



TIS Member Resource

A fact sheet for social housing tenants on the essentials of tenant participation

Overview

This factsheet is designed to provide social housing tenants with a basic overview of tenant participation – what it is, why it matters, and what your rights to participate are.

If you would like further support from TIS on the essentials of tenant participation, please contact our office at:

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1. What is tenant participation?

Tenant participation is about giving people a say in decisions about your home and community. It helps improve services, strengthen communities, and ensures your social landlord is listening to the views of tenants - **working with you** to improve the housing services that you receive.

It works best **when tenants from all backgrounds and walks of life are represented** and have opportunities to take an active role in shaping housing services that reflect their needs and priorities.

You do not need to be an expert to take part – just sharing your opinions and experiences can make a real difference. Getting involved in tenant participation can be as simple as filling in a survey, joining a tenants' group, or giving feedback about what matters to you.

2. Did you know tenant participation is a legal right?

The introduction of the **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** made it a legal requirement for social landlords in Scotland to actively develop and support tenant participation. This means **all Councils (Local Authorities) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)**, such as housing associations and housing co-operatives, **must work with tenants and involve them when making decisions** about their homes and communities.

The law also says every social landlord must have a Tenant Participation Strategy in place. This is a plan that explains how social landlords will listen to tenants, share information, what opportunities are available for tenants to get involved, how the feedback from tenants will be used, and what support will be provided for tenants to participate.

3. What is the Scottish Social Housing Charter?

The [Scottish Social Housing Charter \(the Charter\)](#) was introduced by the Scottish Government as part of the work to put the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 into action. It sets out the **standards that all social landlords legally have to work towards** when delivering services to tenants. The Charter helps make sure that tenants are:

- Treated fairly and with respect.
- Given clear and useful information.
- Included in decisions that affect their homes and communities.

The Charter covers things like:

- The condition and safety of your home
- How repairs and maintenance are managed
- How your landlord communicates with you
- How tenants are involved in shaping services
- Whether people feel safe and welcome in their communities

→ You can get a copy of the Charter by visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/8eda6hzu>

4. What is the Annual Return on the Charter?

Every year, social landlords must send a report called the [Annual Return on the Charter \(ARC\)](#) to the **Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)**. The SHR regulates to protect the interests of tenants, and you can find out more about the work that they do on their website at: www.housingregulator.gov.scot

The ARC report **shows how well social landlords are meeting the Charter standards** – such as, repairs, communication, and tenant involvement. If a social landlord does not meet the standards, the SHR can step in and make sure they improve.

→ You can check out your social landlord's performance against the Charter by visiting the SHR's online Landlord Directory at: <https://tinyurl.com/ppbtemrj>

5. How to get involved

If you want to have a say in decisions that impact your home and community - getting involved in tenant participation is a great way to do it. **Contact your social landlord directly** to learn about the tenant participation and engagement opportunities they offer.