



clydebank housing association

2018 Version

A warm welcome to
Clydebank Housing Association's
Tenant Panel
Information Pack

Application
form to join
on page 9

A Warm Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in joining our Tenant Panel to help us improve our services.

In the following pages you will find information on the role of Tenant Panel and about Clydebank Housing Association. Hopefully it will answer any questions you may have but please don't hesitate to ask if anything is unclear. We welcome feedback for the continued improvement of our Tenant Panel experience.

It is hoped that you will find being on our Tenant Panel a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

A Glossary of some of the terms which may be used is available in Appendix 1.

Introduction to the Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Charter came into effect in April 2012 and was created as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. It highlights the importance of continuous improvement in the quality and value of housing and related services delivered to customers. It also places greater focus on service user involvement by encouraging tenants to change our services for the better.

All Registered Scottish Social Landlords (RSLs) like Clydebank Housing Association must meet the outcomes and standards contained within the Charter. We also have to meet the new reporting requirements which includes the submission of our performance results in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). From the information which we report in the ARC, the Scottish Housing Regulator publishes its Report to Tenants and in October of each year we publish our own Charter Customer Report comparing performance results with previous years and other housing providers.

Service user involvement and satisfaction are at the heart of the Charter and is also essential to the work we do at Clydebank Housing Association. We want tenants and other customers to find it easy to participate in and influence our decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. For this reason, we are working hard to increase our tenant involvement in the running of the Association's business including the services we deliver.

A Scottish Social Housing Charter Summary is available in Appendix 2.

Tenant Panel Aim

Our Panel will be set up to discuss and review the effectiveness of various aspects of CHA's service/ processes and advise us where they think improvements could be made – "a critical friend". The Panel may also carry out tests on data and information published by CHA.

The role of the Panel is tied to the Charter. It will give us feedback about how we are doing, help us deal with weaknesses, co-ordinate engagement activities (events, surveys, for example) and overall, act as a sounding board for the new services.

Panel Membership

Membership of our Tenant Panel will be a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 and we will provide a full induction to members and support and training to the Panel as required. The quorate for each meeting will be 3. Membership of the Panel is open to tenants of the Association and in order to maintain independence, no Management Committee members (even if a tenant) will serve on our Tenant Panel. The Committee will be very supportive of the role of the Panel however, and will take the views of the Panel into account when making decisions.

Panel Remits

The remit of our Scrutiny/Tenant Panel will be as follows: -

1. To attend training, provided by CHA as the Panel requires.
2. To act as a challenge to the Association.
3. To ensure that the Panel's views reflect our customers' priorities and concerns.
4. The group will decide when, where and how often to meet (this should be no fewer than 4 times per year) as well as what aspects of the service should be prioritised for review.
5. The original/current membership of the Panel will decide their approach to involving new people and when or how this might happen. The effectiveness of the agreed approach will be reviewed on a regular basis.
6. Full access to our services will be permitted e.g. like being involved in physical inspections, seeing how systems work in our office, mystery shopping, assurance testing, etc. The Panel will decide what they want to look at and how they wish to do this.
7. Produce a plan and list of priorities for the year ahead. Examples of priorities could be developing ways of involving more customers, tackling issues that are causing concern in the community e.g. dog fouling, maintaining standards in our closes and estates, developing our use of social media, reviewing the information contained with CHA's ChitChat Newsletter, validating CHA performance data, reviewing policy, etc.
8. Receive, discuss and provide views on information sent from CHA which may include information on complaints, the results from the Association's Tenant Satisfaction surveys, details and feedback from policy consultations, and any decisions made by the Management Committee.
9. The Panel will also carry out a performance scrutiny role for the Association by independently checking our records and internal processes. For example, checking the Right First Time Repair history to ensure that the Association's records are accurate. As part of this role, the Panel may wish to attend internal audit visits, review reports, discuss with staff and comment thereon.
10. To encourage and ensure involvement from underrepresented groups, the Association will provide crèche facilities, travel expenses, translation services, information in different formats, accessible venue, etc. when required.
11. All recommendations/findings will be reported to the Management Committee for consideration and review and cost implications if any, will be assessed.
12. The Management Committee will report back to the Tenant Panel within 4 weeks regarding implementation, as appropriate.

