

TENANT PARTICIPATION

020

MARCH 2019

✓ **MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**



Welcome to our 20th Edition

Tenants are always at the heart of housing policy in Scotland and continue to make a difference.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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editorial

A **anne Cook, Head of the Scottish Government social housing team, reflects on some of the housing highlights of the past year and what's in this edition.**

A key issue for the sector was the Scottish Housing Regulator's review of its regulatory framework which was carried out in consultation with landlords and tenants across the sector. The review has shaped the way the Regulator will work in future and more details can be found on pages 9-10.

During the year we retained our focus on supporting developments and improvements in tenant participation and scrutiny through the "Next Steps" Tenant Participation support programme which is being delivered on our behalf by the Tenants Information Service and the Tenant Participation Advisory service.

The programme is designed to help landlords and tenants review current practice, improve their understanding of tenant participation and scrutiny, consider how improvements can be made in relation to tenant participation and

scrutiny. We are pleased that we will be able to continue the programme next financial year which will enable more landlords to participate.

In November we hosted a visit from UK Government colleagues from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, who wanted to know more about our approach to Tenant Participation in Scotland and what lessons could be learned from us following the Grenfell tragedy. Our achievements in Scotland certainly gave them much food for thought.

At the end of last year we said a fond farewell to two long serving staff whose experience, knowledge and good humour will be greatly missed, not only by us but by many in the wider housing sector- read more about them on page 18.

In January we were delighted to welcome Cat McMeeken as our new Unit Head. In her first few months Cat has been busy meeting a wide range of our partners and has quickly become immersed in all things housing.

At the end of February we published a new practitioner guide on allocations and suspensions "Social Housing Allocations in Scotland – a practice guide" which was developed

by Craigforth Consulting and CIH Scotland. The guide was developed in close consultation with housing practitioners and specialist partners, ensuring that the guide reflects the experience of practitioners on the ground. The guide will support Local Authority and RSL landlords in reviewing their allocations policy and managing the allocation of their housing stock.

As we go to press the order extending Freedom of Information to Housing Associations has recently been laid in Parliament. This will extend FOI to Housing association tenants as well as Council tenants who are already covered by the provisions of FOI. Housing Associations in Scotland have proven track record as open and transparent organisations, and, as such, are in a strong position to implement the provisions of FOI successfully.

I do hope you find the newsletter of interest and enjoy this edition.

Anne Cook
Head of the Social Housing Services Team



foreword

I want the social housing sector to continue to provide the types of homes, services and support that enhance the lives of current and future tenants and their families. Social landlords are at the core of the communities in which they operate. They are ideally placed to connect with local people and groups and can encourage and provide opportunities for tenants and residents to make a difference.

I recently launched the Democratic Society report “Improving Democratic Engagement in the Housing Sector: Democracy starts at Home” and I was encouraged to read in the report that a key benefit of giving tenants and residents a clear voice is that this voice leads to better services and stronger, more confident communities. The research, commissioned by Wheatley Group and CIH Scotland, was aimed at gathering the very best examples of customer engagement from across the world to help shape the way forward.

Tenant participation/resident engagement is well developed in Scotland and is based on transparency, mutual respect, partnership and trust. Our legislation, regulatory system and the Scottish Social Housing

Charter all combine to ensure that social housing tenants get clear information on the services they receive and have the opportunity to get involved in their landlords’ decision-making.

Traditional forms of engaging with tenants and residents no longer suit everyone. Historically some people have been disconnected. Younger people in particular are harder to involve in committees and formal forums, but they still have a real interest in the services they receive. While digital exclusion remains a factor in disadvantaged communities, more people are increasingly online, and this presents real opportunities to do things in new and different ways and refocus on how we engage with people at a local level.

We are supporting landlords who need help in reviewing, improving and developing their current tenant participation and scrutiny arrangements by funding “Next Steps – Tenant participation support programme” and the next phase of this programme will be advertised in early summer of 2019.

