

Partnership Agreement

Langstane Housing Association and My Voice Counts Tenant Scrutiny Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Partnership Agreement sets out guidance regarding the role, principles, working practices and reporting procedures of Langstane Housing Association's 'My Voice Counts tenant scrutiny group' (the group).
- 1.2. Although informal, the group, is independent and tenant-led and will monitor Langstane Housing Association's performance.
- 1.3. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 set out the requirements for a Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) which came into effect in 2013 and was updated in 2023. The Charter sets out 16 outcomes which measure performance. The group will, as far as possible, monitor landlord performance against these outcomes, which form part of the Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).
- 1.4. This partnership agreement was developed in discussion with staff and tenants.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To scrutinise service delivery and performance, and to work with Langstane Housing Association to advance forward improvements.
- 2.2. To form an integral part of self-assessment by developing an effective working partnership with Langstane Housing Association's staff, senior management, and Board of Management.
- 2.3. To assess and improve performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter outputs.
- 2.4. To increase tenant involvement and influence business planning and the operational delivery of services.

3. Role of the group

- 3.1. To assess value for money and the effectiveness of services.
- 3.2. To collect and consider evidence from various sources to support recommendations made.
- 3.3. To act constructively and to recognise areas of good performance and success.
- 3.4. To set their own work plan, agenda, and timescales for action.
- 3.5. To raise the profile of the group and to promote opportunities for tenants to get involved.
- 3.6. To participate in setting the Annual Assurance Statement.

4. Selection and Membership of the group

- 4.1. The selection process is open to all Langstane Housing Association tenants and members of their household.
- 4.2. The group will consider the impact of equality and diversity issues in all their work. It will do this by assessing support needs of members and make reasonable adjustments to remove any barriers to participation, where reasonable.
- 4.3. Carers can accompany a member but cannot participate in discussions within the meeting.
- 4.4. Any group member elected or co-opted to Langstane Housing Association's Board of Management must resign from the group immediately, to make sure there is no conflict of interest and scrutiny remains independent.
- 4.5. Members do not represent registered tenant organisations or geographic areas, but act as individuals.

5. Work plan and Meetings

- 5.1. Planning for the year will take place at first annual meeting.
- 5.2. The group will consider their digital access in case of bad weather during winter.
- 5.3. Facilitation and administrative support are provided by the Tenant Participation Officer. More information on support is provided in section 8.

6. Scoping topics for scrutiny

- 6.1. Several sources are considered to determine scrutiny topics:

- Information from Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
- Performance reports, complaints, satisfaction surveys and the Annual Report on the Charter
- Langstane Housing Association staff
- Tenant and community feedback and complaints
- Scottish Housing Regulator

6.2. The group will develop communication and feedback methods to keep tenants informed of activity, to promote and raise the profile of the group's work.

6.3. The group will consider optimum timing for scrutiny activity and consider performance improvement activities that Langstane Housing Association may already be carrying out.

7. Reporting, governance and fit to performance management structure

7.1. All relevant stakeholders (Manager, Director, Board) will be identified at the start of the scrutiny process and the group will be given relevant staff contacts by the Tenant Participation Officer.

7.2. Staff will be informed of planned scrutiny by the Tenant Participation Officer or Customer Service Manager.

7.3. The group produces a scrutiny report with recommendations and meets with the relevant Director and manager to allow a response before it goes to Board of Management. The relevant Director agrees a response and action plan with relevant staff.

7.4. If recommendations are not accepted and cannot be implemented an explanation must be given to the group.

7.5. The action plan is then carried as a standing board item to monitor progress until completion.

8. Support, expenses, and training resources

8.1. Administration and facilitations support includes minute taking, issuing meeting papers, catering, travel expenses, booking events, drafting reports, when requested, and training.

8.2. Development support includes accessing and interpreting performance information, evidence gathering, liaison and organisation of staff input, support to plan and carry out scrutiny, for example, agreeing appropriate scrutiny methods and designing surveys, interviews, case studies and guidance on report writing.

8.3. Training to develop skills is provided.

8.4. Group members may claim travel and child care expenses and are provided with refreshments or lunch depending on meeting duration. Proof of travel and child care required before payment.

8.5. An annual training and support review to identify training needs will be carried out at the first annual planning meeting.

8.6. As volunteers, group members are covered by Langstane Housing Association's liability insurance when carrying out their activities.

9. Openness, transparency, and access to information

9.1. The group may request reports and information from Langstane Housing Association to plan and carry out scrutiny. Where information is not readily available, the group may commission reports, and / or invite officers to the group to present information.

9.2. Information requested should be in place no later than 10 working days after the request is received by Langstane Housing Association. If out with this timescale, reasons, and new deadlines to be agreed with the group.

9.3. Use of personal information will be kept within the terms of *the* Data Protection Act 2018.

10. Evaluation and review

10.1. The activities and operations of the group will be reviewed after each activity has been completed. (Minimum annually)

10.2. The draft Partnership Agreement will be reviewed after the groups initial scrutiny project and subsequently reviewed every three years.

11. Group members induction

11.1. Induction will cover:

- Identify specific training needs
- Langstane Housing Association's structure and function
- How services are delivered
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Legal information
- Stock information
- Costs
- Training materials on Scrutiny

11.2. New employee induction will include the groups role within Langstane Housing Association and the employees role with the group.

12. Code of Conduct

12.1. If any difficulties develop within the group, for example, disrespectfulness, confrontation, or a lack of tolerance then a Code of Conduct will be introduced with all members expected to agree and sign. Refusal to do this will result in the member being asked to leave the group.

Person Profile

Below is a list of the qualities and skills that are desirable to be able to fulfil the role of group member. Training will be provided. Members must show an ability and willingness to develop their skills.

Person must be a current Langstane Housing Association tenant or household member aged 18 or over, not a Board of Management member, a family member, living at the same address, of a board member, and not an employee of the organisation.

Commitment and motivation

- Willing and able to participate in induction and training sessions
- Time commitment for this role is approximately 10 meetings per year plus preparation time e.g., reading, meetings, papers
- Ability and willingness to participate and make appropriate contributions and able to act independently
- Focus on the interest of all customers, not personal interest

Understanding and analysis of information

- Able to analyse and question (or develop the skills to do so) various types of information
- Ability to interpret information and challenge (or develop the skills to) information
- Willingness to learn to interpret and understand statistical information
- Able to act independently and objectively when considering performance information

Group competencies

- Good listening skills
- Respect the views of others
- Show and communicate enthusiasm for the purpose of the group
- Good communication skills

General skills

- Working as part of a team
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct (if and when it is introduced)
- Integrity and an open and honest approach
- Group competencies will be developed in training – key things for the group to work effectively with each other and with staff. Computer skills useful but not essential.

If member has any conflict of interest during a scrutiny project – this needs to be disclosed.