

TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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Chair Person/Office Bearers Signature:	

CASSILTOUN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

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Cassiltoun Housing Association is a recognised Scottish Charity SC035544

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1. Introduction and Background to the Strategy

1.1 Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to define CHA's approach to tenant consultation and participation. Cassiltoun Housing Association aims to provide excellent standards across our services that meet tenants' expectations and provide value for money. Active and meaningful tenant participation contributes towards us achieving this.

1.2 What is Tenant Participation?

Our Community Advisory Panel defined their role as: 'Tenant participation means you get your say, and this participation sits at the heart of all of our work.

The National Strategy for Tenant Participation, 'Partners in Participation (1999)' defines tenant participation as "-about tenants taking part in decision-making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies, housing conditions and housing and related services. It is a two way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of housing conditions and service."

1.3 Compliance with legislation:

This policy complies with:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001: Which requires all registered social landlords to involve their tenants in decision-making processes and recognises this as a tenant's right. It demonstrates our ongoing commitment to develop tenant participation and details an Action Plan to ensure this strategy is delivered, monitored, and reviewed.
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter (2022 Revision): In particular supporting the following Outcome Standards:1.Equalities, 2.Communication and 3.Participation, as well as supporting the other listed Outcome Standards by ensuring effective tenant participation and voice in decision making processes,
- The Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Legislation, ensuring all tenant participation is inclusive and non-discriminatory.

This Strategy is a living document that will evolve through ongoing review. It will set out the ways in which tenants can participate in the Association and the ways in which the Association will ensure opportunities to participate and influence decision making.

1.4 Legislative background:

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter helps to improve the quality and value of services provided by social landlords in Scotland. It sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was reviewed, most recently in 2022. The Charter helps to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide, and supports the Scottish Government's National Outcomes on communities, environment and human rights. The Charter does so by:

- stating clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords, helping them to hold landlords to account
- focusing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers
- providing the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on how well landlords are performing. This assessment enables the Regulator, social landlords, tenants and other customers to identify areas of strong performance and areas needing improvement.

The independent Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) (see 1.6) is responsible for monitoring, assessing and reporting on how well social landlords, achieve the Charter's outcomes.

2. The Reasons for this Strategy and the Benefits of Participation

2.1 CHA aims to provide excellent standards across our services that meet tenants' expectations and provide value for money. Active and meaningful tenant participation contributes towards us achieving this and ensure we meet standards set by the Scottish Housing Charter.

2.2 Specific benefits for tenants include:

- Increased control over living conditions.
- Services from Cassiltoun that are better targeted and offer greater satisfaction.
- Greater ability to influence the decisions and direction of the Association.
- More direct avenues to inform Cassiltoun of the issues that matter most to them and their areas

The opportunity to develop new skills and access training, which can be applied to other circumstances and to the benefit of communities.

2.3 Specific benefits for Cassiltoun include:

- Better community knowledge and experience, leading to more efficient and cost effective management.
- Services are targeted to needs.
- Cassiltoun is better equipped to respond to changing needs and circumstances.

2.4 Specific mutual benefits include:

- Increased communication between tenants, residents, and the Association

- The Association and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives, responsibilities, and limitations.

- Better links between the community and the Association

3. Aims: what we will do

3.1 CHA's guiding principle is that all tenants and residents should have the maximum opportunity that is practically possible to be directly involved in decision making. They should be consulted on and have opportunities to comment on decision-making within CHA. The specific aims below detail what CHA propose to achieve this.

We will:

- Promote and increase tenant awareness of their rights to participate and the ways they can get involved

- Seek to understand any real or perceived barriers that serve to discourage, limit and/or prevent involvement and respond to these

- Develop and expand avenues of participation, alongside tenants and residents

- Maximise and highlight the mutual benefits of participation

- Ensure that consultation and feedback methods reflect the diverse needs of our tenants including the use of multi-media techniques, cultural and community events and the internet.

- Ensure that we have tenant members as the largest single constituency on CHA's Board of Management.

- Encourage and support the establishment of tenant groups and/or issue-based groups

3.2 Current avenues for participation are set out below.

3.2.1 Share Members

Tenants, residents, and people or organisations who support the aims of the Association can become share members. Members can stand for election on our Board of Management, attend our Annual General Meeting, social events, and vote on who joins the Board.