True engagement is not just about solving problems but about working collaboratively with individuals,

groups and organisations to deliver positive change over time. We must build on our successes both locally and nationally and the Scottish Government will continue to work closely with tenants and landlords in developing housing policy and practice.

Our approach to tenant participation in Scotland is based on a partnership and is embedded into the culture of both social landlords and the Scottish Government – it is simply what we do and do well.

**Kevin Stewart
Minister for Local
Government, Housing and
Planning**

International engagement research launched, setting new benchmark across the UK



New international research examining how organisations can best engage and involve their customers and communities has been published by one of Scotland's leading housing groups.

The study – commissioned by Wheatley Group with support from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) – was carried out by The Democratic Society.

The first of its kind to be undertaken in the United Kingdom, the research draws on best practice from around the world – from Antwerp to Oldham; Oslo to Estonia; and Rio de Janeiro to Vienna.

The resulting report outlines fresh approaches, tools and techniques for how organisations across the UK, particularly the housing sector, can better engage with people in the communities they serve.

It suggests working together in new ways by:

- moving from consultation to co-creation;
- giving customers direct powers over budgets;
- creating new routes for conversations;
- bringing customers in to shape agendas, documents and conversations;
- implementing creative brainstorming and feedback sessions; and

- adopting apps and new technology.

Full findings from the report were launched at an event on 29 January 2019 with **Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning**, who welcomed the report.

He said: “The engagement and empowerment of tenants and residents in Scotland are at the heart of local and national housing policy. I was delighted to be asked by the Wheatley Group and The Democratic Society to contribute to the report which provides examples of innovative ways of engagement and participation which could be adopted further in Scotland. Housing providers are ideally placed to empower communities and through their close relationship with residents can help people build skills and support them to get involved in issues that are important to them.”

Martin Armstrong, Chief Executive at Wheatley Group, said: “Housing associations are at the very centre of neighbourhoods and close to the people they serve, making them uniquely placed to empower and galvanise communities. But as we look to the future through the lens of an increasingly digital world, there is a responsibility to review and renew how and with what purpose we engage people.

“Our organisational goal is to define and develop a new relationship with our customers, shifting the balance of power from executive command and control to decision-making by communities, families and individuals who are at the heart of our projects.

“This report sets a new benchmark – not just for Wheatley Group, but for organisations across the UK – and, hopefully, it will stimulate discussion and re-energise thinking on how they engage with people to create and support stronger, more resilient communities.”

Ashley Campbell, Policy and Practice Manager at CIH Scotland, said: “It was a real privilege to be able to work on this project with Wheatley Group staff and customers, learning from experts from across the globe. While there are a lot of good examples of customer engagement within the housing sector already, we know that we can and must do better.

“When it comes to what’s right for individuals, there is no one size fits all but this report presents a range of interesting and creative examples that we hope will help to shape the way that housing organisations work together with their customers.”

For more information on Wheatley Group visit:
www.wheatley-group.com

The research was commissioned in 2018 by Wheatley Group and conducted by The Democratic Society.

Full copies of the report available on request.

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Affordable Housing Building Programme

Good homes grow our communities, strengthen families and connect people and place. The Scottish Government believes everyone in Scotland has a right, not only to a roof over their head, but to a place to call home.

Since 2007 we have delivered more than 80,000 affordable homes, including over 54,500 homes for social rent, significantly increasing the supply of high-quality, energy efficient, affordable housing for the people of Scotland.

We know that access to these homes is vital to economic growth, support and create jobs, strengthen communities and tackle inequalities. That is why over this Parliament we have committed to the single biggest investment in, and delivery of, affordable housing since devolution – we are investing over £3 billion to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes, 35,000 of which will be for social rent.

In the year to September 2018 our affordable homes completions rose by 21% to over 8,500 homes, and affordable housing approvals have increased by 9% to over 11,500 homes – the third consecutive annual increase. By continuing our close working with local authorities, registered social landlords, and other partners we remain on track to meet our ambitious 50,000 affordable homes' target.

