



**Ferguslie Park**  
Housing Association

# Tenant Participation Strategy

April 2021 – March 2023

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## **Tenant Participation - Policy Statement**

Ferguslie Park Housing Association (FPHA) recognises that tenants are central to the success of our organisation and this Tenant Participation Strategy sets out how we will engage with our tenants to ensure we are meeting our legal obligations, promoting engagement to improve service delivery and build a better community for the residents of Ferguslie Park.

## **Some General Background**

The Scottish Government introduced a legal requirement for housing providers to actively participate with tenants in 2001. This commitment was further enhanced when the government introduced additional requirements through the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter was introduced in 2012 and was updated in 2017 and was developed by tenants for tenants.

The Charter sets out the standards that all landlords in Scotland are expected to meet, and the levels of services tenants should expect from their landlord.

The aim of the Charter helps to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide, and supports the Scottish Government's long-term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland.

The Charter covers 16 key areas including participation and communication and provides the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to assess and report on all social landlords' performance.

The Charter Indicators that refer to Tenant Participation are:

## **Scottish Social Housing Charter - Equalities**

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- *every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.*

This describes what social landlords should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## **Scottish Social Housing Charter - Communication**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- *tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.*

This covers all aspects of landlords' communication with tenants and other customers.

## **Scottish Social Housing Charter - Participation**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- *tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.*

This describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation.

## **About FPHA**

Ferguslie Park Housing Association is an independent community-based housing association and we are governed by a volunteer management committee, many of whom are our customers.

We are a registered social landlord and a society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. We have been a registered Scottish Charity since 2003 and do not distribute our surpluses, but rather, we reinvest these for the benefit of our current and future customers.

We have one wholly-owned subsidiary, the New Tannahill Centre Ltd. It is also a registered Scottish Charity and is run by a committee of volunteers. Together we form The Ferguslie Group.

Some other important information about us:

- Our most recent tenant satisfaction survey shows that 90% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service we provide
- We currently provide services to 804 tenancies
- We generate approximately £3.6m from rental income;
- Our income is used to manage, maintain and invest in our properties and provide services such as common area grass cutting, bulk uplifts and welfare rights advice;
- We are run by a Board of Volunteers;
- We are a registered charity; and
- We employ 21 full time members of staff to manage and run the Association

## **Our Aims and Values**

Ferguslie Park Housing Association's vision is to play a key part in maintaining a vibrant community which shapes its own future. As an organisation, we have a short and simple vision statement that we think helps our focus to achieve the best we can in serving Ferguslie and that is "**To be at the heart of a vibrant, healthy, flourishing community**"

To ensure we stay focused on improving our services, we have developed a set of 5 strategic objectives. All the things we do are linked to these objectives.

We will also measure our success by setting targets against these objectives, ensuring that we deliver them efficiently and effectively. The five objectives are:

- 1. To provide excellent homes, services and a local environment to be proud of*
- 2. To support and enable local people to realise their full potential in a vibrant community*

3. *To inspire confidence and trust from our tenants, staff and partners*
4. *To develop a strong team of talented and committed people*
5. *To safeguard our assets, sound financial position, long-term affordability and sustainability*

To underpin these objectives and values is a series of principles which serve to reflect and reinforce the organisational culture of The Ferguslie Group. Those principles which relate to Tenant Participation are:

**Promoting customer and community engagement** - *we seek to embed customer engagement in our organisational culture, ensuring that we involve our tenants in all aspects of our organisation in a meaningful way. As a community-controlled housing association accountable to its tenants and members, it is vital that we continue to have tenants on our Board helping to shape our future and guiding us to make the right decisions.*

**Promoting collaboration and partnership working** – *as a relatively small housing association wishing to make a significant impact in our community, we are keen to work with others and keen to embed a collaborative culture. We know from past experience that pooling our efforts, as well as our resources, more often than not leads to more effective and sustainable solutions.*

### **What is Tenant Participation?**

The Scottish Government state that Tenant Participation 'gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive'. This is a view that Ferguslie Park Housing Associations fully supports.

Tenant Participation is vital to providers of social housing as it helps create better links to communities and widens the opportunity to work with others and make continued improvements. The Scottish Housing Regulator expects that Tenants are at the heart of their organisation.

At Ferguslie Park Housing Association we see effective Tenant Participations as way to:

- Give tenants the opportunity to feedback on key decisions that impact their lives and community;
- Ensure that there are different ways to provide feedback on any matter (phone call, surveys, letter, local groups);
- Working with established local groups to benefit the wider community;
- Act on feedback and make changes that tenants want to see happen, and
- Report to tenants on proposed changes to ensure that people understand the outcomes and how these have been implemented

If you want to get involved then we will provide training and support to help develop the skills and knowledge that you already have.

The Association's performance is monitored every year by looking at the Association's response to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and normally in October of each year all tenants are issued with an Annual Report on our performance.

The charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator require that the Association has arrangements in place to make sure tenants can scrutinise and help us improve our performance and influence decisions about our policies and services.

### **Benefits of Tenant Participation**

Tenants and tenant groups should have an opportunity to have a meaningful role in the decision-making process of Housing providers. It gives the tenants a platform to influence the services they receive and improve the community.

In order to achieve our vision "**To be at the heart of a vibrant, healthy, flourishing community**" we identified a need to connect better with the people who live in Ferguslie Park.

As part of our journey to make this better connection, in late 2019 the Association took part in a Scottish Government backed programme called 'Next Steps' which focussed on improved Tenant Participation.

The Government appointed an independent organisation called Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to work in partnership with us to help us to refine our approach to Tenant Participation. This strategy has been created after going through the process of the Next Steps programme and determining the outcomes we want within the community.

One of the key outcomes from this programme was for FPHA to develop a voluntary Scrutiny Group, made up of our tenants, who the community can trust to challenge, assist and develop our services to the people of Ferguslie Park.

There are a number of advantages for tenants who get involved with Tenant Participation and the Tenants Scrutiny Group we want to help create.

When working well, tenant participation delivers clear benefits for tenants, staff and Ferguslie Park Housing Association. The benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:

- Better service delivery and improved outcomes for tenants whilst ensuring value for money;
- Staff, tenants and local groups all working together for common goals with respect and understanding;
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions;
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood;
- Identifying actions for service and performance improvements and working together to implement these recommended improvements;
- opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills;
- better communication between staff and tenants;

- staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives and what can be achieved realistically;
- breaking down misunderstandings by helping to remove any mistrust between FPHA and our tenants;
- building mutual respect and understanding, and;
- helping our staff feel increased job satisfaction in developing and delivering services

The benefits of tenant participation and improvements in service delivery will not happen overnight and will evolve over time as effective information, communication and participation structures strengthen.

### **How You Can Get Involved – Tenant Scrutiny Group**

We use a number of ways to provide tenants with information, and we want to ensure that we are getting information to all tenants.

As we mentioned earlier, we aim to set up a Tenants Scrutiny Group, and we want you to have your say. We would expect the Scrutiny Group to help with many things such as;

- Give your views on Policies we are consulting on, such as Estate Management, Anti-social behaviour, or Proposed Rent increase
- Carry out a walkabout of your local area with FPHA staff
- Attend events being run locally, or external events as a representative of Ferguslie Park
- Complete and return any Satisfaction Surveys or Questionnaires about our services and be involved with improving services for the community
- Help us develop the newsletter to cover more than just FPHA, to include information and events from local community groups
- Give feedback from the community on who reads the newsletter, and what do tenants want to see appear in future editions
- Help us decide on a newsletter timetable and content specific for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
- Create a 'Seal of Approval' sign that will be used to show the newsletter and other policies are tenant approved
- Assist with developing our social media pages to reach a wider range of tenants
- Become the Tenant Representative for your street or area within Ferguslie Park

The Tenant Scrutiny Group is about giving you a voice and a platform to shape the services delivered to you and the wider community.

The Group would report to our Board with their findings of our service, recommended improvements and results after changes have been made.

FPHA Staff will support the Group in creating a report to the Board however a member of the Tenant Information Group can attend a Board meeting to discuss the challenges and outcomes of specific topics or pieces of work.

In addition to the Scrutiny Group, we will also:

- Publish our Annual Report
- Provide training and support to members of the Tenants Scrutiny Group;
- Update our Tenant Participation Strategy every two years;
- Provide resources to back the ethos of Tenant Participation;
- Conduct various surveys and questionnaires including a comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey;
- Conduct smaller surveys or questionnaires in various mediums including Social Media platforms;
- Give feedback to tenants on the results of the surveys/questionnaires;
- Consult with tenants on any proposed service or changes to tenancy conditions;
- Make information on current policies available on our website and in any formats that people require;
- Create a Tenants Handbook and make this available on our website;
- Effectively use our social media sites for the publication of information;
- Encourage tenants to become members of Ferguslie Park Housing Association;
- Provide training and development opportunities for tenants who are elected onto our Board, and;
- Arrange for tenant led estate inspections on a regular basis

### **Access to Participation for Everyone**

Ferguslie Park Housing Association will actively encourage equal access to tenant participation from all sections of the community. We will take steps to ensure no person is disadvantaged because of disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. When organising events, we will strive to ensure that:

- Meeting venues are barrier free;
- Information is available in different formats, such as large print, Braille, audio tape and community languages where required
- Meetings are held at times and locations that are convenient, or make use of internet-based meetings through Zoom/Microsoft Teams or similar platforms.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy**

The Association will:

- Provide progress reports on the Tenant Participation Strategy to our Board; and;
- Review the strategy as required, considering tenants aspirations regarding varying degrees of participation and to more accurately reflect change arising from the Tenant Participation process.