3.2.2 Community Advisory Panel

Looking at all aspects of the organisation, this group makes sure that we're doing things right. The Panel defined their role as: "We're the eyes for you"

They chose a topic or topics and work through an agreed process to scrutinise it through methods including; reviewing policies, interviewing staff, seeking information from across the sector, going on walkabouts and visiting other sites to explore best practice.

From this process, the panel create a report detailing their process, what they scrutinised, what they learned, and recommendations for improvement. These recommendations go to the Board and Action Plan is created. The topics that the panel chose can be any aspect of service delivery and examples include Estate Management, Allocations, Repairs, Money Advice, or Tenant Participation. The panel meet every 6-10 weeks for approximately 2 hours.

3.2.3 Tenant Conference and other activities.
The Tenant Conference is an annual event, held in August. This is advertised to all tenants and offers the opportunity to meet staff, feed back on services and for the team to collect feedback from tenants. This is made accessible to all through the provision of children's activities and free food which meets a range of dietary requirements (including offering vegan and Halal options).

We also encourage feedback through other activities and events such as our Cassiltoun Connects visits to tenants, events such as rent consultations and Tenant Conference as well as by seeking feedback at our regular community programmes.

3.2.4 Youth Advisory Panel
For those aged 14-25 years old, this panel are involved in decision-making, co-designing projects, scrutinising a variety of materials and influencing the Association from a youth perspective. The panel have opportunities to volunteer, access training and development, visit a variety of locations for team-building and workshops and be celebrated via volunteer and youth achievement awards. The Panel decide together how often they meet: this is generally monthly.

3.2.5 Board of Management

This group make decisions on the overall direction of the Association and make sure that Cassiltoun stick to their vision, mission, and values. They meet every month or approximately 2 hours. There are also Board of Management sub committees which look at specific areas of business. ~~These include: Operations, Regeneration, Staffing and Audit and these meet quarterly (Operations and Regeneration) or when required by the business (Staffing and Audit).~~

3.2.6 Individually

Tenants are regularly encouraged to voice their ideas and opinions. This includes offering feedback through our Tenant Satisfaction Survey which offers in depth interviews with tenants to gain feedback on services as well as other surveys.

Tenants can also feedback via other channels such as visiting the office, phone, email, letter, social media and at events and activities.

3.2.7 Registered Tenant's Organisations (RTOs) and local residents and tenants groups

At present, we currently have no RTOs. However, where tenants would like to establish an RTO, we will offer guidance, training, and advice. We will also support with meeting rooms, access to office equipment, start-up grants, and with seeking further funding.

3.3 How we ensure tenants are aware of how to engage:
Opportunities for tenants to engage are advertised in a range of ways. These include via the website and social media, newsletters and the annual report as well as via mailouts and posters around the area. We also provide information in person at the office and at community events.

4. Objectives: how we will do this

Cassiltoun will achieve the above aims through implementing the below. We will:

- Ensure a cross-departmental approach whereby all staff members implement this strategy
- Have an introduction to tenant participation as part of every staff member's induction
- Have easy-to-read information detailing tenant's rights to participate and the current avenues for participation
- Ensure the above information is available readily, in both hard copy and as a digital resource
- Ensure communication on participation is clear, regular, diverse, and creative (see Section 5).
- Informally build relationships with tenants through engaging at various community events and at tenant events
- Increase incentives to engage with the Association through widening access to recreational and learning opportunities
- Continuously seek out and explore innovative strategies to encourage and enable tenant participation for everyone, in particular those who are traditionally under-represented.
- Seek out and respond to any training needs (tenants and staff) that would facilitate greater participation.

- Develop strong relationships with external agencies across the wider community, such as; schools, community groups, healthcare partners, and employment and voluntary organisations to achieve mutually beneficial support

- Promote examples of tenant participation which highlight the positive impact involvement has for tenants

- Review this strategy in consultation with tenants and residents

5. How we communicate with tenants

5.1 We strive to communicate in a way that is inclusive, diverse, and far-reaching. Based on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out in November 2025, most use letter for sources of information with website the next most favoured option. ~~Tenants have stated that their preferred method of receiving information is by newsletter.~~ Tenant's preferences, circumstances, and priorities may change over time and so this will be reviewed, as per the Action Plan.