But we must also look to the future and in this year's Programme for Government we committed to beginning work on a vision for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040, and the options and choices to get there. Between September and November 2018 we engaged with tenants, local government, businesses, the third sector, and housing associations to gather initial views. There will be a second round of engagement later this year and we encourage tenants to continue to provide their thoughts and ideas then. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-beyond-2021/>.

Ultimately, our ongoing goal is to deliver more of the right homes in the right places to meet the housing needs and aspirations of the people of Scotland. We want this to be a lasting legacy that is not just about new homes but is also about making the best use of our existing buildings too. We look forward to working further with tenants on this important agenda.

For more information please contact Gareth.Lewis@gov.scot



Anderston Phase 5, Glasgow, Sanctuary Housing Scotland



Bonnyrigg, Midlothian, Melville Housing Association

Housing Beyond 2021



Keith Fernie from the Scottish Government addresses delegates at the TPAS conference in Aviemore 2018

On 4 September 2018, the First Minister announced the Programme for Government for the next 12 months and, as part of that, the Scottish Government has committed to beginning work on a vision for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there.

They have been engaging with housing stakeholders to identify some themes to explore further, as well as seeking views on what might be part of a vision for 2040 – see Housing Beyond 2021 Discussion Paper at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-beyond-2021/>

Following the Housing Beyond 2021 Event on the 25th September, the first wave of stakeholder engagement took place, and this included a discussion with both tenants and housing officers at the TPAS conference on 17 November 2018. This provided

an opportunity for the attendees to explore the big challenges facing organisations and people in delivering appropriate housing in the future and how the housing system needs to change to achieve this. The discussion output will form part of the feedback gathered from a very broad range of other stakeholders, which will in turn be used to inform the range of options for Scottish Ministers to consider.

The Scottish Government are now processing the wealth of material generated in response to the stakeholder engagement. This will

help frame proposals for a second round of engagement in 2019.

The Scottish Government are very grateful to everyone who contributed to date as part of the first wave of engagement, and those who participated in the Housing Beyond 2021 discussion in Aviemore on 17 November 2018 as part of the TPAS conference.

For more information contact HousingBeyond2021@gov.scot

SHR Framework

New social housing Regulatory Framework goes live in April



Our statutory objective

To safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, people who are homeless, factored owners and Gypsy/Travellers.

Our functions

To monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) in relation to social landlords' performance of housing activities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) financial well-being and standards of governance.

Consulting on a new approach

Towards the end of last year the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) consulted on its proposed new Regulatory Framework for social housing in Scotland. The Framework sets out how SHR regulates both registered social landlords (RSLs) and the housing and homelessness services provided by local authorities.

SHR had wide-ranging discussions during the consultation. It held a series of events with tenants, landlords, and organisations

who work with people who are homeless and other service users. This included ten tenant events organised by TPAS and TIS.

SHR had 100 written responses to its proposals, including feedback from tenant networks and groups and from those who work with tenants.

SHR's work

The vast majority of people and organisations that responded support the principles that underpin the approach to regulation SHR proposed.

There are four broad ways SHR carries out its work with both local authorities and RSLs:

- gathering and publishing data in ways that tenants and others can use;
- getting assurance from landlords;
- taking action where it needs to; and
- 'thematic' work, where it looks in depth at specific areas of a group of landlords' work

Tenant voice

SHR promotes a strong tenant voice, and this will remain at the centre of the new Framework. It is important that landlords involve tenants and other service users in the scrutiny of their performance and in discussions about affordability and what they get for their rent.

SHR empowers tenants and others by publishing landlord performance information in accessible and useful ways, to enable them to ask questions and hold their landlords to account. SHR gives tenants an effective way to bring to it significant performance failures by their landlord.

Landlord self-assurance

The concept of 'landlord self-assurance' is central to the new Framework. This means landlords assuring themselves, their tenants and SHR. Each landlord is responsible for delivering good outcomes and services for its tenants and service users. Landlords need to be self-aware, open and honest about their performance and identify, and drive improvement.

One major new concept in the Framework is that all landlords must prepare and publish an *Annual Assurance Statement* to confirm to their tenants and to SHR that they are meeting regulatory requirements. The Statements support openness and a culture of continuous assurance and improvement.

