

# Nomination Form

## Tenant Group of the Year



### 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 **Tenant Group of the Year** award recognises a tenants, residents, or community group who has made an outstanding contribution and achieved great practice that others can learn from in the future.

Submissions must **evidence how the group has added value to their local area and improved community spirit,** strengthened relationships and communication, championed tenant participation, found innovative new ways to get people involved, **influenced decisions and housing policies, services and standards,** or driven community regeneration projects forward.

#### Who you can nominate

This award is open to tenant, resident, and community groups.

## About you

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

<b>Name</b>	Anne Cook
<b>Position</b>	Head of Social Housing Services
<b>Organisation</b>	Scottish Government
<b>Email address</b>	anne.cook@gov.scot
<b>Telephone number</b>	07802 894207

## About the nominee

Please note information about the group you are nominating:

<b>Group name</b>	Tenants Together (Scotland)
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:colin.stewart@tenantstogether.scot">colin.stewart@tenantstogether.scot</a>
<b>Telephone number</b>	07973 252361

## Background

### Maximum 250 words

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

For example, detail:

- The background of the group, including: when the group was established, the number of individuals involved in the group, and the aims of the group, etc.
- The specific role the group undertakes.

Tenants Together Scotland (TTS) is a national network of tenants, committed to empowering the tenants of today and tomorrow, ensuring that their views are heard, influencing national policy within the social housing sector, protecting tenants' rights and ensuring tenants receive good quality standards and services.

TTS, previously known as the Regional Networks (RN), were set up in 2008 to enable tenants, residents and the Scottish Government to work collaboratively on national housing policy.

Initially there were nine regions, which were reduced to four following a structural review. Each Network covered a number of local authority areas, and membership was drawn from Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) and other recognised landlord groups. There was a maximum committee membership of 85. In 2024 the networks rebranded to Tenants Together Scotland.

Membership comes from tenants and service users of social housing throughout Scotland.

Members can get involved at a level that suits them by:

- Becoming a champion for the organisation promoting the work that we do at local and national events/conferences.
- Sharing their views on national housing policy and development, and best practice relating to tenant participation and engagement.
- Coming together with peers to review information and discuss some of the biggest challenges facing the sector.
- Engaging directly with the Scottish Housing Regulator on the issues of key importance to tenants and service users in relation to the regulation of social landlords.
- Working directly with the Scottish Government and participating on national committees, panels, boards, task forces, and at ministerial meetings.

## Actions

### Maximum 500 words

Please outline specific actions the group has taken to make an outstanding contribution.

For example, outline:

- How the group has added value to their local area and improved community spirit.
- How the group has made a real difference to the lives of tenants.
- How the group has influenced decisions and housing policies, services, and standards.
- How the group has explored innovative new ways to get people involved.
- How the group has driven community regeneration projects forward.
- The work involved and their overall aim.

Since 2008, the group has made a difference to the lives of tenants across Scotland by working directly with the Scottish Government in developing a wide range of housing policies, including ending of Right to Buy, the introduction of social housing regulation and the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Due to the changing tenant participation landscape, the networks were restructured from nine regions to four and expanded their membership to include landlord-recognised groups such as scrutiny groups, along with RTOs. This refreshed the network, keeping us in touch with local groups and increased committee membership.

Regional Networks rebranded to Tenants Together Scotland in 2024 to better fit with tenant needs today and in the future.

They are a National Organisation, with a structure that enables every tenant and service user in Scotland to become a member and have their voice heard, influence decisions at a national level and feel they are represented at the forefront of all Housing and Community developments. The flow of information between tenants, TTS and Government is essential to ensure that tenant views and priorities are reflected in national housing policy and to building Homes and Communities that work and enrich lives.

TTS is led by a Committee of members, with representatives from across Scotland. We keep in touch using the “Basecamp” platform which is an online project management system enabling immediate contact between Committee members.

They meet regularly with Scottish Government and the Housing Minister to discuss housing policy and issues of national importance to tenants. TTS is the only Tenant Organisation in Scotland to have planned regular access with the Housing Minister and officials and can raise tenant concerns and issues directly with them.

TTS members also make up the SHR liaison group which is a forum for SHR to have meaningful dialogue with tenants and provide SHR with the views on issues that are presented to them by SHR.

Regional Networks (now TTS) members were directly involved in developing the Scottish Social Housing Charter. During the Bill process for the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 they gave direct

evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning committee. They made a strong case that the Charter and social housing regulation should apply to both local authority and RSL landlords when COSLA was making the case that local authority landlords should not be covered by the Charter or regulation.

