

# Nomination Form

## Outstanding Contribution to Tenant Participation: **Housing Staff**



### TIS National Excellence Awards 2024

The **TIS National Excellence awards** recognise and celebrate housing organisations, staff, volunteers, tenants, residents, and community groups **who are leading the way and making positive change in the Scottish social housing sector.**

Categories honour excellence in everything **from partnership working, tenant participation and scrutiny practice, to digital creativity and innovation.** Hotly anticipated, the awards offer a seal of approval for the most outstanding work.

Finalists are selected by an expert and independent judging panel, and **winners announced at an awards ceremony at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.**

#### Category Overview

The **Outstanding Contribution to Tenant Participation** award recognises an inspiring, individual member of staff who has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to driving tenant participation practices forward, to achieve great practice that others can learn from.

Submissions must **evidence how the individual has demonstrated an ability to go above and beyond, empowered tenants, residents, and communities** to influence housing policies, services, and standards, explored innovative new ways to get people involved, strengthened relationships and communication, and **championed tenant participation practices within their organisation.**

#### Who you can nominate

This award is open to an individual member of staff working within a housing organisation throughout the Scottish social rented sector.

## About you

Please note information about the individual, organisation, or group submitting the application:

<b>Name</b>	Jim Herron
<b>Position</b>	Chairperson
<b>Organisation</b>	East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel
<b>Email address</b>	tenantspanel@hotmail.com
<b>Telephone number</b>	0131 665 9304

## About the nominee

Please note information about the individual you are nominating:

<b>Name</b>	Deborah Piner
<b>Position</b>	TP Service Development Worker
<b>Organisation</b>	East Lothian Council
<b>Email address</b>	Dpiner@eastlothian.gov.uk
<b>Telephone number</b>	01620 827 827

## Background

### Maximum 250 words

Please outline background information about the individual that you are nominating.

For example, detail:

- The background of the individual.
- The specific role they undertake.

Deborah has worked for East Lothian Council since the early 80's – over 40 years! She started off as an office junior and has progressed to the position of Service Development Officer for Tenant Participation.

Deborah has been responsible for tenant participation for over 15 years and embodies the principles of tenant participation throughout her working practice. Her role involves setting up and supporting subgroups on specific topics and activities and ensuring tenant representation on each of the subgroups. Topics and activities include: the Landlords Report Group, Tenant Participation Strategy, Tenant Scrutiny Group, Estate Inspection Working Group, Tenant Induction Sessions, HRA group and the Rent Consultation Group.

Deborah works closely with the EC of ELTRP along with the TIS staff to promote and support tenant participation across East Lothian. She has a responsibility for assisting over 25 local groups that want to apply for funding and access meeting spaces; she also helps the groups access additional resources and provides appropriate advice to enable their tenants and residents' meetings run smoothly and maximise attendance.

Part of Deborah's role is to facilitate the editorial group of the Homefront magazine, a publication that is distributed to all tenants from East Lothian Council twice a year. Deborah has always ensured that East Lothian Tenants & Residents Panel (ELTRP) has a dedicated section within the magazine to publicise the activities of ELTRP and all the local groups within East Lothian.

## Actions

### Maximum 500 words

Please outline specific actions of the individual that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to driving tenant participation practices forward.

For example, outline:

- How the individual has gone above and beyond and championed tenant participation practices.
- How the individual has empowered tenants, residents, and communities to influence housing policies, services, and standards.
- How the individual has explored innovative new ways to get people involved.
- How the individual has championed tenant participation practices within their organisation.
- The work involved and their overall aim.

Deborah has been responsible for tenant participation in East Lothian for over 15 years. She has never sought personal recognition, focussing on the individuals/group's needs. Deborah always has a 'can do' attitude, and looks for solutions, innovative and creative ways to address concerns and issues raised ensuring tenant participation is always a high priority.

Deborah diligently promotes the work of ELTRP and only seeks to gain recognition for the work of the individual tenants and/or group involved. She is approachable, reliable and friendly and always does what she says she is going to do; she keeps in regular contact with individuals'/groups/ ELTRP communicating and relaying the relevant information. She practices 'true' partnership working with excellent communication skills, liaising on a regular basis, listening to the issues raised and exploring resolutions with the individuals/groups concerned.

Deborah is extremely knowledgeable about tenant participation and promotes the benefits of TP and partnership working – because she has 'experienced' it working really well. She motivates people and is always encouraging and supportive.

East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel think that Deborah should definitely be the Tenant Participation Champion for her ongoing excellent practice, support and commitment to ensure the development of 'true community' and partnership working.