The Statements will influence how SHR will engage with each landlord. SHR will consider carefully, firstly whether it needs to engage with a landlord that discloses any areas of non-compliance, and secondly what the most proportionate engagement will be.

SHR may ask some landlords to give it more assurance around how they are tackling areas of more significant non-compliance. And it will engage more directly with landlords where there is serious non-compliance that presents a risk to tenants' interests.

Engagement plans

Transparency also features prominently in the new Framework. SHR will make its regulatory view of each landlord readily available to tenants, other service users and landlords. To do this it will publish an *engagement plan* for every landlord. This will replace its current high, medium or low engagement level for each RSL and its current regulation plans.

The new engagement plan will focus on SHR's judgement on each landlord's compliance with the Standards and regulatory requirements. Each engagement plan will set out:

- the information SHR requires from the landlord;
- any further work SHR is doing with it;
- and why.

SHR has a broader role with RSLs than local authorities. So for RSLs, SHR will publish a new regulatory status. Each RSLs plan will have a status of *compliant*, *working towards compliance* or *statutory action*.

Tenant redress

Tenant and service user redress continues to play an important part in the new Framework. SHR requires each social landlord to:

- make information on reporting significant performance failures, including its leaflet, available to its tenants;
- provide tenants and other service users with the information they need to exercise their right to complain and seek redress, and respond to tenants within the timescale outlined in its service standards; and
- ensure it has effective arrangements to learn from complaints and from other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman guidance.

The new Regulatory Framework is available the SHR's website: <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>



A chat with the Chair of the North of Scotland Regional Network of Registered Tenant Organisations



1. Who are you?

I'm Bill Chapman, Chair of the North of Scotland Regional Network, or as we call it Region 1.

2. Where do you live?

I live in Aboyne, a wee village about 30 miles west of Aberdeen and 15 miles from Ballater. Most people will recognise Ballater as the village that took the brunt of Storm Frank back in December 2015 after the River Dee burst its banks.

3. What are you involved in both locally and nationally?

On a local level, I am Chairman of the Osprey Housing Group, which incorporates Osprey Housing, Osprey Housing (Moray) and Osprey Initiatives.

I'm also involved in NETRALT, a local initiative to bring tenants, residents and landlords together in the North East of Scotland. NETRALT does an amazing job and I'm gutted I cannot devote more time helping out.

Nationally, there is the Regional Network and within this I co-ordinate the SHR Liaison Group. Until recently I was also on the Board of TPAS.

4. What do you like about being involved with the Regional Networks?

The Regional Networks are an excellent forum to influence housing policy and to put tenant and residents perspectives into the work that we do. We have achieved much in

the relatively short time we have been established. Today we have representatives on the Joint Housing Policy Delivery Group; the Age, Home and Community Advisory Group; the Housing and Social Security Group and the Scottish Housing Regulator Liaison Group. In addition to this, we continually engage with Ministers on matters that are important to us, such as the Housing Revenue Account. It is fair to say that we are now a respected voice within the housing sector.

5. What do you like to get up to in your spare time?

Spare time? Any time I have spare I like to spend with my wife, children and especially my grandchildren. I also like to relax by listening to all kinds of classical music – not the family's favourite genre. In the summer, I like to watch my wife transform the garden with colour. I'm a disaster in the garden so I'm best sitting on the lounge, admiring the views and taking in the sun!

6. What do you think the networks have achieved in their first year of the new structure?

There is a better appreciation of what the networks do and all Regional Network committee members have, for example, an opportunity to attend the Chairs and Secretaries meetings and input their views accordingly. There are also opportunities for members to attend the meeting with the Housing Minister, and I know that all members of the SHR liaison group attend the pre-meeting with two of them going on to the meeting proper.

The training for members will shortly start which will be good for the networks.

We have to remember that this is early days for the restructured networks and even allowing for teething problems, a lot has still been achieved. Of course none of this would be possible without

the help of the Tenant Participation Team at the Scottish Government, who facilitate the groups, meetings etc. with their knowledge, professionalism and good humour.

