



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

About the nominee

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

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Housing Organisation | Aberdeenshire Council |
| Tenant Scrutiny Group | Sheltered Housing Tenants' Forum |
| Email address | Tracy.noles@aberdeenshire.gov.uk |
| Telephone number | 01467 532 866 |

Background

Maximum 250 words

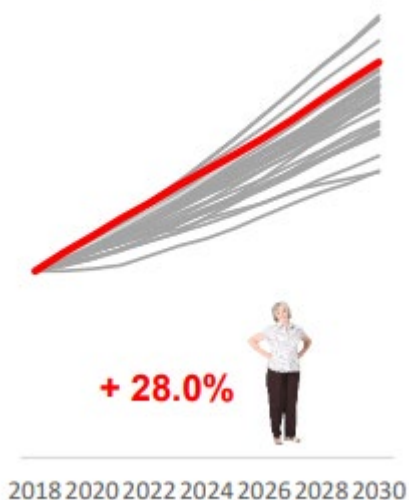
Please outline background information about the housing organisation and tenant scrutiny group that you are nominating.

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.

Aberdeenshire covers an area of 6,313 square kilometres (2,437 sq. mi) and the Sheltered Housing Service has 58 Sheltered Housing schemes across the region. Aberdeenshire's geographical size and rural nature presents challenges to travel, rural connectedness and digital connectedness. Aberdeenshire has a significant rising proportion of individuals aged 65 and over - for the first time in four decades, this age group is poised to constitute a larger segment of the population than those aged under 18.

65+ Population Projection



(Aberdeenshire Council Strategic Assessment 2024/25)

The Aberdeenshire Sheltered Housing Tenants Forum was formed in 2012 and between 2012 and 2020 met quarterly each year, with approximately 14 – 20 tenant representatives out of a possible 1700. The meetings took place in a face-to-face format.

Between 2020 and 2022, due to Covid-19, tenants switched to 'virtual' meetings using their own ICT equipment which was provided to them via the Connecting Scotland initiative. A new chair and vice chair of the Forum were voted into position in 2021, and since then the forum meetings have changed significantly with an adaptable and inclusive approach to widen ability for all to take part.

The approach between 2012 and 2021 was very “council led” – but particularly from 2021, there has been a huge shift to working in partnership. Norman Strachan, current SHTF chair, has stated to members “We are doing things **with** the council”.

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.

The SHTF was not initially a scrutiny group and would not at present consider itself a scrutiny group. However, this is because service scrutiny is at the heart of the forum principles since 2021.

The SHTF have taken action to

(1) Increase participation

The Forum ensured that minutes of all sub-group meetings were given to all schemes and made available by the notice boards.

(2) Create Branding

The SHTF created a branding logo so tenants can easily identify communications coming from them.

(3) Create Sub-groups for Service Review

Aberdeenshire's Sheltered Housing Service has been undertaking a service review which started in 2018 (but was delayed due to Covid-19). As part of this review, the SHTF created a Service Review Group which included sub-groups, ensuring tenant scrutiny at all levels of review.

The SHTF subgroups are:

- Staffing
- Finance
- Communications
- Environmental

These sub-groups meet, consider financial and performance data, and identify actions for improvement. This creates accountability to tenants from the service by addressing actions identified.

(4) Involve tenants in the strategic direction of Council Policy

Including tenants in changes and development related to council and wider government policies e.g. Place Standard.

The developments between 2021 to current time through the SHTF allows tenants to address concerns they have now rather than “save up” which can cause frustration. Tenants are now more confident to bring up operational issues, knowing action will be taken (as demonstrated in the following section), and is not just tokenism.

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.

(1) Increase Participation

The drive for increase in participation has led to an increase in representatives attending forum meetings. SHTF meetings take place quarterly, but scheme-to-scheme meetings have increased.

(2) Create Branding

The SHTF worked with Aberdeenshire Council’s Creative Design Team to create the below logo



(3) Create Sub-groups for Service Review

a. Staffing - Actions

- i. Notice Boards put out with photos and contact details of teams, who they are, what they do

- ii. Reviewed Job Profiles, and created a simplified version for tenants to understand what the SHO vs HO's do
- b. Finance - Actions
 - i. During the Cost of Living Crisis, the group looked at heating and lighting usage in communal areas and made recommendations to the service on what changes could be made to reduce the cost of energy for the buildings (which could in turn reduce costs for tenants). Developed suggestions were referred to the Environmental sub-group.
 - ii. Applying for Grant Funding for goods that the Schemes may want that the service do not provide e.g. Greenhouses
 - iii. SmartTVs in the Communal Lounges were grant funded and procured. Tenants were instrumental in progressing through lived experience.
 - 1. Increased social interaction, meaningful activity through using scheme to scheme video call meetings.
- c. Communications – Actions:
 - i. Creation of area based newsletters rather than Aberdeenshire-wide.
 - ii. Use of Smart TV's to encourage more tenants to join the SHTF by allowing for the SHTF to be hosted at all Schemes and Allowing for a wider reach on location (consideration to variations of tenants' accessibility, mobility, and transportation challenges) (mobility, transportation)
 - iii. Environmental impacts and budget savings due to less travel for tenants
 - iv. Change in approach of welfare calls based on feedback from tenants – from old style morning check ins (intercoms) (I'll stay in until my call) to ability to text, use mobiles, etc; Voicemail set up for leaving a message if they wish to confirm all is okay
- d. Environmental
 - i. Currently focusing on biodiversity and how tenants and the service can make improvements in reaction to cost of living

(4) Involve tenants in the strategic direction of Council Policy

- a. The Chair of the Forum attended meetings with the Sheltered Housing Service and assisted in the design of the Place Survey. The Place Survey used the Place Standard (a tool developed by the NHS and Scottish Government) to consider (if each scheme is in the right place with the right support). Changes to the survey were made using the 14 Place Standard Principles and simplified based on tenant feedback.
- b. The Chair has been able to discuss, alongside the Council, the tools being used and how they work from a tenant perspective, giving credibility to the process.
- c. Using strategic approaches such as place planning and lived experience allows the SHTF to give ideas of what has worked in the past and allow learning from value in age and experience while capturing while contributions are meaningful to the population.
- d. The SHTF allows for the tenants to become “a community within a community” and highlight those significant links. For example, with local butchers and libraries, who often show appreciation for the support that the local schemes give through the year by donations during holidays.

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.

The SHTF have shown what true empowerment through scrutiny can do. They take the issues of today and work with their landlord to create lasting solutions. They have created a rolling program of scrutiny which allows for flexibility and constant improvement.

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 | Tracy Noles |
| Signature | <i>T Noles</i> |
| Date | 11.7.24 |

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.