



"Offering our community more than a home"

Tenant Participation Strategy

Management Committee submission:	29 October 2024
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CHA Objectives:

- To provide quality, affordable housing that meets the changing needs of our customers and to ensure fair access to housing within our area.
- To manage the houses provided, in a professional and cost effective manner, for the benefit of our local community and the environment.
- To provide a first class maintenance service which offers value for money and ensures the comfort and safety of our residents while achieving high levels of satisfaction.
- To work in partnership with others, supporting our tenants and other customers, to maximise opportunities for physical and socio-economic regeneration in Clydebank.
- To ensure local decision making and community control, we will encourage our tenants and other customers to influence our policy and participate in decisions, which may affect them.
- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, increasing digitalisation, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

Regulatory Standards:

- The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these objectives.

- The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.
- The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

Front page introduction

We want tenants and other customers to find it easy to participate in and influence our decisions, at whatever level they feel comfortable.

Tenants and other customers can get involved in our decision-making process in many ways. We hope this strategy makes it clear to our tenants and other customers that we want to shape our service to reflect their views. We particularly wish to highlight that this includes online methods and we will do all we can to engage with and support tenants and other customers, our Tenant Panel and Residents Groups in this way, as we emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic and beyond, and this has been identified as a priority in our Business Plan 2020-2025.

Lynette Lees, Chief Executive

If you have any questions about getting involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch. This is the full version of the Strategy. A summary leaflet is also available.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Association 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.

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About Us, At a Glance (31/03/24)

- 93% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of services we provide
- Providing houses in Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire, for nearly 40 years
- Manage and maintain 1,211 homes for rent, mainly in central and east Clydebank
- Provision of 34 shared ownership properties and factor to over 600 owner occupiers
- We have 1,539 housing applicants on our waiting list and welcomed 77 new tenants in the year
- We own and manage Centre81, in Whitecrook (see page XX)
- We have a wholly owned subsidiary, CHA Power Ltd (see page XX)
- We have rental income of c. £5.06 million which is used to manage and maintain our properties, including your home
- 35 staff are employed (full-time equivalent)
- Run by a Management Committee of volunteers
- Deemed Compliant by the Scottish Housing Regulator (2024)
- 1 Registered Tenants Organisation - Radnor Park Multis Tenants and Resident Association

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1. What is Tenant Participation?

There are many long winded official definitions but tenant participation is about us genuinely caring about your opinion on our services, acting where at all possible on your feedback and then giving you feedback so you know how valuable your comments are to us in helping us to provide a better service.

We want tenants and other customers to find it easy to participate in and influence our decisions, at whatever level they feel comfortable.

The aim of this Strategy is to welcome and encourage involvement from tenants and other customers and to show all of the options available and to demonstrate how they genuinely influence our services and decisions.

The Scottish Housing Regulator expects that tenants are at the heart of our organisation. We can do this by helping you get involved.

2. What's in it for me?

Being involved with the Association can provide you with lots of skills and knowledge or build on skills and knowledge you already have. A report from the Scottish

Housing Regulator's National Panel on Tenant Participation (August 2019) highlights a range of benefits expressed by tenants, including a sense of community and a feeling that landlords are listening to them.

We can help you in whatever way you feel comfortable participating and giving us your opinions. It could mean attending a one-off meeting, being involved with one of our residents group, or returning a questionnaire or complaints handling satisfaction survey to us. It could also mean joining in in our more formal ways such our Management Committee.

We will provide individuals and groups with any training and support that they need.

3. What's in it for the Association?

If our tenants and other customers are happy we are happy! We have always embraced old and new ways to involve and consult tenants even before the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 made it law. We were founded by members of the local community in 1984, one of which (pictured) currently serves on our voluntary Management Committee and recently celebrated 17 years of service.

We recognise the importance of tenant participation and consultation, as a way of monitoring both the effectiveness of our policies and the quality of services provided. In addition to the legislation requirements, there is a set of outcomes and indicators listed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter was developed by tenants and for tenants in 2012, updated in 2017 and again for another 5 years from 2022.

The Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator require that the Association has arrangements in place to make sure tenants can scrutinise and help improve performance and influence decisions about policies and services. We want you to be involved in setting and monitoring performance in all aspects of our service.

We report our performance against the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator each year in May. We strive to better our results each year. A Charter summary is enclosed on page 15. You can review our performance on the Regulator's website and compare us with other landlords too at <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance>.

4. Who are the Association's customers?

- Tenants
- Sharing Owners
- Owners
- Housing Applicants
- Job Applicants
- Centre81 tenants
- Centre81 & Gym81 service users
- CHA Power Ltd customers

- Clydebank Social Economy Centre tenants
- Registered tenants organisations
- Members of the Association
- Members of the public
- Social media users
- Local media
- Board room hire customers
- Electric charging point users
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Councillors
- Suppliers
- Local Authorities
- Other Housing Associations
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- The Scottish Government
- Lenders; and so on

5. How we make it easy for you to participate

Information and Communication

Information you will receive from us

All information is automatically sent to residents in the format they have requested eg. large print or on audio CD as per our Information in Different Formats Procedure. We make sure all published information is legible and in clear language.