Background

Bill has been the Chair of the North of Scotland Regional Network for its first year under the newly created geographical structure, which seen the networks being reduced to four across Scotland from the previous nine.

The networks are made up of council and housing association tenant and resident groups and they work to influence the development of national housing policy, ensuring tenants and resident views are reflected in policy discussions. They work in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Achievements include:

- Developing effective engagement with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and meeting with SHR on a regular basis to discuss social housing regulation.
- Challenging the Scottish Government to produce more robust guidance on the operation of Local Authority Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) to ensure Council tenant rent money is used correctly.
- Participating alongside professional organisations in Scottish Government working groups ensuring that tenants and interests are at the heart of the policy process.
- Sharing ideas and best practice to improve services and participation locally.

For more information contact tpadminsupport@gov.scot



Homelessness – after HARSAG

Having somewhere to call home is a basic human right and one of the most important factors in any person’s quality of life.

This is central to the government’s drive for a fairer and more prosperous Scotland and at the core of its Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan, published at the end of 2018 in partnership with COSLA.

Scotland already has some of the strongest rights in the world for anyone experiencing homelessness. Anyone found to be homeless is legally entitled to housing and most people are provided with settled, permanent accommodation.

In the last decade, the number of people applying to be classed as homeless has fallen by around 39%. It’s a testament to the positive work which focuses on preventing the causes of homelessness. Despite this, many people still face barriers

to support when faced with the blight of homelessness and the government is determined to tackle this. In September 2017, the First Minister set up the short life Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to recommend actions to eradicate rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness for good.

Last June, the Action Group delivered 70 recommendations for systematic change at national and local level. Ministers accepted these, now translated into the Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan. This sets out the steps required to prevent homelessness and ensure everyone has a safe and settled home.

Scottish Government Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart said:

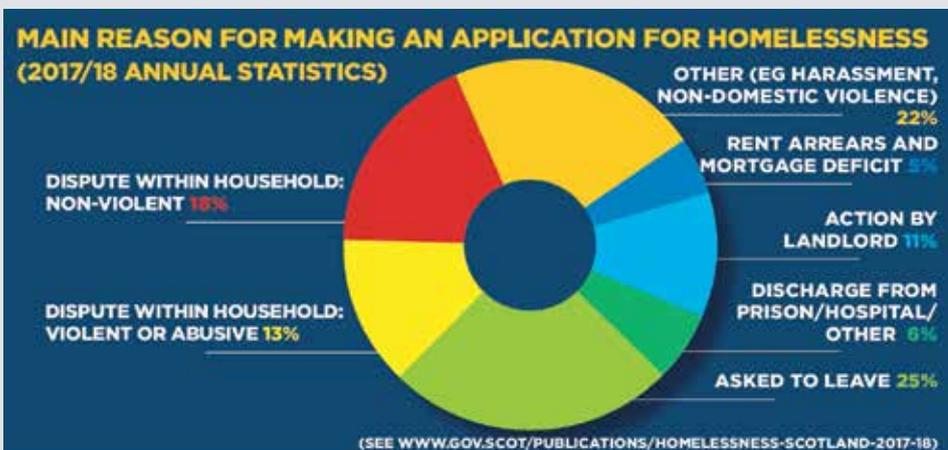
“In addition to homelessness and housing services, we need

partners across services, including health, education, social work and justice to recognise and act when the people they work with are at risk of homelessness. Our shared ambition is bold and clear: we must create the environment for significant and lasting change. That means working across and outside traditional boundaries and developing collaborative approaches. We can and must end homelessness together.”

Work is already underway across the 32 local authorities, who have prepared draft plans for a transition to a rapid rehousing approach. This will see those experiencing homelessness supported into settled accommodation.

Action Plan implementation is overseen by the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, co-chaired by the Scottish Government and COSLA. To drive the work forward, the Scottish Government has created a five-year £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund, with £23.5 million from this and the health portfolio already committed to rapid rehousing and Housing First, for people with more complex needs.