Joining the Panel

An application form to join the Panel is enclosed. It asks for some basic details including name, address and contact details and asks members to abide by the Code of Conduct (Appendix 3). You will also need to complete a simple one-page Declaration of Interest Form that all of our Staff and Committee are required to complete. All new Panel members will receive a welcome letter from the Association and time will be organised to take members through a full induction process. If there are more applications than spaces available, a waiting list will be set up.

About Clydebank Housing Association

We were established by local residents in 1984 and were registered with the Housing Corporation in January 1985.

Today our aim to develop where possible and continue to provide good quality, affordable housing remains to the forefront. We aim to be able to provide a mix of homes in a variety of sizes and types, both to cope with current housing need and to allow for transfers from one type of housing to another. We manage over 1,100 homes for rent, over 40 for shared ownership and are a factor to 600 owners.

We are a “not for profit” organisation and a registered Scottish Charity. We employ over 30 staff. We are committed to community control. Our policy is to encourage tenants to become members of the Management Committee and to take an active part in the running of the Association.

We have also undertaken a ‘wider role’ in our community where we aim to improve the social, economic and environmental circumstances of the community in which we operate. Our regeneration centre, Centre81, delivers these objectives. We also own and manage CHA Power Ltd which provides energy efficient and affordable heat and hot water to our residents in Radnor Park and own and manage Clydebank Social Economy Centre, providing quality, inclusive accommodation for social economy, voluntary and community businesses.

Training and Support

We wish to encourage Tenant Panel Members to gain further knowledge and skills in their personal areas of interest relating to our work. Please do not hesitate to let the Communications Officer know if you have any suggestions. We will get you to sign a register that you have undertaken training for audit purposes.

We hope that being Tenant Panel member will enhance your confidence, enable you to meet new people, help you to gain knowledge of the workings of Housing Associations and to develop new skills.

Health & Safety Procedures

Our responsibility

We take all steps that are reasonably practicable both to ensure the health, safety and welfare of visitors to our office, and to protect them from accident or injury due to our operations.

In particular, we have a responsibility to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions taking account of any statutory requirements and, where required, to make available all necessary safety devices and protective equipment and to supervise their use.

Your responsibility

For your part, you are expected to maintain high standards of health and safety to ensure your own protection and that of others.

Insurance

As a member of our Tenant Panel, you will be covered by Clydebank Housing Association’s insurance policies for work related activities during any period of your Tenant Panel involvement.

Accidents/incidents

We keep a record of accidents which occur, no matter how minor these appear to be. All accidents should be reported to the Health & Safety Officer/Maintenance Manager.

First aid

We have two first aiders that operate in our main office, should you require any assistance.

Smoking

Members are only permitted to smoke (including e-cigarettes) outside the building at the designated smoking area.

Identification badge

You'll be issued with an ID badge which you should always have with you if carrying out Tenant Panel duties around our office/estates.

Personal property

Clydebank Housing Association will not accept responsibility for loss of or damage to your property so please make sure to secure property when in our office/estates.

Gifts, Hospitality, etc.

Tenant Panel members are not permitted to accept any gift or favour which might appear to be offered as an inducement for any purpose. In case of doubt you should consult the Communications Officer.

Confidentiality

As a Tenant Panel member you may be party to information of a private and confidential nature. Information gained in this way must not be disclosed to any person, in detail or by way of illustration, either during your time as Tenant Panel member or afterwards. Failure to adhere to this principle may be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as Clydebank Housing Association's Confidentiality Policy/Tenant Panel Code of Conduct. Breach in confidentiality may result in your membership of the Tenant Panel being terminated.