We issue a quarterly newsletter, ChitChat, to all tenants, our sharing owners, owner occupiers, shareholders and other interested parties. ChitChat contains information about our activities, new services or schemes and tenants rights, such as their right to repair, compensation and participation. It contains an owners section to provide them with up-to-date information on issues such as forthcoming major repairs, changes in legislation and ways to pay their factoring account.

It invites comments on various issues, for example, proposed improvements, rent setting, new policies and policy changes.

It provides details of complaints we have received and the service improvements put in place as a result and tenant participation activity and the difference tenant involvement is making to our service. We commit to promote an option for getting involved on our front page.

When we asked tenants in our 2022 tenant satisfaction survey of 456 tenants, 87% chose our quarterly ChitChat newsletter as their preferred method of being kept informed. This therefore continues to be our main way of providing general information on our services and decisions to tenants. 100% of our tenants stated in the same survey that they feel informed about our services and decisions and we believe ChitChat helps with this.

We issue an annual report to all tenants, and also sharing owners, owner occupiers, shareholders and other interested parties, with details of our performance.

We issue an annual report on our performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and indicators. The report contains the performance information that tenants felt was relevant from what we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) in May each year. We are then required to issue this report to tenants by the end of October. We also include for reference, the Scottish average, the performance of West Dunbartonshire Council and the average of the other 3 community based housing associations also operating in Clydebank.

We continue to develop the content and style of this report with tenants, we held a focus group in July 2024 and issue feedback forms with the report each year. We are overwhelmed by the positive feedback received each year. Of the 38 feedback forms received following our last report, 100% felt the information was useful and all those who responded said it was presented clearly. 8 tenants got involved in shaping the report for 2023/24 and one topic was added (contribution to management of the neighbourhood) and one was removed (court actions) from the performance reported on.

We use direct mailing and personal letters when appropriate. We received a good return to our Rent Setting consultation 2024/2025 with 119 responses. Our Charter Report consultation received 8 responses and our report feedback received 38 responses. From our 2022 tenant satisfaction survey, personal letters are the preferred format of tenants for us communicating with them with 71% selecting this option.

We have an informative, user friendly website full of useful information and opportunities to feedback on our service: clydebank-ha.org.uk. Sections include Housing, Maintenance, Properties, Community, Noticeboard and Get Involved and we have a download area packed with useful publications.

The website can be translated into over 50 languages at the touch of a button. Select the language of choice from the Google Translate box available at the top of all website pages. Users can link directly to our social media accounts and tenant portal.

Recent additions include a 'Find my Housing Officer' feature, a link to our Contractor Portal and direct link on all pages to our business WhatsApp account. . We actively encourage tenant and other customer interaction through our website.

We provide information leaflets so that our tenants are informed about both key policies and useful information. These are available at reception and on our website or can be sent on request, including:

- Becoming a Shareholder of the Association
- Customer Care: What to Expect
- Making a Complaint
- Your Rent Charge
- What to do if you have Rent Arrears

- Housing Benefit

We will develop new summary leaflets as new or updated policies are approved. General housing information packs are available in many languages from our reception or on request, including Chinese, Farsi, Gaelic and Kurdish, in topics such as:

Housing Options
Homelessness
What is Council Tax?

Email, Calls and Text - We embraced a new housing system in late 2020 which allowed easier options for this. The number of tenants wishing information to be received by them in email continues to rise and is currently at 68%.

Online meetings –We maintain a blended/hybrid approach to attending and holding meetings. This is both for the convenience of all attendees.

Additional Publications - In 2015 we introduced an annual housing applicant newsletter as we want to give clear and effective information to our applicants on the services we provide, how we allocate homes, the housing options available to them and advice on managing a tenancy.

In 2021 we introduced a Contractor Newsletter to share good news such as compliments, community benefits and apprenticeship successes alongside performance and complaints information in order to improve performance in services provided to their tenants and other customers.

We have very active social media accounts on Facebook and twitter/X @clydebankha so that our tenants and other customers can access up-to-date/instant information on events and services and join in discussions with us online. We actively welcome interaction from tenants and other customers on our accounts.

Supporting tenants/residents groups

We attend meetings of local tenants/residents groups. Staff at all levels, but always a Senior Staff member, regularly attend public meetings of our current tenants and residents group to discuss issues of shared interest and concern. We also attend and participate in their events and hold joint events, such as the celebration of 60 years of Radnor Park in 2023.

A welcome pack has been developed for all new groups.

Knowledge

We are members of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service. This means we are informed about new ideas, best practice, updates to legislation etc.

We train, update and support our staff and committee in tenant participation, communication and equalities issues by providing an induction covering these topics to all new members of staff, providing training for them at suitable intervals and

keeping the internal Intranet up to date with details of tenant participation activities. Staff regularly get involved in events and 8 staff attended our Scottish Housing Day 2024 afternoon tea with tenants.

Our Customer & Corporate Services Manager has been a judge of their National Good Practice Awards and hosted a workshop on tenant participation and our good practice at their Annual Conferences in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023, gaining other Association's good practice information and ideas along the way.