You can read more about HARSAG at <https://www.gov.scot/groups/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group/>



Tenant Engagement in the Private Sector: Welso Property Management



Tenant engagement is unusual in the private rented sector. But Welso Property Management, the private sector subsidiary of registered social landlord Welso Housing Management, is paving the way for better tenant engagement in the sector in Scotland through the continued success of its Tenant Participation Group.

Welso Property Management mirrors, on a smaller scale and without formal regulation, the requirements its parent company, Welso Housing Management, set out in its tenant participation strategy. The group, which meets quarterly, has exciting plans to increase its level of tenant participation through the addition of an online private tenants' forum.

Welso Property Management's Tenant Participation Group, which was developed by Welso Housing Management's Head of Private Rented Services Ashley Millan in early 2017, has been working on private sector housing policy,

property condition and service and tenant scrutiny. As the group has evolved into a community anchor, sharing best practice and working on improving service within the sector. The group members are keen to see the initiative grow and have agreed that an online forum would allow them to reach private renters across the country.

It is expected that the new online forum will launch in the summer of 2019. Initially open to tenants of Welso Property Management and their clients, the forum will, once established, be open to anyone interested in private renting.

Ashley Milan, Head of Private Rented Services said:

"We are delighted with the work that our Tenant Participation Group is doing and fully support the move to provide an online forum – in addition to our regular meetings. The private rented sector is now tenure of choice, with people enjoying, and

benefitting from the advantages renting can bring. It is expected that one in four households will rent privately in Britain by 2021. It is therefore vital that we continue to meet the needs and demands of this growing tenure. As tenants, including families with children, look to settle into private rented accommodation for the longer term, it is expected that more private tenants will look to influence and shape the service they receive from their landlord – and we are pleased to be leading the way in this particular area".

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The Scottish Household Survey

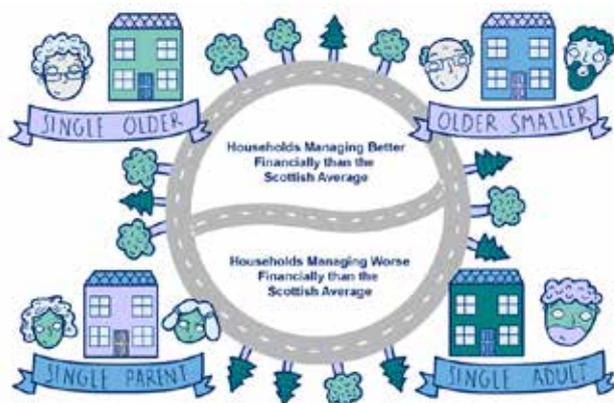


The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) has been asked of a sample of people in Scotland since in 1999. The SHS produces results for the whole of Scotland and every local authority every year. The SHS social interview is carried out face to face by professional interviewers working for Ipsos Mori using computer tablets to record answers. In some cases, the interviewers are followed by professional surveyors who conduct an inspection of the dwelling.

The surveys asks about if people think their area is a good place to live in.



The survey shows that not all households manage the same.



Why should households living in social rented homes complete the survey?

It is important to complete because the results of the SHS are essential in helping the Scottish Government to develop an understanding of households living in social rented homes, to help ensure that government policies and legislation meet the needs of those living in this sector. Key information collected includes information on the characteristics and composition of households,

including on health, disability, housing adaptations and support, along with information on people's housing satisfaction and housing aspirations.

Information from the physical survey component of the SHS is important as this allows the monitoring of housing quality in terms of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), in which social landlords must make sure that their tenants' homes are in a good state of repair, energy efficient, healthy, safe and secure.

Falling response rates from social rented tenants

The SHS response rate has fallen from 68% in 1999 to 64% in 2017. Those living in different tenures of housing have differing response rates.

Currently, there are less renters in the first issue sample.

Also, less tenants of social housing are agreeing to have a surveyor assess their dwelling. This has fallen from over 90% to 78% in 5 years.

	2012	2017
Rent – LA	92.4%	79.1%
Rent – HA, Co-op	90.4%	77.9%

Please do take part in the survey if you are selected. It is important for all voices to be heard in Scotland.

