



Nomination Form

Excellence in Scrutiny Danny Mullen: Working in partnership

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 **Excellence in Scrutiny Danny Mullen** award recognises housing organisations, and their tenant scrutiny groups, who have demonstrated excellence in **working collaboratively** to achieve an exceptional standard of scrutiny that has made a real difference to the lives of tenants, delivery of housing services, and improvement of satisfaction levels.

Submissions **must evidence how the organisation and group have worked in partnership** to embed scrutiny within the organisation's strategic approach and have demonstrated an outstanding contribution to empowering tenants to work together, have their say, and influence decisions about housing policies, services, and standards.

Who you can nominate

This award is open to housing organisations and their tenant scrutiny groups – working in partnership.

About you

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

Name	Ian Macpherson
Position	Community Participation & Engagement Officer
Organisation	Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd
Email address	imacpherson@chaltd.org
Telephone number	01294 606012

About the nominee

Please note information about the housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group you are nominating:

Housing Organisation	Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd
Tenant Scrutiny Group	Cunninghame Scrutiny Group
Email address	williammcfarlaneclarke@gmail.com (Chair)
Telephone number	07527 754199

Background

Maximum 250 words

Please outline background information about the housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group that you are nominating.

For example, detail:

- The background of the organisation, including: total number of homes, total number of employees, and the geographical areas the organisation covers, etc.
- The background of the tenant scrutiny group, including: when the group was established, total number of members, etc.
- A brief overview of the partnership approach.

Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd (CHA) was registered in 1984 as the Three Towns HA with 36 properties. This has grown to 3425 properties across 21 towns in North and East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway, factoring 450 properties. Our vision statement is 'Making Our Communities Better Place', 'More than Just a Landlord' The Cunninghame Group of companies now include Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Centre, Citrus Energy Lemon Aid Project and Direct Works employing 175 staff.

The Cunninghame Scrutiny Group was formed by tenants of CHA in 2015 and it is now coming up to the 10 year anniversary since the group formed. Known as CSG we have 12 members who are all volunteers working with Cunninghame to improve housing services. They rightly feel they have achieved a lot in the space of the last year. They gave an exceptional amount of their personal time with an impressive commitment to carry out the following:

- To independently review and scrutinise the performance of Cunninghame Housing Association's (CHA) Shared Spaces services.
- To work with an independent Strategy and Research consultant (IBP) to design the research process for the CHA 2023 Tenants and Owners Satisfaction Survey.
- To form an action plan based on the findings of the survey to guide the Association's Senior Management Team and the Management Board over the next two years to address any poor performance.
- To report to tenants and other service users on progress being made.
- To approve/validate the Annual Performance Report on the Charter.
- They have built a very close working relationship with CHA Staff and Board ensuring services are improved for tenants.
- Showcasing the opportunities available to empower tenants and services users of Cunninghame to get involved, have their say and influence the decisions about key policies, strategies, and service standards.

Actions

Maximum 500 words

Please outline specific actions the housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group have taken to achieve an exceptional standard of scrutiny.

For example, outline:

- How the organisation and tenant scrutiny group have worked collaboratively to embed scrutiny within the organisation's strategic approach.
- How the organisation and tenant scrutiny group have made a real difference to the lives of tenants and improvement of satisfaction levels.
- How the organisation and tenant scrutiny group have contributed to empowering tenants to have their say, and influence decisions about policies, services, and standards.
- The work involved and their overall aim.

CHA is confident that the work of the CSG is based on the following core standards:

- Being accountable to tenants and service users.
- Being transparent; Reflecting the needs and aspirations of tenants and service users.
- Respecting the decision-making role of the Board.
- Making recommendations based on robust evidence.

The scrutiny activities that have been completed by the CSG over the last few years have made a significant difference, not only to the services that tenants receive but to the culture and ethos of the whole organisation. CSG members have built up an excellent working relationship with staff at all levels and Board members, meeting regularly formally and informally. The work of the CSG is valued by the Association as the emphasis is on working with each other, not against, with tangible benefits for tenants and staff.

CHA recognises the benefits of independent scrutiny of their services from a tenant perspective and the resulting efficiencies to staff time and increased awareness of how services impact on tenants. Most CHA staff and board members have met with CSG members which ensures recommendations from current and future scrutiny exercises are well received. The 'buy in' from both staff and tenants is down to the enthusiasm, commitment, and determination of the CSG with the positive outcomes. Their work is conducted with respect, manners and quite a lot of humour.

Scrutiny is embedded into CHA, supporting local tenants and residents' groups and the scrutiny group to shape housing services. It is on the agenda at to give updates at monthly staff meetings and the Board are updated quarterly. CSG members present their recommendations directly to the Board at the end of each exercise and are updated on the progress of these being implemented. Senior staff will seek the assistance of the CSG in policy reviews such as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. This was reviewed, improved and a tenant leaflet devised by the CSG to encourage and make complaints simpler. This already had an impact indicated in the 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, that satisfaction with how ASB cases were dealt has increased by 10% from the 2021 survey, a huge improvement.

CHA carries out an extensive customer satisfaction survey every two years across a wide range of subjects, to help gain a better understanding of tenants' needs and preferences, as well as gauging their overall satisfaction of the services provided. The CSG ensure comprehensive engagement with

tenants in the design and delivery of the survey. A 2-year action plan is then produced by the CSG to address any areas of weakness in housing services, based on the feedback from tenants. The Board and senior staff work to implement this plan.