5.2 We recognise that communication is a two-way process and so support a range of communication methods to provide information to, and to receive information from, our tenants and residents. These are detailed below:

• We offer ~~every household receives~~ an online Newsletter twice~~4 times~~ per year
~~• each tenant receives the Tenant's Handbook on their Sign-Up meeting~~
• sending letters
• leafleting and putting posters around the local community
• updating the website
• door-to-door engagement
• one-to-one meetings
• organising pop-up community events
• having stalls at wider community events
• organising open days
• utilising the telephone and mobile phones
• arranging public meetings
• supporting Close and Block Meetings
• directly informing our Tenant Groups
• regularly updating Facebook
• creating an 'open door' culture whereby tenants and residents are encouraged to share their ideas, opinions, and views at any time

6. How we consult

6.1 CHA recognises its obligation to consult tenants on a range of issues, to consider their views, and to implement them where possible. CHA utilises the 'National Standards for Community Engagement' to ensure high standards of engagement and consultation.

6.2 In particular we will consult all tenants on;

- Any issues affecting their tenancy
- Changes to rents and services
- The repairs service
- How we will deal with problems
- How we will communicate with tenants
- How tenants and residents can participate
- Any changes to our tenancy agreement.

6.3 We will conduct community consultations on specific issues, for example use of space in an area or parking solutions. We will use a variety of methods to consult our tenants, through:

- Utilising busy community and tenant events throughout the year for informal engagement to build relationships for further participation
- Extensive door-to-door engagement
- Organising community consultation events
- Consultation road shows
- Conducting surveys, including online surveys

7. How we give feedback

7.1 When tenants take part in a consultation, we will give them, where possible, the option to choose how to directly receive feedback, through for example, email, letter, or over the phone. We will also widely publicise results through, for example, our Newsletters, website, social media, letters, and information leaflets.

8. Equal Opportunities

8.1 We are committed to supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. This commitment is embraced by our board members and applies to all customers, employees and other stakeholders, such as contractors, volunteers and partners.

We believe that everyone is entitled to respect and dignity and we are committed to building an environment where our employees, customers, contractors and visitors are treated in this way.

We want to create a working environment which is characterised by respect and dignity and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying.

We will encourage and promote measures that ensure all tenants have equitable access to participating, as per the Equality Act 2010.

8.2 We will achieve this by:

- Using interpreters, signers, tapes and Braille if appropriate.
- Facilitating tenants' and residents' attendance at meetings by ensuring premises are accessible.
- Providing childcare or allowances for childcare.
- Ensuring meetings are appropriately timed so that the maximum number of people can attend.
- Meeting 'Out of Pocket' expenses where necessary.

8.3 We are aware that for some groups there are additional barriers to participation and are thus at risk of being under-represented across tenant participation. Such groups include:

- people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities
- lone parents
- people with additional support needs
- people with physical disabilities
- young people
- older people
- people in supported accommodationpeople experiencing mental ill health.

We will actively engage with these groups and with the services and agencies that represent and support them. We will listen and learn to ensure we are implementing best practice for encouraging and supporting participation from these groups.

9. Training

9.1 To achieve involvement that is meaningful and capable of influencing CHA's decisions, we will ensure that:

- Staff receive training in developing and supporting participation.
- A demonstrable commitment to tenant and resident involvement will be included in all person specifications when recruiting staff. For some posts, this will be an essential requirement e.g. ~~Area Managers,~~ Housing Officers.

- New staff will receive induction training on Cassiltoun's approach to tenant participation.

- Skills and knowledge in techniques for assisting and developing participation will be part of ongoing staff training and development

- Staff are adequately informed and supported when involved in consultation and dialogue with individuals and groups.

- We will consult with tenants on their training needs and facilitate these opportunities internally or through various external organisations, for example; Tenant Participation Advisory Service, Tenant Information Service, Chartered Institute of Housing, SFHA and SHARE.

10 Resources

10.1 We recognise that sufficient resources are required to implement the strategy effectively. Resources include; a member of staff dedicated to Tenant Participation, budgets for consultation exercises, training for staff and groups, staff time, supporting registered and unregistered groups, and initiating specific projects.