SHS Project Team

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Mailing List

If you wish to be added to the e-mail mailing list to be kept informed of details of SHS developments, you should register your interest in 'Population and Household Surveys' and/or the Scottish Household Survey sub-topic on the ScotStat Register <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/Intro>

CIH Excellence in Scrutiny Award



Ann Marie Stanley, Scottish Government, presents tenants and residents of Maryhill Housing Association with the Excellence in Scrutiny Award

The CIH Excellence 2018 Awards Ceremony, held in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre in November, celebrated the fantastic work going on in housing across Scotland.

Maryhill Housing Association scooped the CIH Excellence in Scrutiny Award sponsored by the Scottish Government. Ann Marie Stanley, Tenant Participation Development Manager from the Scottish Government, presented the award, which recognised the association's achievements in developing scrutiny activities that deliver service improvements and good outcomes for their tenants.

Maryhill showed sustained and continually improving tenant scrutiny where outcomes for

tenants are being improved as a direct result. The award reflected its understanding of the need to ensure its work is examined impartially by its scrutiny panel.

The panel meets monthly and works collaboratively with staff from the association. It aims to deliver service improvements for all customers in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter. In 2019, the panel focus its scrutiny activities on communications.

Commenting on the win, Chief Executive Bryony Willet said: **"Scrutiny is now a vital part of our service improvement processes. We believe that the best people to tell us how to improve our services are our customers. We thank our Service Improvement Panel,**

Tenants Service Improvement Group and residents' associations for the time they dedicate. We congratulate them on their success and the hard work that went into winning this important accolade."

The other finalists, pipped at the post, were Aberdeen Housing Review Group, Aberdeen City Council, How Your Rent is Spent, Housing Revenue Account Methodology, Dundee City Council, Tenant Scrutiny Group, East Lothian Council and Horizon Get RIGorous on Scrutiny, Horizon Housing Association. All worthy nominees, praised for their scrutiny work.

You can read more about the awards on the CIH website: <http://cih.org/excellenceawards>

Investing in young people at Queens Cross



The association held many free events during the summer holidays for local children

Providing opportunities to local young people has always been important to Queens Cross Housing Association.

And in the Year of Young People, 2018 saw the social landlord make a difference in more ways than ever.

Community Chest

The association, based in north-west Glasgow, launched its 'Queens Cross Community Chest' fund in January last year.

The fund gives grants of up to £150 to help improve the quality of life for young people under 25.

It was set up in response to findings in the association's latest tenants' survey, which showed that poverty

was still a real issue for many families living in the area.

According to the findings, 18% of tenants with children have had to put off buying children's shoes and 27% have had to say no to a hobby or sport for their children because of the cost.

"Our neighbourhoods are great places to live and work but as a housing provider we can also help address wider issues of poverty that still exist in too many of our households," said Queens Cross Chief Executive, Shona Stephen.

"We launched the Community Chest to help more people and families pursue their interests and take opportunities open to them."

Thirteen-year-old Tia Warren was one of the first to benefit, with the donation allowing her to buy sports equipment to pursue her Muay Thai hobby.

Tia's mum, Leanne Miller, spoke positively of the project. "I think this fund is a great idea – we could never have afforded the kit without it," she said.

"It's really opening up new opportunities for Tia to pursue something she otherwise might not have."

The grant has also funded other projects such as educational trips, college courses and clothing for job interviews.



The Queens Cross Community Chest fund was launched in January 2018

So far, the fund has successfully awarded 182 grants totalling nearly £15,000, with another £10,000 pledged for 2019.

Holiday programmes

Aside from the scheme, the association is involved heavily within the community, running weekly classes and activities for children and families throughout the year.

These included homework cafes, youth clubs and digital sessions which improve children's practical and social skills.

Queens Cross also sees the important need for events and activities to keep young people busy during holiday periods.

They run extensive Easter and summer programmes, providing free child events and trips, with healthy breakfast and lunches provided, for families who otherwise could not afford the costs.

