- Notebook / pen
- Folder to keep all paperwork in
- Headed notepaper
- Stamps / envelopes
- Access to a computer or typewriter

**Minute Secretary**

To lighten the duties of the Secretary some groups consider dividing the duties and having a Minute Secretary.

The Minute Secretary should:

- ❖ Compile minutes of meetings, recording decisions and action to be taken and by whom
- ❖ Ensure minutes are available to all Committee members prior to or at Committee meetings
- ❖ Retain copies of all minutes for future reference

**The Minute Secretary should also have:**

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meetings: agendas, minutes, reports
- Notebook / pen
- Folder to keep all paperwork in
- Access to a computer or typewriter



## **9. Guidance on the Role of the Treasurer for Keeping Your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Accounts, and the Use of Grant Fund from the Association**

Every Registered Tenants' Organisation should make sure a Treasurer is appointed to handle the finances of the Organisation.

- ❖ The Treasurer should keep a clear and accurate book-keeping system and should be able to handle figures.
- ❖ The Treasurer is responsible for the proper accounting of the finance of the Organisation, but not the actual raising of money.
- ❖ The Treasurer will be one of three officers of the Committee authorised to draw out money. Normally two out of three of these signatures are required when money is withdrawn.

### **Before a meeting**

- ❖ The Treasurer should prepare a financial report before each meeting.
- ❖ The Treasurer should check members have paid their subscription (if applicable) and ensure all approved bills have been paid.

### **At the meeting**

- ❖ The Treasurer should present a report of money paid into and taken from the account.
- ❖ The Treasurer should bring all the account books, receipt books and any other financial records required to the meeting so that he/she can answer any questions.
- ❖ The Treasurer should advise on the amount of money available for the Organisation's work and monitor expenditure.
- ❖ The Treasurer should collect any subscriptions (if appropriate).

## **At the Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

- ❖ The Treasurer should prepare a financial statement for audit prior to the AGM.
- ❖ The Treasurer should present the balance sheet and financial statement at the AGM after they have received the audited accounts. Please see some examples of balance sheets which you might wish to consider using at Appendix I.

### **A Treasurer should have**

- Diary
- Money box
- Cheque book
- Accounts book
- Folder for expenses
- Receipt book
- Bank book
- Petty cash book
- Note pad
- Paperwork for meetings

### **Useful Tips**

The Treasurer should purchase diaries for all Committee members at the beginning of the year. Then there will be no excuses for not knowing when meetings are planned.

Set dates for regular meetings several months in advance – reduces the chance of double booking yourself.

Find out the public holiday dates in order that you can arrange meetings around them to avoid the need for last minute cancellations.

Make sure that your wider membership knows who you are and how to contact you.

Make your meetings as interesting and enjoyable as possible – HAVE FUN!

Make sure you publicise your successes.

## **Grant Fund**

The grant given to you by the Association is to be used to help set up your Organisation. There is no need for this to be kept in a separate bank account, but it would be useful if you kept a note of how this money was spent. This can be done simply by highlighting any of this expense with a highlighter pen or by keeping details on a separate sheet/page of your accounts book/spreadsheet.

The grant may be used for items such as:

- ❖ Photocopying
- ❖ Stationery
- ❖ Phone calls
- ❖ Postage of anything sent in connection with the Organisation
- ❖ Publicity for meetings



## **10. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Committee Members**

A Committee member may not have any special title or task, but their presence on a Committee is just as important as that of the Office Bearers.

Some duties of the ordinary members are as follows:

- ❖ Attend meetings regularly / ensure they start on time
- ❖ Stick to the agenda
- ❖ Support the Organisation as a team
- ❖ Take action on tasks identified from the previous minute
- ❖ Vote on issues
- ❖ Discourage domination by one or a few
- ❖ Assist with projects, fund raising etc
- ❖ Support and encourage quieter members to take part in discussions
- ❖ Abide by the decisions of the Organisation
- ❖ Encourage membership
- ❖ Listen to each other
- ❖ Feedback to the Committee
- ❖ Aim towards constructive discussion and decisions
- ❖ Help with advertising, distributing pamphlets etc
- ❖ Elect office bearers
- ❖ Make suggestions
- ❖ Accept the authority of the Chairperson

A good Committee member should always have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meeting, agenda, minutes, reports
- Notepad / pen
- Folder to keep paperwork