Customer Satisfaction

We regularly ask our tenants and other customers what they think about us and act on their feedback. For example, in 2022 an independent company carried out our Tenant Satisfaction Survey and spoke face to face with 456 tenants about their views on our services. We issued the results of the survey to all tenants in our June 2022 newsletter.

In March 2023, we commissioned an independent company to carry out an Owner Occupier Satisfaction Survey. 265 interviews were carried out (46%). We issued the results of the survey in June 2023, met to develop an internal action plan and updated on actions/advice on dissatisfaction to all owners via a 2 page ChitChat special feature in September 2023.

We also carried out a satisfaction survey on our repairs and maintenance service regularly. Our findings and actions against dissatisfaction are included in ChitChat newsletters. An internal action plan was also set up.

On an on-going basis we also ask:

- all new tenants what they thought of our sign up and allocations process
- all tenants who've reported a neighbour complaint what they thought of the complaints process
- all those who have been rehoused on medical grounds how a move has helped them
- all those who have a rent arrears arrangement how they found the assistance provided to them
- in a variety of surveys satisfaction with major, cyclical or routine repairs

We use the results received to continue to improve our service.

Complaints Handling

We recognise complaints handling as a valuable tool in receiving feedback from our tenants and other customers and using it to shape our services. We work with the new Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) procedures and additional training required for our staff and Management Committee has been completed, but as required by the SPSO, is also ongoing.

We report detailed complaints performance quarterly to our Management Committee, we report annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator (our Regulator), Scotland's Housing Network (national housing benchmarking agency) and in our Annual Report to our residents. We also benchmark our performance against the

Scottish Average and 3 local housing associations and West Dunbartonshire Council.

There's a focus from both the SPSO and through the Housing Charter of the importance of providing feedback to customers on how their complaints have helped shape our services and that's why in each ChitChat quarterly newsletter we detail the service improvements made to our services as a result of complaints. We recently held a complaints event where all those who had an partial or upheld complaint in 2023/2024 were invited to drop-in to the office with any feedback or suggested improvements for our complaints handling process.

Customer Involvement

We have a dedicated point of contact to deal with tenant participation issues. All staff and Committee are actively committed to tenant participation, however, naturally staff from Housing Services are mainly involved.

However, our Customer & Corporate Services Manager is our tenants' first point of contact and has designated responsibility for all Tenant Participation matters.

We have a growing consultation register with tenants, owners and applicants wishing to be contacted for their views when we have new or updated policies for consultation.

We encourage new tenants to get involved. When a tenant signs their tenancy agreement, we actively encourage them to become a shareholder of the Association. We also issue and explain a variety of information including how to make a complaint and their right to repair.

We encourage membership of our Association. Local people can become shareholders by purchasing a £1.00 lifetime share of the Association. Shareholders can attend and vote at our Annual General Meeting and enjoy the social event afterwards. If elected, they can then join our voluntary Management Committee, who make all the important decisions about the way we operate.

We hold a range of events for our tenants and other customers so that all tenants and staff have the opportunity to come together and discuss issues of shared interest and concern.

We hold public meetings, open days at the office and send individual letters and questionnaires with reply-paid envelopes when appropriate, for example, when we are proposing major repairs and improvements to tenants' homes.

We will continue with our 'open door' policy for all staff where tenants and other customers are easily able to visit, speak to or make appointments with staff members at all levels.

We strive to find different ways to engage with tenants and other customers for example, we recently set up a WhatsApp Business account so that we can be contacted for free within

Our Management Committee receives 4 quarterly reports each year on all Customer Communication/Consultation activity.

In May 2020 we adopted a Communications Strategy to detail all the methods of communication the Association uses and to encourage staff and Management Committee to use these channels effectively and consistently to help us achieve our strategic objectives, engage effectively with our tenants and other customers and more. It has a specific section on communication during emergency situations such as a pandemic.

Consulting tenants and tenants groups about changes in policy

We have in place a consultation procedure to ensure all staff are aware of the following procedure.

Where there are significant changes proposed which would affect tenants we are required to consult with tenants. We will do the following. We commit to providing the necessary information that tenants need to make an informed response. We may also choose to follow this process where there are minor changes proposed:

- include article in newsletter (at first opportunity)
- as a minimum we will write out to tenants on our consultation register and the tenants group by email or paper format with a covering letter, consultation document/draft policy and reply paid envelope (where applicable). Give around one calendar month to respond
- allow feedback in as wide a range of ways as possible, usually, website form, questionnaire, email or telephone
- if required, invite those above to a focus group at the office regarding the proposed changes
- incorporate feedback into the proposed policy and take a draft to the Management Committee for approval
- write out to tenants who participated enclosing a copy of the new policy and thanking them for their feedback
- feedback results and the impact to tenants as a whole via newsletter and website

In our covering letter, we will include:

- how and when the final decision will be taken
- how the proposal will affect tenants
- how and within what timescale tenants can make their views known to us (around a month is just about right usually)
- details of how the tenants will receive feedback
- who's dealing with the consultation
- information on how and where to complain

Consulting with tenants groups about other issues

Our Senior Staff meet regularly with representatives of tenants' groups to discuss ideas, interests and concerns, exchange information and to advise them of pending policy changes.

