

# 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 on Thursday 7th November 2024 at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.**

**The closing date for applications is 5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024.** TIS accepts submissions in more than one award category.

#### 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>             | Tracy Noles                      |
| <b>Position</b>         | Service Development Officer      |
| <b>Organisation</b>     | Aberdeenshire Council            |
| <b>Email address</b>    | Tracy.noles@aberdeenshire.gov.uk |
| <b>Telephone number</b> | 01467 532 866                    |

## About the nominee

Please note information about the individual you are nominating:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>             | Andrew Mackie  |
| <b>Position</b>         | Housing Manager – Tenancy Services   |
| <b>Organisation</b>     | Aberdeenshire Council  |
| <b>Email address</b>    | <a href="mailto:Andrew.mackie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">Andrew.mackie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Telephone number</b> | +441467535214  |

## 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.

Andrew Mackie is the Housing Manager for Tenancy Services at Aberdeenshire Council. He started his post as housing manager in 2018, following an extensive career in asset management related roles. Andrew is responsible for the management and outcomes of the following teams/services which operate across the large rural geographic area of Aberdeenshire:

- Sheltered Housing Service
- Tenancy Services – Arrears Management
- Tenancy Services – Tenancy Management
- Tenant Participation
- Community Safety

Tracy Noles, Service Development Officer, was approached by tenants from the RTO Aberdeenshire Council Tenants' Group (ACTG) who have requested he be put forward for this award. They are nominating Andrew on the following basis, and the below text is a quote submitted by the ACTG committee:

#### **Statement**

Andrew Mackie is always there for tenants, he encourages full tenant participation throughout Housing Services, he cares for all tenants in his working ethos.

To help me describe this, I asked a number of tenants to describe Andrew Mackie, and how he interacts with them, I received the following in their replies,

Andrew Mackie is:

- A nice person.
- Always there for us.
- Very approachable.
- Always very calm in his interactions with tenants, and easy to talk to.
- An asset to Aberdeenshire Council.
- Trustworthy and professional.

Tenants who have regular contact with Andrew also said that he:

- Sees Tenant Participation as crucial in housing today, and he is fully committed to TP.
- Goes above and beyond to help tenants.
- Is always very knowledgeable and makes discussions interesting.
- Listens to tenants and his criticisms are always constructive.
- Has time for everyone.
- He cares about us.
- He always thanks us for any work that we've done.

## 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.

#### **Covid-19 and ongoing Resilience (Winter Weather, Emergency events e.g. flooding)**

Andrew has been instrumental in ensuring tenants are involved at all levels of decision making. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Andrew worked with teams to target vulnerable groups of tenants – ensuring that contact was made and these tenants knew where to turn to during physical office closures. Thousands of tenants were contacted including (but not limited to)

- Tenants over 80
- Tenants between 60 and 80
- Tenants in single parent households
- Single tenants under 25, and over 50

As a service we learned through the Covid-19 contact work that tenants appreciated the proactive contact, and this was embedded through later times where resilience measures were required such as during Storm Arwen (2021) when many communities were cut off due to impact of snow and ice, and lack of electricity or Storm Babet (2023) where the service made proactive calls to vulnerable tenants to discuss the impact of potential flooding in their areas and assist with emergency planning information. Early communication also allowed the service to let tenants know that due to exceptional circumstances, issues around repairs for storm damage would be delayed until safe to carry out – allowing for managing expectations in a stressful time.

#### **Influencing policies/services/standards through tenant empowerment & Championing tenants in organisational decision making**

Andrew has been instrumental in the inclusion of tenants at all levels of decision making. He has supported initiatives such as

- Streamlining tenants' "working groups" and moving to action-plan based working to demonstrate that comments and ideas are taken seriously and monitored; working towards inclusion of regular performance and financial monitoring within these groups for heightened scrutiny
- Ensuring tenants have a say in short-life Member-Officer Working Groups, most recently including the topics of Housing Business Plan Review and Rent Strategy Review
- Inclusion of tenants at Committee Level

### **Supporting teams to include tenant participation activity**

Quote – Sheltered Housing Manager:

*“Andrew has actively encouraged and supported all tenant participation activities with the Sheltered Housing review, with the aim to get as much feedback from tenants to help shape the future of the service, including individual tenant’s meetings, tenants place questionnaires and tenant surveys undertaken impartially by an independent consultant. He has approved the time and space to enable any proposed changes to be introduced at a pace the tenants will understand so any changes to service delivery are introduced with them and not to them, which is particularly important for the older demographic of tenants who reside in Sheltered Housing.”*

## **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.

#### **Business Plan Review (delivery of housing services)**

Andrew was instrumental in the design of tenant feedback in Aberdeenshire’s 2023/24 Business Plan Review and Rent Strategy Review and consultation was accomplished at a level which was not previously considered. The key goal through this process was to engage with tenants on a meaningful level in the face of severe budget constraints. This consultation included:

- 17 Stakeholder Interviews (professionals, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations)
- 12 focus groups consisting of 64 tenant participants which took place both in person and online, during the day and the evening. Groups met three times (1x per week for 3 weeks) to discuss their experiences, service priorities, and preferred rent options for the next 3 years.
- 1,000 tenant interviews
- A large scale quantitative survey which was made available to all tenants with a response rate of 1,233

- Inclusion of tenants who identify as Gypsy/Traveller, who have particular needs, and women who have been victim of domestic violence

### **Improvement in satisfaction levels**

The 2024 Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed a majority of tenants are very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in the Housing Service's decision-making processes (77%, up from 73% in 2021).