Recently East Lothian Council have reviewed their tenant participation strategy and Deborah worked with ELTRP to find different ways of involving harder to reach tenants, vulnerable tenants and tenants with disabilities, as well as the general population of tenants. Through her work with ELTRP the strategy now sets out how East Lothian Council will seek to involve all tenants in a way that suits them – a person-centred approach.

Deborah has ensured that the strategy is clear and easy to understand, encouraging involvement and feedback, and reflects what tenants want to see. Deborah is enthusiastic, wise, positive and reassuring in any contact with ELTRP. She explains things very clearly, while suggesting innovative ways and ideas to improve all aspects of the organisation.

Deborah is always very professional in her approach and guides us in a sensitive and effective manner. No matter what the issues are Deborah is always supportive and never fails to respond to calls, emails or personal requests.

Deborah is thorough in her research and always shares good practice; she encourages the groups to share good practice with others' and is always supportive and a good listener. Deborah is never pushy and is never interested in gaining recognition for her own work. She works diligently in the background and is always the 'professional', extremely supportive to all members of the organisation. Nothing is ever too much trouble for Deborah (and everything is done with a smile!).

## Outcomes

### Maximum 700 words

Please outline positive outcomes the individual has achieved as a result of their commitment to empowering tenants, residents, and communities.

For example, detail the impact on:

- The delivery of housing services.
- The improvement of satisfaction levels.
- The strategic approach of the organisation.
- The culture of the organisation and its core values.
- Communication, strengthening relationships, and partnership working.
- The inclusion and lasting benefits of tenants, residents, and communities.
- The skills and knowledge of tenants, residents, and communities.
- How others can learn from the individual's good practice now and in the future.

The ELTRP Executive Committee consist of 12 volunteers who have been elected to represent tenants and residents throughout East Lothian. The knowledge we have about the housing service is varied, with some members knowing a great deal and other members knowing very little. As a result of discussions with Deborah, she and a colleague have provided induction training on every housing service provided by East Lothian Council. The sessions are now into their third year, as we as members want to learn even more in-depth knowledge about the service, so we can represent our wider membership as best we can.

The sessions are organised monthly and have covered various topics like tenant participation, amenity service, roads, repairs, the Scottish Social Housing Charter, tenant scrutiny and homelessness. Deborah has prepared and delivered these sessions with knowledge, patience and introduced a great deal of fun. This has ensured that each of us enjoy the sessions thoroughly and have gained so much knowledge – we also love attending.

Deborah also prepares packs on every session and encourages us to share the information gained with our local groups. As a result of these sessions, we have all become a lot more confident, and learned so much about the housing service as a whole and that of East Lothian Council. We have

been able to use this information in our local communities to improve communication and partnership working. The service has benefited by having tenants more knowledgeable, willing to engage and participate, due to Deborah's patience and commitment.

Deborah also supports and encourages the Chairperson; she gives confidence to individuals and to the organisation as a whole and makes everyone feel that they are a valued member of the group; particularly important when working with volunteers. Deborah takes every opportunity to promote the group to other agencies and organisations and encourages and helps the group to promote their work. She shares innovative and creative ideas about the best way to 'show off' the groups' work, encouraging the group to take photographs and display their work and ongoing commitment.

Deborah is willing to help in any way she can, including applying for raffle prizes within East Lothian which also raises the profile of the group with organisations, within the Council and with individuals. Deborah never takes on any task without consulting with the group; she always ensures that the group have the final say in any discussions or negotiations. Her positive 'can do' attitude, her professionalism, her ability to listen and identify the main issues as well as looking for joint resolutions are ones that many people and organisations can learn from; this leads to more people wishing to get involved because of the support of Deborah.

## What makes this nominee stand out from the rest?

### Maximum 100 words

Please provide a short testimonial on why this individual deserves to win.

A willingness to put tenants needs first and ensure they are involved in decisions affecting them, is a skill she uses every single day. Her commitment to TP is uncompromising and shows not only empathy and understanding but also a non-judgemental approach, no matter what the issues or difficulties are.

Her positive 'can do' attitude, her professionalism, her ability to listen and identify the main issues goes above and beyond expectations, even after all these years. Deborah's determination to keep TP a high priority on the agenda as well as looking for joint resolutions, are attributes that many people and organisations can learn from.

## Declaration

As the proposer I have completed this nomination form to the best of my knowledge, and the information provided is a true representation of the nominee's achievements.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Jim Herron</b>
<b>Signature</b>	<i>Jim Herron</i>
<b>Date</b>	<b>July 2024</b>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this nomination form.