Some real examples of tenant participation from the last year alone...

- Ongoing – a huge range of community benefits from contractors to support and engage with tenants and other customers including providing wellbeing gifts and creating a community room in Radnor Park.
- October 2024 – new Tenant Portal for tenants launched. Support provided for Radnor Park Multis Tenants and Residents Association (RPMTRA) for their AGM. Christmas Card for group to distribute designed by staff. Special project agreed for a staff member's qualification to promote a Bannerman Place residents group.
- September 2024 – Scottish Housing Day celebration with tenants being invited to the office for afternoon tea and 8 staff coming along to chat to tenants. New Tenant Portal launch in October promoted in ChitChat. Tenant Participation Strategy review and website renewal promoted in newsletter and feedback encouraged.
- August 2024 – Estate Management Policy and Tenants' Handbook Focus Group held. Senior Staff attended RPMTRA public meeting.
- July 2024 – Repairs and Maintenance quarterly satisfaction survey of 70 tenants returns satisfaction at 99% for the service with 100% satisfaction in more than 4 other key areas. £1,400 annual grant funding provided to RPMTRA. Support in kind offered. Support provided to publicise RPMTRA bus trip. Charter Report Focus Group held and Charter Report consultation with consultation register concludes. Complaints event held for all those who had partial/upheld complaint in the year 2023/2024 to provide us with any feedback on our complaints handling process
- June 2024 – 11th Radnor Park Clear Out Day held with tonnes of rubbish disposed of or recycled. Annual General Meeting and social event for many of our tenants who are shareholders. Increase in tenants elected onto Management Committee. Annual Consultation Prize Draw to thank all who have provided feedback where it did not have its own prize draw. Support provided to RPMTRA to advertise their dance night.
- May 2024 – Wellbeing hamper competition on social media for our customers for Mental Health Awareness Week. Tenant Panel information session held to promote benefits of joining the Tenant Panel.
- April 2024 – An Owners Event hosted by the factoring team.
- March 2024 – Staff attended RPMTRA Blitz Memorial service to place wreath on behalf of CHA. WhatsApp account for business introduced so customers can contact us for free in a WiFi area and also for their convenience. Find my Housing Officer feature added to website. RPMTRA successful in securing Lottery funding following the support provided by the Association, through our consultants. Staff visited a tenant on their 90th birthday and provided a card and bouquet of flowers. Major Repairs event hosted by the maintenance team with a variety of partners including Citizens Advice Bureau. Senior Staff attend RPMTRA public meeting.
- January 2024 – RPMTRA meeting in office for annual rent setting presentation. Rent consultation concludes with 119 responses received from tenants/sharing owners (9.48%). 58% of responses were received online via the website and 42% were via post. Recommended to Management Committee to go for option 1 as chosen by 77% of tenants. 38 feedback

forms received on our Performance Report for Customers. Senior Staff attend RPMTRA public meeting.

- December 2023 – Christmas basket competition on social media for our customers. Staff volunteered at the RPMTRA Christmas Lunch at Centre81, supported by £1,000 by Anglian Home Improvements secured by us. Christmas event at Radnor Park where staff distributed over 150 selection boxes and mince pies at our community garden and provided refreshments. Community Christmas lunch held for 70 local people at Centre81. RPMTRA new members in office for introduction to Senior Management Team. New members induction presentation on background of Housing Associations/CHA.
- November 2023-March 2024 – Cosy afternoons held where over 400 people enjoyed free soup, tea/coffee, WiFi and company on Friday afternoons at Centre81.
- November 2023 – Customer Care Policy enhanced. World Kindness Day activities where over £1,000 of kindness distributed in our community. Attended Cost of Living event with event partners at Centre81.
- October 2023 – An Owners Event hosted by the factoring team. Senior Staff attend RPMTRA public meeting.

6. How we help tenants and other customers to become involved

There are many barriers which may affect how well our strategy works. Examples of some of these barriers are listed below. Also listed is our commitment to help deal with these barriers. We want our strategy to include all of our tenants and other customers.

When asked in our 2022 tenant satisfaction survey of 456 tenants were there sufficient opportunities to participate at different levels 100% said there was. However, 85% said they would not wish to get involved in the Association's decision making processes. When asked if we could do anything to help tenants participate at different levels, 100% said no.

We are mindful that 31% of tenants surveyed said they had a disability or long term health conditions lasting or expecting to last more than 12 months, 39% of which were mobility issues.

Our biggest known non-British ethnic group of tenants are African at 2% and Polish at 1.7% (October 2024).

Low Income

People may be unable to attend meetings or events because of family responsibilities.

We will offer crèche facilities during meetings and events free of charge, or make available official childcare allowances to allow people to attend participation meetings and events.

Location of Meetings

Meeting places may not be suitable, for example, office accommodation upstairs may not be suitable for wheelchair users unless it has been adapted. We will try always to hold meetings in venues used by the community that are accessible, convenient and secure. Transport costs will be paid. We can also arrange home visits.

Times of Meetings

Meeting times may not be convenient for people, for instance, in an area with high unemployment meetings during the daytime may be preferred.

We will arrange meetings to take account of the needs and preferences of local households.