This resulted in Parliament agreeing that local authority landlords should be covered by the Charter ensuring that all Social Housing tenants received protection.

The group has subsequently been involved in reviews of the Charter which concluded that the Charter was working and supporting improvements in services and standards.

Although a national group, members come from registered tenant organisations and landlord-recognised groups throughout Scotland. Tenants and service users from these local groups update TTS members on their opinions and issues as well as feedback on any consultations or focus groups they receive from their Stakeholders to their members which feeds up the chain to SG and vice versa.

## Outcomes

### Maximum 700 words

Please outline positive outcomes achieved as a result of the group's work.

For example, detail the impact on:

- The delivery of housing services.
- The improvement of satisfaction levels.
- Adding value to their local area and improving community spirit.
- 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 group's good practice now and in the future.
- A specific community regeneration project.

Members of Regional Networks (RN)/Tenants Together Scotland (TTS) gain a lot of knowledge and experience by taking part in their committees and working groups. RN/TTS has various working groups which have fed into Scottish Government (SG) committees and stakeholder groups which has resulted in the following achievements: -

- Contributed to the Housing (Scotland) Acts 2010 and 2014 and helped develop the Scottish Social Housing Charter and approach to social housing regulation. Their influence resulted in Local Authorities being regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) along with Registered Social Landlords.
- Given written and oral evidence to Parliamentary committees, during the consultation on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, resulting in landlords being required to involve their tenants in preparing their Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) to the SHR.
- Meeting with Dame Judith Hackitt who chaired the Grenfell Enquiry to outline Scotland's approach to tenant participation and the protections tenants have in relation to complaints about their landlords and how landlords can be held to account for their activities and performance, not only by tenants themselves but by the SHR.
- Given evidence to the Local Government, Housing & Planning Committee in parliament on damp and mould issues within the social housing sector.
- Given evidence to the same committee on the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and the emergency legislation introduced in October 2022
- Collected tenant's views and provided responses to a range of SG formal consultations including on the recently proposed Housing Scotland Bill.
- Developed effective engagement and influence with the SHR, through their SHR Liaison Group which meets quarterly with the SHR. They have recently provided tenants views on proposed changes to the annual return on the charter indicators. They are the only tenant led/tenant driven group to have direct input into the SHR.
- Challenged the SG to produce more robust guidance regarding the operation of Local Authority Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) which resulted in new guidance being issued.
- Established a rent affordability group which collected evidence from across the sector and provided a report to Scottish Ministers on rent affordability for social housing tenants.
- Fully participated in SG working groups such as the Housing Benefit Reform Group and the Joint Housing Policy and Delivery Group formerly HPAG which helped shape future policy direction.

They continue to be involved in the following: -

- The SG's Strategic Board for Housing to 2040 – there is only one tenant from the whole of Scotland on this board and it is a member of TTS.
- The SG's Housing Affordability Stakeholder Group has one social housing tenant from all of Scotland, again a member of TTS
- Two TTS members participate in the SG's Accessible Housing & Inclusive Living (AHIL) accessibility working group to feed in tenants views on making the housing stock meet the requirements of tenants with varying needs.
- Meet regularly with the housing minister to discuss current topics and issues affecting tenants. They are the only tenant organisation that has regular and direct access and are able to raise tenants concerns and issues directly with the Housing Minister and officials.

To help communicate with committee members, TTS use a project management system called Basecamp. This enables communication with committee members between meetings, store documents, schedule meetings and keeps a record of their work.

Since the launch of TTS, they have a new website and introduced a free subscription service for anyone in Scotland to register interest in their work. Additionally, Tenants, Service Users and landlord staff members with an RTO or recognised group can register as Members of TTS.

Through their network of tenants, they are able to share experiences learnt from members at a local level and pass that knowledge and experience learnt at a national level to their members at the grassroots.

This level of interaction, from local to national helps improve community spirit, strengthen communication and relationships, and partnership working.

Tenants Together is a great example of tenants being empowered and causing change for the good, for the benefit of everyone. The list of their achievements above is a prime example of what tenants can achieve when working together.

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

Maximum 100 words

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

Since 2008 RN/TTS has been instrumental in improving the lives of social housing tenants across Scotland and ensuring that tenants views are considered in the development of national housing policy and legislation. The members and committee have worked tirelessly to improve the housing services that tenants receive and by championing issues that are tenants' priorities. The organisation has had to adapt and find new ways to work and engage as it continues to ensure it provides a platform for tenants to be heard nationally. For over 15 years their hard work and commitment to making a difference should be celebrated.

## 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.

Name	Anne Cook
Signature	Anne G Cook
Date	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

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](mailto: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.