We also provide 'in kind' resources for all of our tenant-led groups by providing:

- Hire of meeting rooms
- Photocopying
-
- Provision of any special requirements
- Attendance at conferences
- 'Out of Pocket' expenses

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

11.1 Each year Cassiltoun will produce an Action Plan developed in discussion with tenants and residents. The Action Plan (Appendix A) will set targets and timescales and will be reviewed annually. This Strategy will be monitored and reviewed every three years to ensure that it continues to meet tenants' needs and conforms to best practice.

11.2 Cassiltoun will monitor the impact of this Strategy through recording the following:

- Representation of tenant group membership by area coverage, age, gender, ethnicity, and how this has changed over time

- Percentage of tenants responding to consultation

- Number of tenant group memberships and how this has changed over time

- How we have engaged with tenants

12. Involvement in the development of this strategy

12.1 This strategy was developed in consultation with tenants and residents through:

- Facilitating discussions with groups of tenants (such as the Community Advisory Panel) around what the strategy should contain.
- Issuing the strategy to our Tenant Scrutiny Panel for feedback
- Running workshops with the Youth Advisory Panel to enable detailed guidance on youth participation

13. Links to other policies and strategies

13.1 This strategy is part of a broader package of involving tenants and residents in the work of the Association. Other elements include;

- Our Equal Opportunities Policy
- Our Housing Strategy
- Our Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Our Community Development Strategy
- Our Volunteer Policy

14. Appendix A

Action Plan, 2026-2028

Proposed Action	Lead Officer(s)	Timescales
Develop annual Tenant Conference	Community Team/ all teams	Ongoing
Ensure Community Advisory and Youth	Community Team/ with support from all teams	Ongoing

Advisory Panels continue to be convened		
Increase the numbers and diversity of tenants in all our tenant groups	All	Ongoing
Update information on our website, leaflets, and in the Tenant's Handbook on tenants rights to participate and ways to participate across the Association	All	Ongoing
Promote participation to all new tenants through updating the Sign-Up pack	Housing Officers/Community Team	Ongoing.
For staff to refer tenants and residents to the Community Team to learn more about wider involvement.	All	Ongoing
Engage at Community and Tenant Events to promote participation both formally and informally	Community Team/Operations Team/	Ongoing
Consider staff training needs on Tenant Participation	SLT/ Community Development Manager	Through appraisal & induction process
Publicise any major changes that affect tenants	Housing team	Ongoing
Establish a programme of Estate Walkabouts attended by tenants	Housing Manager/Community Team	Summer 2027 onwards (quarterly)
Work together to respond to recurring tenants issues by supporting the development of issue based tenant groups	All	Ongoing
Monitor representation of tenant group membership by area coverage, age, gender, ethnicity	Corporate and Operations	Ongoing
Monitor number of tenants in tenant groups	Community team/ Corporate and Operations	Ongoing
Monitor how we have engaged with tenants	All	Ongoing

15 Appendix B
Guidance on youth participation

The Youth Advisory Panel, Cassiltoun Housing Association and Children's Neighbourhood Scotland worked alongside each other in 2021 to explore best practice in youth participation and involvement. From this, the Youth Advisory Panel produced the below guidance on youth participation and Cassiltoun agree to commit to this.

The Youth Advisory Panel state that for youth engagement, young people need respect, inclusion and trust and have detailed what this looks like in practice.

4.1 Respect Them By

- Creating a mutual agreement between Youth Advisory Panel members and reviewing it as new members attend
- Speaking to them, not at them
- Providing them with opportunities
- Genuinely listening to their ideas
- Working with them to build solutions to issues we've identified

4.2 Include them By

- Keeping them 'in the loop' by providing them with information and updates
- Valuing their opinion and acting on it as much as possible
- Involving them in conversations about wider community consultations/groups/decision-making

4.3 Build Trust With Them By

- Treating them as equals
- Taking things at their pace
- Encouraging them
- Letting them have a laugh and banter, too
- Helping them build their confidence
- Tailor their personal development opportunities to them as individuals

The Youth Advisory Panel state that if the above is followed alongside best practice for engagement, then young people will:

- Be actively engaged
- Give it their all
- Be committed and authentic
- Bring ideas
- Be enthusiastic
- Be respectfully critical