Expenses

All Tenant Panel members will have their travel expenses reimbursed. Refreshments/catering will be provided as appropriate.

Problems with your role

If you encounter difficulty with any aspect of the role, please talk to the Communications Officer as soon as possible for advice and support.

Dealing with complaints

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve the way we do things and provide a better service.

We have a complaints procedure to ensure that we capture all feedback. If you wish to make a complaint or you receive a complaint from someone about your Tenant Panel membership or anything to do with our work, please pass the information on to the Communications Officer for recording.

Equal Opportunities statement

We will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Ending membership

When a Tenant Panel member wishes to end their membership of the Panel, they should speak with the Communications Officer.

Glossary of terms which may be used

Arrears - Rent that is lawfully due and is unpaid by current and former tenants.

Assignment - Where landlord consents to a tenant signing over his/her tenancy to another party (i.e. spouse).

Complaints - A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard or service provided by or on behalf of the organisation.

EEESH - The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases and contribute to reducing carbon emissions by 42 % by 2020, and 80 % by 2050, in line with the requirements set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Housing list - A register of applicants and tenants who have applied for housing with a particular landlord.

Mortgage to rent - A scheme supported by the Scottish Government to prevent homelessness through mortgage repayment default. An owner sells their home to a landlord which then rents it back to them.

Mutual exchange - Where two tenants (whether or not from the same landlord) exchange homes and tenancies.

Reactive repairs - These are repairs which cannot be planned or included in a repair programme.

Emergency repairs - Repairs necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupier's property.

Reporting year - The period beginning on 1st April (or for financial indicators, the first day of the landlord's accounting year) and ending on 31st March of the following year (or for financial indicators, the last day of the landlord's accounting year).

RSL - Registered Social Landlord (Clydebank Housing Association is a RSL).

RSL Governing Body - When we refer to the governing body we mean the management committee or board of management of an RSL.

Sharemember/shareholder - The sharemembers/shareholders of an RSL are those persons or organisations who hold a share in the RSL and whose names are entered in their Register of Members, in line with the membership policy of each RSL.

SHQS - Scottish Housing Quality Standard (the Standard) - The Standard all self-contained, rented homes should achieve by 2015 as defined by the Scottish Government.

Scottish secure tenancy (SST) and Short (SST) agreement - a tenancy agreement with a council, housing association or housing co-operative which gives you certain rights under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (the 2001 Act).

Section 5 referral - A request from a local authority issued to an RSL, under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, to provide housing within six weeks to applicants assessed as statutorily homeless.

Service charges - Costs, in addition to rental charges, levied against a property for communal services

Shared ownership - Landlord run scheme to encourage those who cannot afford outright ownership, but who can afford more than an affordable rent, to become part owners. The private owner must buy at least 25 % of the value of the house initially, but can buy more later. An occupancy charge is paid on the portion of the house remaining in the landlord's ownership. The sharing owner is responsible for all maintenance.

Subsidiary - CHA Power Ltd is a subsidiary company which we own and manage.

Succession - Where a landlord awards a tenancy to a member of the household on the tenant's death.

Transfer - A transfer is when a tenant has been rehoused by its landlord in another of the landlords' properties.

Void - A void is a property owned by a landlord which has no tenant.

Void period - The void period is the time, measured in calendar days, between the date of termination of a previous tenancy or the date the property was repossessed to the start date of a new tenancy.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter Summary

The Scottish Government brought the Charter into effect in April 2012, and reviewed in 2017, after consultation with tenants in social housing, social landlords, homeless people, other stakeholders and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality and services that social landlords, like Clydebank Housing Association, provide by:

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

The Charter has 7 sections containing 16 outcomes and standards that apply to social landlords. 14 apply to us (summarised below) as 2 are only applicable to Councils.

We go some way to proving we meet these outcomes by reporting to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 31 of the 37 indicators (6 only applicable to Councils).