### **Strategic approach in supporting tenants at high level decision making opportunities**

Tenants are now invited to all Housing Member-Officer Working Groups (MOWGs). They hear the background of the information of the short-life topic, view and discuss any data, and make recommendations for decision or action to go to Committee. From 2022, the Housing Service have ensured that tenants are represented at each MOWG and able to comment and input on discussion and outcomes.

Tenants attend Communities Committee (where the majority of housing papers are discussed) for both public and exempt reports and give a tenants' view on the recommendations put forward for decision by elected members. Tenants are also able to discuss with other tenants on a peer-to-peer basis how a decision was made and the practical impacts it could have on the tenant community.)

### **Link to communities through Participatory Budgeting (PB)**

Andrew has championed the start of PB activity within the Housing Service. PB is a democratic process in which citizens decide directly how to spend part of a public budget. The first exercise began in 2024 and is currently ongoing and linking with a local community association to achieve wider goals.

### **Communication/Relationships/Partnership working/lasting benefits – Tenant Evidence:**

Tenant Quote 1:

*"My recent encounters with Andrew have been amazing. Last year I was diagnosed with a serious health issue, and I couldn't keep up with regular attendance on Aberdeenshire Council's Working Groups, one day my phone rang, I answered the phone and I was surprised to discover that Andrew Mackie was calling me, he wanted to know how I am and if there was anything that he could do for me, I was really surprised at this, someone in his position has taken the time out of his schedule to talk with me, to ask how I am! That goes to show how much Andrew cares about tenants, I think that he's terrific."*

Tenant Quote 2:

*"I have known Andrew for quite a long time, and sometimes I have had some issues, Andrew is a person that I can talk to, he listens to everything that he is told, and he always wants to help. I have a lot of time for Andrew, but I wouldn't like to be on his bad side. It's great how he thanks us personally for our efforts, and he always puts tenants at the heart of everything he does."*

Tenant Quote 3:

*"Andrew is very committed to TP, he always wants more tenants to help with TP, but more importantly, he always thanks tenants by name for work that they've done, it makes you feel valued. When I was invited onto the Communities Committee Andrew was a huge help, he emailed me to update me on the issues on the agenda, but he didn't stop there, he arranged for a meeting so that he could talk with me directly, I could then attend Communities Committee meetings with some knowledge of what will happen, which was very comforting."*

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

### Maximum 100 words

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

Tenant Statement 4:

*"He has always been committed to involving tenants in every aspect of his working life, he sees the value in having tenants involved in every aspect of Housing Services, and he wants tenants to be comfortable with anything that they do. Tenants are involved in Aberdeenshire Council, and they enjoy being involved in working groups, tenant groups, HRA meetings, tenancy management meetings, and now a tenant was recently invited onto an interview panel for our new Head of Housing. None of this would have been possible without Andrew. To add a final point, Andrew has also been known to visit Food Larders, not for food, but to talk to everyone that comes in, he wants to know how people are coping with the current cost-of-living crisis, doing this helps Andrew to make financial decisions, although he is generally very people centric in his professional life."*

Quote – Service Development - Tenant Participation:

*"Not only is Andrew appreciated by tenants, but he is also appreciated by his team for the support he gives behind the scenes. Andrew ensures suggestions from the TP team are brought to the appropriate decision-making levels, often inviting myself to speak to the Housing Management Team or ensuring I can present to appropriate Committees. Andrew also ensures the team has autonomy and flexibility to work in a way that is most suitable for the needs of the tenant base they are working with. He always makes time to be available for a variety of activity both in person and online, formal and informal."*

## 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>Tracy Noles</b> |
| <b>Signature</b> | <b>T NOLES</b>     |
| <b>Date</b>      | <b>31.07.24</b>    |

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

Please submit your nomination by **5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024** to TIS by email at: **info@tis.org.uk** or by post to: **TIS – Clockwise Offices, 77 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3BZ.**

## Next steps

- **All applications will be acknowledged on receipt by TIS.** If you do not receive acknowledgement within 3 working days, please contact us to ensure your application has been received.
- An **independent judging panel** will rate your application against the award criteria. The panel will consist of representatives from organisations across the Scottish social rented sector.
- Your award submission will provide the basis for both the shortlist and final decision of the winning entry.
- **TIS welcomes applications in more than one award category.**
- Please ensure you answer all questions as fully as possible and keep the content of your nomination focused – avoid exceeding the suggested word count.
- **TIS will inform all proposers of the outcome of their application Thursday 29th August 2024.**
- Finalists will be invited to the **TIS National Excellence Awards Ceremony**, as part of the TIS National Housing Conference and Exhibition, on **Thursday 7th November 2024** at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.