The CSG have just recently completed their latest exercise 'Shares Spaces' looking at landscaping, bin areas, communal spaces, closes, etc. This was identified by tenants as a service that needed improvement. They conducted tenant-led inspections by visiting a number of neighbourhoods to gather evidence and interviewed tenants on their doorstep to get their direct views. The group then developed the 'Shared Spaces' report, which included their key findings, photographs and a total of 22 recommendations which were taken to the Board, with the majority of recommendations accepted. The Board are now working to produce an action plan off the back of the report.

CSG decided to conduct this review as well-maintained shared spaces can create a strong sense of community, which not only results in better wellbeing for tenants but a feeling of satisfaction, which results in longer tenancies and fewer complaints. The CSG recently also presented their findings at the Annual CHA Tenants Conference.

The overall aim of CHA working with the CSG is to directly involve more tenants to scrutinise more housing services to raise satisfaction levels and ensure maximum value for money.

Outcomes

Maximum 700 words

Please outline positive outcomes the housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group have achieved as a result of their scrutiny activities and partnership approach.

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 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 close working relationship between CHA and the CSG has had a huge positive impact on housing services. A recent example was our gas safety procedures were changed based on research carried out by CSG. Communications/Notifications were made more user friendly, timescales were increased, flexible appointment times, additional support for vulnerable tenants was introduced and target support from our subsidiary organisation, Lemon Aid - who provide fuel poverty advice to CHA tenants and across Ayrshire, along with Financial Inclusion Officer. This improved the service for working tenants, reduced the stress to some of our tenants who previously would not engage wouldn't and reduced the number of forced entries and tenants with no gas supply. CSG are currently also reviewing the ground-breaking work of Lemon Aid, to further improve this service for tenants.

Tenant scrutiny has seen significant improvements in how housing services are delivered. There is a more open environment for CSG and CHA to work together to ensure value for money for rents and service charges. Cunninghame continually review savings that are being made following the implementation of scrutiny recommendations and review if there is more tenant satisfaction after these changes are made. Scrutiny is supporting the Association to ensure services reflect tenant's needs and priorities. It is always our priority to listen to tenant feedback before decisions are reached to drive forward service improvements.

The 2023 Tenant Satisfaction survey has again shown an increase in satisfaction levels across a variety of housing services where CHA and have CSG have worked together and influenced improvement over the last few years. These include:

- Overall service provided by the Landlord increased to 92% from 85% in 2021.
- Tenants who think their rent is good value for money increased to 83% from 72% in 2021.
- Satisfaction with management of neighbourhood increased to 89% from 87% in 2021.
- Satisfaction with the opportunities to participate in landlord decision making increased to 89% from 87% in 2021.

This represents a significant upward trend in tenant satisfaction levels.

*'The CSG has carried out a range of excellent scrutiny projects that have been well received by the Board and staff team. We ensure that tenant scrutiny is fully embedded into Cunninghame's performance monitoring and reporting arrangements. We respect the commitment of our volunteers and the essential work they do. It is an excellent example of partnership working to ensure continuous improvement'. **Frank Sweeney, CEO, Cunninghame.***

CHA has developed an **excellent working partnership** with tenants and service users to work together to discuss issues and joint solutions to these. CHA and CSG have regular meetings and updates on progress with previous scrutiny activities. The Association also has seven tenants and resident's groups who are updated at their monthly meetings on the progress and outcomes of the scrutiny work.

Cunninghame ensures that staff are kept up-to-date about scrutiny activity at team briefings and via the staff intranet. Scrutiny is a standing agenda item at Senior Management Meetings. Tenants are being kept updated on scrutiny activity through: Cunninghame newsletters; Annual tenant performance report and at the Annual Conferences, which is normally attended by over 120 delegates each year.

The outcomes and achievements following scrutiny projects can be summarised as follows:

- CSG has a full complement of 12 trained members who have grown in confidence, knowledge, skills and experience.
- Since the Covid-19 pandemic, CSG has maintained a strong voice throughout, even growing by having more members join the group.
- TIS support CSG and Cunninghame to ensure an independent and innovative approach.
- Scrutiny is now fully embedded into the culture of Cunninghame at all levels.
- CSG are significantly influencing continuous improvements in housing services.
- Satisfaction surveys highlight that Tenant Satisfaction levels are increasing.

To ensure an inclusive representation of views and experiences, the CSG consists of 8 CHA tenants and 4 residents - 2 owners, 1 private tenant and 1 Local Authority tenant. CHA is fully aware that housing and social issues do not end at CHA housing stock. Problems and solutions affect and benefit the whole community. This is why partnership working with other landlords and partners is essential in the implementation of the wider recommendations of the CSG.

CSG are always willing to share their good practice, including their sustainability, recruitment, group member support, the development of excellent working relationships with staff, Board and partners and the enjoyment they get socially and from making a real difference. Several organisations have visited the group to share ideas and learn from their successful scrutiny exercises. These include East Lothian Council and Viewpoint HA. CSG have also been invited to speak at national tenant events to showcase their work and how they interact with CHA.

What makes this nominee stand out from the rest?

Maximum 100 words

Please provide a short testimonial on why this housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group deserve to win.

CSG are a fantastic group who have worked tremendously hard over the last 18 months. They are now a cohesive and effective scrutiny group with a track record of making a difference. CSG have been very creative and innovative in carrying out their Shared Spaces exercise, which proved to be an extremely robust scrutiny task, attracting interest from other organisations across Scotland.

The way they are regarded now by CHA'S senior staff and board is clearly demonstrated in their continuing involvement in the 2023 tenant satisfaction survey and the production of another two-year action plan to address the issues raised. CSG are committed to improving housing services and standards to make sure tenants voices are heard and their views are genuinely represented. CSG and CHA have an excellent partnership relationship and tenants are at the heart of the decision-making process.

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	Ian Macpherson
Signature	<i>Ian Macpherson</i>
Date	30 th 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** 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.