The customer/landlord relationship

1: Equalities - We perform all aspects of our housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

2: Communication - We manage our business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with us and get the information they need about us, how and why we makes decisions and the services we provide.

3: Participation - We manage our business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence our decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Housing quality and maintenance

4: Quality of housing - We manage our business so that tenants' homes as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy

Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.

5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements - We manage our business so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Neighbourhood and community

6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes - We, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure that tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

Access to housing and support

7, 8 and 9: Housing options - We work together to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them and tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options. We ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

10: Access to social housing - We ensure that people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how we allocate homes and their prospects of being housed.

11: Tenancy sustainment - We ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by us and by other organisations.

Getting good value from rents and service charges

13: Value for money - We manage all aspects of our business so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

14 and 15: Rents and service charges - We set rents and service charges in consultation with tenants and other customers so that a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them and tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

Tenant Panel Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets out the rules and the standards of behaviour for Panel Members and is subject to an annual review by the Panel and relevant Clydebank Housing Association staff.

My role

As a Tenant Panel member, my role is to be part of a team of people that will carry out detailed and robust assessments and performance monitoring of the services provided by Clydebank Housing Association (CHA), and work with the panel and CHA staff to recommend how and where improvements to services and performance can be made.

In recognition of this, I agree to the following:

- I will be polite, tolerant and respectful of everyone I work with and come into contact with within the course of the assessments. I can expect to be shown the same consideration in return;
- I will be patient, calm and non-confrontational so that those I come into contact with in the course of the process feel at ease talking to me;
- I will listen and keep an open mind about things I see and hear until I have collected all the facts and evidence;
- I will show empathy/sympathy to understand the concerns and circumstances of the people I come into contact with;
- I will be careful to weigh up all views equally in considering aspects of the service;
- I will strive to look at both positives and negatives of the service I am assessing;
- I will be mindful of equal opportunities issues while carrying out an inspection;
- I will try and adhere to a 'team consensus' within the panel whenever possible.

Respecting confidentiality

As a Tenant Panel member there may be times when I will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the work of the Association in a confidential manner. I may on occasion receive information of a private nature that is not yet public, or which perhaps will never be made public. I may have opportunity to witness personal files, hear phone calls or observe other sensitive information. I will always respect and comply with the requirement to keep such information private. I will at all times respect and comply with the Association's Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.

Furthermore:

- I believe it is unacceptable to disclose any information to which I have privileged access. I will never write down personal details, or discuss with other people, any information I gain of a confidential nature other than that which Panel members and staff are discussing but are not discussing individual circumstances and then only in relation to that information being used as part of the assessment process;
- Our report on our assessment will not disclose any information to which we have had privileged access, as long as it has been made clear to us in advance that such information is confidential;
- Our report will not contain any information that can personally identify anyone spoken to in the course of our inspection without their express permission;
- I will ensure that prior permission has been obtained before I speak to tenants or officers in the course of our assessment;
- I will not use my position as a Panel member for personal gain or to further my own interests but as a member of a team involved in the assessment process.

If at any time it is found that I am not abiding by these rules, I will automatically be removed from the Panel as a Panel member, subject to an appropriate discussion with Panel members and staff.



Application for Tenant Panel Membership

Name:

Address:

Telephone No:

E-mail:

Please tick

I am a tenant of Clydebank Housing Association:

I am not a Management Committee Member:

I agree with the rules set out by the Code of Conduct:

I agree to participate in a Tenant Panel Induction:

If you know of any particular training you would like, please note it here:

I understand that the information I have provided is covered by up-to-date Data Protection legislation and it will be processed as per the Association's Fair Processing Notice provided to all tenants in March 2018 and available on request from the office or at <http://clydebank-ha.org.uk/data-protection/>.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

If you need this form in Braille, large print, on CD or in any other language, please contact us.

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*With thanks to West of Scotland Housing Association for their assistance,
particularly with regards to the Code of Conduct.*

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