

Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation



Respondent's information form

Please make sure you return this form with your response so that we can handle your response properly.

1. Name/organisation

Name of organisation (if any)

Govan 'C' Tenants & Residents Association

Title Mr Ms Mrs Miss Dr *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Hine (Secretary)

Forename

Greg

2. Postal address

47 Burndyke Square

Glasgow

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Phone 07832957755

Email greg@osevon.com

3. Permissions – I am responding as...

Individual

/ Group/organisation

Please tick as appropriate

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library or on the Scottish Government website or both)?

Please tick your choice Yes No

- (b) If yes, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library or on the Scottish Government website or both).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick your choice Yes No

- (d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we need your permission to do so. Are you happy for the Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick your choice

Yes

No

Consultation questions

We listened to what you told us at the roadshow events, on our website, and in your responses to the discussion paper, and we think we have identified all the important areas that the Charter should cover.

1. Have we missed out any areas that the Charter should cover ? If so, please tell us.

Separate outcome or statement defining the document and outcomes as being subject to equality and diversity laws.

The customer/landlord relationship

We want the outcomes in this section to cover the important aspects of the customer/landlord relationship. We would like to know if you agree with the outcomes in the draft charter, and if the wording is clear and understandable.

2a. Do you agree with the ‘participation’ outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

We feel every service user should have the opportunity to give their opinions and to have those opinions recorded.

This should take the form of the use of the word ‘resident’ in this section as well as ‘other’ users.

Also participation should be at a level suitable to the service user and landlords should act with this in mind so a statement to the effect that:

- ‘Landlords when engaging should where possible accommodate and consider the requirements of ALL customers. Engagement should take place in a timely fashion and landlords should be prepared to be measured on this style of engagement as one of their ‘success’ criteria.

2b. Is the 'participation' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Bullet point 3 should be changed from 'have opportunities...' to 'can' or 'are'

3a. Do you agree with the 'communication and customer services' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

We believe that landlords should be doing all this already in accordance with current practice and the Housing Scotland Act

3b. Is the 'communication and customer services' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Quality of housing and the environment

We want the outcomes in this section to cover the important aspects of the quality of housing and the environment. We would like to know if you agree with the outcomes in the draft charter, and if the wording is clear and understandable.

4a. Do you agree with the 'housing quality' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Modify to include: 'A nationally recognised letting standard should be set, and where appropriate locally agreed standards may be applied.'

Add an extra bullet point:

- 'Where a locally agreed standard is proposed, the landlord, customers and representative groups are engaged in the defining of those standards to allow for a better understanding.'

4b. Is the 'housing quality' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Also believe there should be more definition here by specifying 'good state of repair' for example

See above

5a. Do you agree with the 'repairs, maintenance and improvements' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

We believe these are easily attainable and should already be being done by landlords.

Title should have '& communal repairs' added

Text should read 'Tenants & Other customers'

Bullet point 1 should be amended to read 'receive repair, maintenance and improvement services that are responsive to their needs and priorities and meet NATIONALLY agreed minimum standards and locally agreed standards where these have been put in place'

Add an extra bullet point:

- 'Where a locally agreed standard is proposed, the landlord, customers and representative groups are engaged in the defining of those standards to allow for a better understanding.'

Bullet point 5 should read 'are involved in and kept informed about planned improvements to their home and communal or shared areas.'

Bullet point should be added due to the inclusion of Tenants & other customers and removed from section 'other customers' page 23

- 'participate in a timely manner where planned improvements are to be carried out'

5b. Is the 'repairs, maintenance and improvements' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As above

6a. Do you agree with the 'estate management' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

We would like to see "Tenants are aware of their responsibilities" included in the section on tenancy conditions.

6b. Is the 'estate management' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Access to housing and support

We want the outcomes in this section to cover the important aspects of access to housing and support. We would like to know if you agree with the outcomes in the draft charter, and if the wording is clear and understandable.

7a. Do you agree with the 'housing options' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Add two further outcome bullet points:

- 'The landlord will attempt to accommodate the property preferences of the customer where reasonably possible'
- 'Where the preferences are either unavailable, unreasonable or likely to cause substantial delay then the landlord will inform the customer of these facts and advise them of their options'

7b. Is the 'housing options' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As above

8a. Do you agree with the 'access to social housing' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

The committee feels that there should be key NATIONAL allocations guidelines providing minimum standards and protocol, which can then be enhanced by local variations.

This is a fairer system when impacts such as the 2012 homelessness act apply to all landlords.

Extra bullet point requested:

- 'Landlords will provide clear and succinct information to the regulator, tenants and residents on their allocations on a regular basis to be determined Nationally.'

8b. Is the 'access to social housing' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

See above

9a. Do you agree with the 'homeless people' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

In the main, add the following bullet points:

- 'Where the preferences are either unavailable, unreasonable or likely to cause substantial delay then the landlord will inform the customer of these facts and advise them of their options'
- 'The landlord where possible should agree a timescale and work schedule to meet the reasonable requirements of the customer where a suitable property can be modified or adapted'
- 'The landlord will consider the environment as a whole when considering a 'homeless' placement in accordance with the Housing Scotland Act'
- Landlords will provide clear and succinct information to the regulator, tenants and residents on their homeless allocations on a regular basis to be determined Nationally.'