For example we hold focus groups and meetings at all different times and take account of standard school and nursery pick up times where possible.

As a courtesy, we will always provide suitable refreshments and appropriate catering for the time of the meeting.

Jargon/Lack of Clarity

The use of complex agendas, housing terms or complex statistical data can lead to non-participation.

We will publish all information in a user-friendly style and a format that is clear and in clear language. We will provide training to give tenants appropriate knowledge. For example, we provided training on the background of Housing Associations to a new residents group members in December 2023.

Finance and Level of Resources

Lack of funds can mean that participation cannot develop properly. We will make sure that adequate funds are provided to develop tenant participation, both within the Association and within our tenants group(s). Read more information in sections 8 and 9.

Attitude

How staff approach or respond to groups and individuals and the assumptions they make may hinder good working relationships.

We have a designated member of staff for contact on all tenant participation issues. We will provide training to staff on tenant participation, customer care, complaints handling and equalities issues. We want to provide a service where every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised and is treated fairly and with respect. We will ensure staff are kept updated on consultation activity through our internal Intranet/email and newsletters and Communication folders on our system. We will plan engagement with specific consideration given to cultural, historical, religious, social and communication issues.

Information Needs

A tenant or resident may need information in a different format.

We have an Information in Different Formats procedure which allows us to deal with any information need very quickly. We currently, automatically provide information to tenants in large print and on audio CD. We can provide information in another language, on computer CD, in Braille, in plain text and so on.

7. Staff responsible for Tenant Participation

Staff from Housing Services are those mainly involved in tenant participation activities. However, all staff and Committee are actively committed this strategy. Staff acknowledge that tenants being involved in and shaping the delivery of services which affect them, means happier tenants and therefore happier staff! Our Customer & Corporate Services Manager has designated responsibility for all Tenant Participation matters.

8. Resources needed for Tenant Participation

We take our commitment to tenant participation seriously and as such tenant participation is included in our annual budget.

Our budgets cover the cost of:

- Writing, designing, printing and distributing newsletters
- Other information produced for tenants
- Tenant satisfaction surveys and other ways of getting feedback
- Tenant participation events such as training and the tenant conference
- Supporting/training tenants' groups including annual grant and potential training and special grants
- Miscellaneous activities to encourage tenant and other customer involvement including individual tenant requests for appropriate level of support to participate in tenant participation
- Out of pocket expenses for tenants or other customers getting involved in tenant participation
- Staff involved in Tenant Participation activities

9. Supporting Tenants' Groups

Financial support

We will provide financial support to tenants' groups. However, groups who apply that are not registered as a Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) with us or who are not working towards registration may be funded at a reduced rate or supported to a different degree, at our discretion.

Criteria for and description of payments is shown over the page.

All payments are made to contribute to the running costs of the tenants' group such as:

- Printing
- Stationery

- Travel costs
- Tea/coffee for meetings
- Venues for meetings/public meetings/AGMs
- Publicity/advertising
- Training/conference attendance
- Affiliation/membership
- Translation/interpreting

Support in kind

We will also support tenants' groups with resources in kind. Examples of this are detailed below:

- offering our premises for meetings
- putting together their tenants' newsletter and printing in either black & white (free) or colour (charged at cost price)
- putting together and printing smaller items such as meeting notices, agendas etc. (no charge if colour)
- administrative support (for example, taking minutes at meetings, photocopying, assisting with mailings, designing posters and booking meeting venues)
- including a tenant representative in our training programme (such as certain Committee training)

Special grant and training grant

We can provide Special and Training grants. However, there will be an element of 'reasonableness'; that the request fits in with the group's activity and does not duplicate grants already awarded. There should usually be a contribution of approximately 50% from the tenants' group. Further information is contained in the table above and within the application forms on pages XX & XX.

Start Up Grant Amount/Formula

£200 for 0-250 tenancies represented
 £300 for 251-500 tenancies represented
 £400 for 501+ tenancies represented

Criteria

For groups aiming to set up as properly constituted body, the grants are for copying, postage, hire of meeting rooms, telephone calls and publicity etc. Groups should fulfil a number of conditions such as representing one of our areas of operation, having a bank account or other recognised agency that can hold the money; that basic records are kept and that the group can demonstrate that it is developing into a properly constituted and representative body. To make sure this criteria is being met, we may request to have a member of staff present at their meetings.

Annual Grant Amount/Formula

£400 + £2.30 per tenant for 0-250 tenancies represented
£500 + £2.30 per tenant for 251-500 tenancies represented
£600 + £2.30 per tenant for 501+ tenancies represented

Paid to properly constituted groups for running costs. Criteria for payment to include:
a constitution and membership policy in place and acceptable to the RSL to ensure the group is representative
the group has regular General, Public and Committee meetings
that no excessive surplus exists, which is defined as more than a years' grant amount

Special Grant Amount/Formula

Not usually exceeding £750.00 in any one year

Applications will be considered for one off expenditure such as a conference attendance, purchase of equipment, organised excursions etc.*

Training Grant Amount/Formula

Not usually exceeding £750.00 in any one year

Applications will be considered for attendance at training courses, seminars, conferences *

10. Supporting local community groups

We will support local community groups that have aims and objectives which are broadly similar to our own (see page 2) and whose members live mainly within our area of operation. We have recently support Linnvale Community Group in this capacity. Support could be offered in a variety of forms, for example:

Use of equipment

We will allow occasional use of equipment at the request of local community groups provided that:

- there is no disruption to the normal running of the office (access is restricted to office hours)
- equipment is not removed from the premises
- users of equipment are familiar with our Health and Safety policy and are trained to use the equipment properly

Regular use would not normally be encouraged but in any case it would be at the discretion of our Management Committee.