Away from the community, the social landlord also provides opportunities to young people within the association.

In 2018, nine people under 26 have been employed by Queens Cross,



Bronny, left, at the Pride of Queens Cross awards in November

including two modern apprentices, two trade apprentices and three graduate trainees.

The association also employed two customer advisers and worked with local schools to offer short-term work placements.

Bronny's story

And one young person is now involved in decision-making at the very top, with association tenant Bronwyn Wyper the newest member of Queen Cross' Board.

After becoming homeless, the 22-year-old was supported by the association's youth homelessness service for a number of years.

She continued to be involved with Queen Cross' homelessness team, working closely with current residents and volunteering at community events.

She became a Young Inspection Volunteer with the Care Inspectorate, using her experience of receiving support to try and improve services for young people across Scotland.

Now appointed to the Board, she can bring a younger perspective to the role.



"We struggle to get diverse membership on our Board so Bronny will give us a real insight into the issues facing our young tenants which will be invaluable. She will be a real asset to us," said Shona.

"Bronny is exceptional as she has not let her childhood or becoming homeless hold her back. Using these experiences in a positive way to help others is truly inspiring."

The association didn't just invest in young people but also recognised them at their Pride of Queens Cross Awards in November.

Held every two years, the awards are designed to recognise outstanding achievements in the community, and Bronny was one of those honoured.

She received the 'Young People's Outstanding Service to the Community', with her efforts with the Care Inspectorate receiving particular praise from the judges.

Shona added: "It is important that we focus on what our youth have achieved in helping to build stronger, happier communities."

For more information visit <http://www.qcha.org.uk>

Retirements ...

2018 saw 2 members of Better Homes Division take very early retirement.



William Fleming

William Fleming, Head of Housing Services Policy Unit, retired in September 2018.

William had started in the civil service at Westminster in 1983 and served in the Cabinet Office when Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister. In 1997, he moved to the Scottish Executive and spent 9 years in Water and also worked in Finance.

He joined Housing in 2006. He served 6 Housing Ministers, built Firm Foundations, chartered a new course for social housing standards with the Social Housing Charter, corralled the policies in Homes Fit for the 21 Century in to the 2014 Act and the Private Tenancies (Scotland) Act 2016.

He was admired and respected by tenants in Scotland and the Regional Networks will certainly miss his wit and wisdom. He was supportive and encouraging, firm and fair when required and is greatly missed.

William and his wife are looking forward to renting a house in France and if that works out retire to France permanently.



Ann Marie Stanley

Ann Marie Stanley, Tenant Participation Manager, retired in November 2018. Ann Marie had worked in housing since she was 18, having started her career in Glasgow City Council before moving to Scottish Homes, Communities Scotland and latterly the Scottish Government. Ann Marie spent the last 15 years working in the Tenant Priorities Team and was very popular with the Tenants and Residents she worked with.

Peter Winnie, a member of Central Regional network, Coatbridge Federation and North Lanarkshire Federation said about Ann Marie:

'An excellent and efficient young lady who has been without compare in her efforts to assist the tenants and residents throughout Scotland without her Coatbridge Federation and North Lanarkshire Federation could not have developed as it has. Ann Marie's expert advice was invaluable. To say that you will be missed is an understatement and it is sad that you we will not be able to avail ourselves of our vast knowledge and lovely personality, but wish you all the best in your retirement.'

Ann Marie is looking forward to spending more time with her husband and holidaying anywhere sunny.

All their colleagues in the Scottish Government and all the tenants and landlords they worked with over the years wish both William and Ann Marie all the best for the future!

Dates for your diary



TIS Annual Conference 2019

Date: 14th-16th June 2019

Venue: Westerwood Hotel, Glasgow

Contact: 0141 248 1242

Website: www.tis.org.uk



TPAS Scotland Annual Conference & AGM 2019

Date: 4th, 5th and 6th December 2019

Venue: Fairmont Hotel, St Andrews

Contact: enquiries@tpasscotland.org.uk

Website: www.tpasscotland.org.uk

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