9b. Is the 'homeless people' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As section a

10a. Do you agree with the 'tenancy sustainment' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

The emphasis on multi-agency co-operation and information sharing is particularly important.

Extra bullet point requested:

- 'Landlords will provide clear and succinct information to the regulator, tenants and residents on tenancy sustainment on a regular basis to be determined Nationally.'

10b. Is the 'tenancy sustainment' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

11a. Do you agree with the ‘anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes’ outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Yes, the committee also required the addition of a bullet point.

- ‘Landlords should agree Anti-social behaviour, nuisance and tenancy dispute Guidelines and Policy documents with the tenants AND residents and review these on a regular basis.’

Bullet point 1 should read ‘Must be...’ instead of ‘are.....’ able to

Bullet point 2 should read ‘Must get clear.....’

Bullet point 6 should read ‘if causing nuisance or anti-social behaviour MUST get support to help them stop this and to keep their tenancy agreement where appropriate.’

Bullet point 7 should read ‘MUST be satisfied that landlords.....’

Bullet point 8 should read ‘MUST be involved in reviewing and monitoring.....’

New bullet point:

- Landlords will provide clear and succinct information to the regulator, tenants and residents on Anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes on a regular basis to be determined Nationally.’

11b. Is the ‘anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes’ outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As above

Getting good value from rents and service charges

We want the outcomes in this section to cover the important aspects of getting good value from rents and service charges. We would like to know if you agree with the outcomes in the draft charter, and if the wording is clear and understandable.

12a. Do you agree with the 'value for money' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

This could form part of the Participation section (page 16)

In addition 2nd bullet point changes to 'ARE involved in monitoring.....for money'

New bullet after point 1.

- 'Landlords will involve tenants and customers in decisions regarding value for money and services prior to finalisation and in a timely fashion'

12b. Is the 'value for money' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As above

13a. Do you agree with the 'rents and service charges' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Additional bullet points:

- 'Landlords must consider the affordability of housing within the local area of the property when making decisions on rent and service charges'
- 'Landlords must be able to evidence the rents and service charges by area and provide this information to their customers on a regular basis'
- 'Landlords should not increase or use rental income from other areas to provide 'subsidies' to other properties at the detriment of the former.'

13b. Is the 'rents and service charges' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

As before

14a. Do you agree with the 'transparency' outcome?

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Yes No

The committee also believes the addition of further bullet points are required:

- 'The threshold for reporting of 'expenditure publication is £500
- 'Printed information should be easily available to all customers who request it'
- 'Landlords will be prepared to evidence their involvement and methodology on a regular basis.'

14b. Is the 'transparency' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Needs more work, as above.

Other customers

We want the outcomes in this section to cover the important aspects of other customers. We would like to know if you agree with the outcomes in the draft charter, and if the wording is clear and understandable.

15a. Do you agree with the 'services for Gypsies/Travellers' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

Might need more thought

15b. Is the 'services for Gypsies/Travellers' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

Might need more work to protect both customer and landlord.

16a. Do you agree with the 'other customers' outcome?

Yes No

If yes, please use the box to provide any comments. If no, please tell us why.

We felt that a few changes were needed to the strength of the wording of this outcome:

New bullet points:

- 'Residents & other customers should be made aware of their responsibilities and services they receive'
- 'Where other customers receive services, they should be included in the processes and agreements involved and treated in the same way as the landlord would treat a tenant'

Bullet point 2 should read 'Must be able to easily get the information....'

Bullet point 3 should be moved into the amended Repairs/maintenance and improvements section, and changed to 'Must be able to participate where planned improvements are to be carried out.....'

Bullet point 4 should read 'Must be able to easily get involved in'

16b. Is the 'other customers' outcome clear and understandable?

Yes No

If no, please tell us why.

With the above note.

In conclusion

17. Do you think that a good landlord should be able to achieve these outcomes?

Yes No

Please explain your answer.

Experience and knowledge tells us that this data is or should be available to all landlords without any major difficulty or expenditure.

Where the requirement does not require empirical data such as involvement then again landlords should be able to meet these outcomes without substantial operational or financial impact.

18. Do you wish to add anything that is not covered by the questions above?

Given the scale of the charter and its importance to tenants, residents and any customer of a landlord, it would be naïve to consider this an over-long or over-complicated document.

Tenant Priorities research by the Scottish Government identified 10 main priorities of tenants & residents, and some but not all of these are included in the charter. Ideally the Government should make sure, where possible all priorities relating to housing and environment are touched upon within the Charter.

It would be possible to condense some of the outcomes within the sections yet still retain the quality required for a meaningful charter.

Key to the success would be the requirement for specific and quantitative National and Local guidelines which would work in conjunction with the measurement and monitoring carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Without this link there is the danger that legislation will fall short of the definition tenants and residents require.

We also believe that although equalities do run through the Charter a dedicated equalities outcome should be included.