Use of facilities and accommodation

The Management Committee will consider each request individually and may give permission subject to the above.

Sharing information

Much of our information is already publicly available but we will provide copies of other policies and procedures on request. An exception to this may be if the other agency is a competitor for local stock or development sites and giving them information may be harmful to us.

Providing a donation

We may also provide a donation. Groups should contact us if they wish to ask for a donation for a specific purpose, which would be at the discretion of the Management Committee. We have a policy which covers the provision of donations.

11. Registering your tenants' group with us

The criteria and an application for registering your group with us as a Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 are available on page 16.

Although we gather and take account of views of all tenants, other customers and tenants' groups, becoming an RTO means consultation with your group is covered under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and requires us to take account of representations of your group.

(All tenants have the right to consultation as individuals through their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement).

A decision will be made on applications to register within 28 days of it being received (except during our Committee's summer break in July). This decision will generally be reached by the Management Committee.

If accepted, the registration will last for three years. However, if there are significant changes to constitution, membership or area of operation, the RTO may be required to re-register.

Groups that do not wish to register

If a tenants' group decides not to register with us, we are very likely to still support and consult with the tenants' group, however, consultation with such a group would be outwith the statutory provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

12. Tenants and residents groups

It is recognised that groups may comprise a mix of tenants and residents. Residents are sharing owners and owner occupiers. There is nothing to prevent a mixed group of tenants and residents applying to be registered provided they meet the necessary criteria and provided there is a mechanism in place within the RTO for the views of the tenants of that landlord to be sought, for example, through tenant only surveys or tenant sub-committees.

Please note that as we receive no income from residents, we can only provide funding for the tenants represented by RTOs, as detailed within section 9.

Regional Networks

Regional Networks were set up in 2008 to help Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) engage with the Scottish Government on issues of national policy. There are 9 regional networks. No tenants' groups in West Dunbartonshire currently participate in the regional networks.

Their objective is to improve the housing and well-being of tenants and residents in Scotland. They work to promote tenants and residents interests in housing, planning, community regeneration, the environment and community safety. Their website is www.regionalnetworks.org.uk.

14. A relationship breakdown

Our relationship with our residents group(s) is really important to us.

We hope the group(s) get to influence what is happening with their housing services and we get feedback from our tenants with which we can improve and develop our services.

If we feel there is a relationship breakdown between the Association and a tenants' group we will do everything we can to resolve the matter.

15. Removal from the Register of Tenants' Organisations

An RTO can be removed from the Register in any of the following circumstances:

- The tenants' organisation no longer meets the registration criteria; or
- The tenants' organisation ceases to exist or does not operate; or
- There is mutual agreement between us and the tenants' organisation
- Relationship breakdown

Removal from the register will only take place after 21 days. Notice will be served in writing to all registered committee members of the organisation, setting out the reasons for removal and the effective date of removal.

16. Appeals

A tenants' group may appeal against our decision to:

- Not register the group; or
- Remove the group from the Register; or
- Not remove the group from the Register

You may appeal to our Management Committee in the event of the above. You should contact us immediately if you wish to appeal. The appeal process will be complete within three months.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, the appeals process will be considered by the Scottish Housing Regulator, on behalf of the Scottish Government.

17. Monitoring and Reviewing our Performance

It has been recognised by the Scottish Housing Regulator that landlords are good at recording their tenant participation activity but it is difficult to assess what the impact or effectiveness of this is on the way the landlords operate.

We will therefore look at ways to record not only tenant participation activity, but how that activity has impacted upon the Association. We recognise that being able to demonstrate real influence is important in sustaining tenant participation and we can do this by monitoring the responses to all of our tenant and other customer satisfaction surveys, interactions and meetings with our registered tenants organisations and so on.

Tenant involvement and its impact is also considered as part of the self-assurance process to which all tenants are invited to participate in (September 2021 ChitChat).

18. Review of the Strategy

The next review is due in September 2027. . Please do not hesitate to contact our Customer & Corporate Services Manager if you have any comments or suggestions for improvement for the next edition.

We consulted on the 2024 edition by putting a feature in our June and September ChitChat Newsletters and hosting a focus group in July.

We have had a Tenant Participation Strategy in place since 2002.

19. Contact details

Clydebank Housing Association Ltd
77-83 Kilbowie Road
Clydebank G81 1BL
Tel: 0141 941 1044
Fax: 0141 941 3448
Contact: Customer & Corporate Services Manager
E-mail: sinead@clydebank-ha.org.uk
Web: www.clydebank-ha.org.uk

If you would like more information about tenant participation, there are many places to find it, including the following:

TPAS Scotland, Erskine House, Room 2, 3rd floor, 1 North Avenue, Clydebank
Business Park CLYDEBANK G81 2DR
Tel: 0141 552 3633
Fax: 0141 552 0073
E-mail: enquiries@tpasscotland.org.uk
Web: www.tpasscotland.org.uk

Tenants Information Service (TIS)

Clockwise, Savoy Tower, 77 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G2 3BZ

Tel: 0141 248 1242

Fax: 0141 221 1911

E-mail: info@tis.org.uk

Web: www.tis.org.uk

Scottish Housing Regulator, 5th Floor, 220 High Street, Glasgow G4 0QW

Tel: 0141 242 5642

E-mail: shr@shr.gov.scot

Web: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Appendix 1

How we operate

So that you can participate fully, it's important that you know a bit about how we operate.

We are managed by a Management Committee of local volunteers, some of whom are tenants. They make all the important decisions about how we operate and employ staff to carry out day-to-day duties and make recommendations to them. The Management Committee meets monthly and the sub-committees meet; Housing Services (quarterly); Finance, Audit and Risk Services (quarterly); Development (as required).

Our Core Values & Objectives

“Offering our community more than a home.” We will achieve this by being:

- **Respectful** We will treat all our customers with courtesy and respect
- **Accountable** We will be open, honest and approachable and act with the highest integrity at all times
- **Responsive and Informative** We will listen, respond and inform through effective and timely communication
- **Professional** We will ensure we have the appropriate skills and strive for excellence in all aspects of our service

CHA Objectives:

- To provide quality, affordable housing that meets the changing needs of our customers and to ensure fair access to housing within our area.
- To manage the houses provided, in a professional and cost effective manner, for the benefit of our local community and the environment.
- To provide a first class maintenance service which offers value for money and ensures the comfort and safety of our residents while achieving high levels of satisfaction.
- To work in partnership with others, supporting our tenants and other customers, to maximise opportunities for physical and socio-economic regeneration in Clydebank.
- To ensure local decision making and community control, we will encourage our tenants and other customers to influence our policy and participate in decisions, which may affect them.
- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, increasing digitalisation, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

Legislation

The way we work is governed by lots of legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Housing (Scotland) Acts 2014, 2010, 2001 and 1987
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011
- Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Acts
- Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965
- Charity & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- Employment law

The majority of the policy changes we propose are to do with changes in legislation. Where we have come from...

We were established by local residents in 1984 and working in partnership with the Housing Corporation and with the Local Authority, set out to improve housing and regenerate the central and east areas of the town. This shows that tenant/resident participation was at the very core of our set-up! We were registered with the Housing Corporation in January 1985, so will celebrate 40 years in January 2025. In the earlier years, our development work concentrated on the modernisation of the tenements in the town centre. When this work was finished, we embarked on a programme of new building to provide more houses and flats for rent and for shared ownership.

In 1999, we acquired over 750 houses in Clydebank from the previous landlord, Scottish Homes, increasing our stock to over 1,100 houses and flats at that time, catering for all types of people including the elderly, disabled people and those with additional needs.

Where we are now...

Today our aim to provide good quality, affordable housing remains to the forefront. The Scottish Housing Regulator has us as low engagement which means they are happy with the financial and performance information provided and with our current performance.

Our core values and objectives are listed above.

Our role as an employer

As we grow, our role as an employer becomes more significant. We now have over 35 staff (full time equivalent). We are committed to equal opportunities and have Disability Confident Employer status.

Whilst we have been a Living Wage Employer since 2011 we were accredited in 2016.

Our wider role

We aim to offer our community more than a home. Our 'wider role' is where we aim to improve the social, economic and environmental circumstances of our community, in addition to our primary role of building and maintaining homes. We have 3 main wider role project examples:

Centre81

We own and manage Centre81, our regeneration centre in the heart of our community which opened in 2008.

The Centre is home to Gym81, Café81, a community garden, raised beds area and has an outdoor multi use games area (MUGA). We run our own activities and activities in partnership with others, including health and fitness, employability, English as a Second Language (ESOL), kids' club and weekly bingo. We have a project funded bike mechanic and community gardener. We provide office space to a range of organisations, and our hall and rooms are available for hire.

CHA Power Ltd

In 2005, following consultation with tenants, we set up CHA Power Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary, to provide energy efficient and affordable heat and hot water through a Combined Heat and Power system (CHP).

It now provides unlimited heat and hot water to over 370 two bedroom multi-storey properties, for just £15.75 (incl. 5% VAT) a week (at 01 April 2024) and also supplies the local church.

Our CHA Power plant generates electricity and as a by-product, heat is produced and used to provide the heat and hot water to tenants whilst the electricity is sold back to the National Grid.

Clydebank Social Economy Centre

We own and manage Clydebank Social Economy Centre (SEC) which opened in 2005. The SEC provides quality, inclusive accommodation for social economy, voluntary sector and community businesses.

We are delighted that the office space is fully occupied by Community Links Scotland and Stepping Stones Mental Health Organisation.

Small print

Registrations

- OSCR (Scottish Charity No. SC033962)
- Scottish Housing Regulator (No. HAL 86)
- Scottish Government as a Property Factor (No. PF000231)
- Industrial and Provident Societies/FCA (No. 2191RS)
- Information Commissioner's Office (No. Z6043444)

Memberships

- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
- Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland (CIH)
- Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)
- Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

- Homeswapper
- SHARE
- Scotland's Housing Network (SHN)
- Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum (GWSF)
- Scotland Excel
- Scottish Procurement Alliance
- The Big Issue Bronze Sponsor
- PATH
- Happy to Translate
- Child Poverty Action Group

Appendix 2

Legislation on Participation

The Legislation

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (the Act) provides a legal framework for tenant participation to take place in Scotland. All local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) such as housing associations have a number of new legal duties regarding tenant participation. These duties are outlined in Part 2 of the Act (Sections 23, 53, 54, 55 and 106).

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 refocussed but does not supersede the Tenant Participation obligations of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Section 23 (The right to a tenancy agreement and information)

Tenants have a right to a written tenancy agreement and to receive information on:

- their right to buy provisions
- our complaints procedure

If tenants request it, they must be provided with information about:

- the terms of their tenancy
- our tenant participation strategy
- our rent setting and other charges policies
- our allocations policy
- our repairs and maintenance policy
- the decision making process on housing related matters
- obligations of the tenant if they exercise their right to buy

Section 53 (Tenant Participation)

This section requires local authorities and RSLs to have a tenant participation strategy. It also places a duty on them to maintain a register of tenants groups meeting certain criteria. It sets out the criteria for registration or removal from the register and the procedures to be followed in relation to registration and removal. It also provides a right of appeal for such groups in relation to registration and removal from the register.

Section 54 (Consultation with Tenants and Registered Tenant Organisations)

This section outlines the provision to enable both individual tenants and registered tenants groups to be consulted by the landlord on issues affecting them. It also requires the landlord to take account of representations by the tenants or tenants groups, within a reasonable time scale. In addition, it sets out the relevant policies to which this applies, such as our allocation policy or rent setting policy.

What is Tenant Participation (TP)?

This definition from the National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999) we feel is still a good way to sum up tenant participation: “Tenant participation is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing the 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 services”.

This snippet from the Guide to Successful Tenant Participation – Scottish Government (2018) is also useful:

“Effective participation gives tenants the opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive, and it helps landlords deliver better services that focus on tenant priorities”.

Guide to Successful Tenant Participation – Scottish Government

The Scottish Government have produced a handy guide to successful participation. It contains a wealth of useful information and topics include:

- Tenant Involvement
- Advice for Tenants and Staff
- Case studies
- Further reading
- Useful sources of advice
- A fantastic jargon buster of housing words and abbreviations and a description of all key Housing Organisations

Our Strategy meets with this guidance. Find it on our website:

<https://www.clydebank-ha.org.uk/get-involved/our-tenant-participation-strategy/>

Appendix 3

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Charter was approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into effect on 1 April 2012. It was then reviewed in 2017 and 2022.

The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality and services that social landlords provide. It:

- Provides a set of consistent standards and outcomes which should be met for all social housing tenants wherever they live
- Focuses landlord activity on services that are important to tenants and other customers
- Encourages a culture of involving service users in the design, delivery and performance of services

The Charter currently has 7 sections containing 16 outcomes and standards that apply to social landlords. 14 apply to us as 2 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) in May each year.

Here is a summary of the 14 outcomes that are applicable to us:

The customer/landlord relationship

1. Equalities - Social landlords perform all aspects of their 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 - 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.
3. Participation - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Housing quality and maintenance

4. Quality of housing - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes, as a minimum, when they are allocated are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and any other building quality standard in place throughout the tenancy; and also meet the relevant Energy Efficiency and Zero Emission Head Standard.
- 5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements - Social landlords manage their businesses 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 - Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible 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 - Social landlords 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. Social landlords have a role to prevent homelessness and should ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice and information on preventing homelessness.

10: Access to social housing - Social landlords 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 the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.

11: Tenancy sustainment - Social landlords 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 the landlord and by other organisations.

Getting good value from rents and service charges

13: Value for money - Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses 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 - Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their 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 service users can afford them, tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

Appendix 4

Tenant Federations

The criteria for the registration of local tenant federations will be the same as for individual tenants' groups. A federation, which is registered with each of the landlords in its area of operation will have statutory rights to be consulted by those landlords on housing and related issues affecting the area served by its membership.

This will give the federation direct involvement with such issues rather than through each of the member groups concerned.

As with tenants' groups representing tenants of two or more different landlords, it is essential that when consulted by a particular landlord, a tenants' federation can make sure that the views given are representative of the tenants of that landlord. Where a local federation does not have tenants of a particular landlord, there is no statutory duty on that landlord to register that federation.

West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation is the umbrella group for the tenants groups in West Dunbartonshire and is supported by the Council.

Although our tenants' groups could not join this organisation, they would be happy to meet up with our tenants' groups. This would allow them to discuss what they are currently working on/doing and get advice from groups who may have had similar issues.

Harry McCormack is the current contact for the WDTRO:

harrymccormack.wdtro@gmail.com

Web: www.wdtro.org.uk