

Tenant Participation Strategy

2025 - 2028
June 2025



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1. Foreword

“Our new Tenant Participation Strategy for 2025 – 28 sets out how Council tenants can work with us to directly influence and improve the delivery of City of Edinburgh Council Housing services.

We know there are areas where the Council needs to do much better by our tenants, and the Tenant Participation strategy is key to achieving this.

This strategy has been co-designed by our tenants telling us what matters most to them and the Council listening and responding accordingly.

Tenant asks of the Council included creating better opportunities for Tenant Participation – to make it more inclusive and accessible by providing a range of different ways through which tenants can shape, and feedback to us upon, the services which directly affect their homes and communities.

We look forward to working with our tenants to deliver this new strategy.”



Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron
Convener for Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work



“Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF) has been working alongside Edinburgh City Council for the past 35 years. Scotland's social housing sector is unique in that developing and supporting tenant participation and scrutiny is a legal requirement for social landlords. In ETF's commitment to reaffirming this requirement, one of our main goals has been to ensure that tenants have an active say in how housing policy and wider community services are shaped and delivered across Scotland's capital.

“With feet on the ground here thanks to our fantastic volunteers and staff at ETF, we work directly with tenants to discover the issues that affect them the most, and feed these back to the Council to be sure that the implemented strategy directly reflects the lived experience of the city's tenants. It has been a positive partnership, one nearly four decades old, and we look forward to continuing to engage with tenants and the Council on tenant participation and scrutiny for many more years to come.”

Betty Stone, Convenor of Edinburgh Tenants Federation



2. Introduction

What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant participation gives tenants an opportunity to influence decisions about the housing services they receive. It enables the Council to build better links with tenants, local communities and others.

The Tenant Participation Strategy has been developed to make sure that tenants are empowered to have their say about the service they receive. To do that, we've consulted tenants and partners to agree a new strategy for 2025 – 2028. The strategy is based on what was important to tenants and how they wanted to take part.

Through the new Tenant Participation Strategy 2025 - 2028, we'll make sure that tenants are treated with respect, listened to and that they can influence decision making. That includes providing honest feedback to tenants about how and why decisions are made.

We know that tenants want to take part in ways that suit them. Participating can mean getting involved because of a single issue or joining regular local community groups. The strategy is shaped around providing as many different ways as possible for tenants to get involved. Whether that's through groups, engaging with their Housing Officers or through online communication.

Supporting the strategy will be embedded across the Housing Service. The way we communicate and engage with tenants is shaped by the core Council behaviors of respect, integrity and flexibility.

3. Vision

Our vision is to get more tenants involved, making sure they're empowered to have a say about their housing services and actively influence decision making.

This means that tenants know:

- **WHO** they can contact to get their views heard
- **HOW** they can get in touch so they can participate

- **WHAT** opportunities and ways they have to take part

Tenant Participation should be easy and accessible for everyone. To achieve this, we have set this strategy around **four key principles**. We'll then set out how we'll achieve these principles through an **action plan**.

4. Key Principles

Principle 1 – The importance of good communication

Outcome – To ensure tenants and residents are well informed to give their views.

Our objective:

Good communication is essential to allow tenants to influence how housing services are provided. It's important that the Council ensures that tenants have access to all the information they need to make informed choices. We will feedback to tenants when decisions are made and be clear why.

We will do this by:

- Providing good quality information that meets the needs of tenants and residents.
- Sharing information that is easy to read and in plain language.
- Providing information in a range of formats to suit tenants needs (for example, large print, audio CD and in community languages).
- Use a range of communication methods (online and offline).
- Provide opportunities for tenants and residents to tell us the types of information they are interested in receiving.
- Ensure tenants can speak to a staff member if they need support, for example if tenants need help to complete a survey or form.
- Guarantee that the results of consultations will be reported and kept under review.
- Tenants will get feedback on how and why decisions about their services are made.

Principle 2 – Improved opportunities to participate

Outcome – The Council listens to tenants and make sure their views and priorities are considered before decisions are reached.

Our objective:

We will provide a range of ways for tenants and residents to give their views to shape housing services. The Council will listen to the views of our tenants before decisions are reached.

We will do this by:

- Encouraging and making it easy for tenants and residents to give their views.
- Increasing the number of tenants and residents that we engage with.
- Providing a range of ways for tenants to give their views in a way that suits them.
- Providing a range of ways for tenants to give their feedback.
- Always ensure that enough time is provided to give their views.
- Listening to tenant feedback before decisions about housing services are reached.
- Developing new methods of engagement with groups who often do not get involved, such as young people.

Principle 3 – Tenant Led Scrutiny is strengthened

Outcome - The quality and standard of services provided to tenants is improved leading to higher tenant satisfaction.

Our objective:

To provide a range of ways for tenants to scrutinise the services they receive and make recommendations to improve services.

What we will do this by:

- Supporting a new Tenant Led Scrutiny Group, which will scrutinise areas of service delivery identified by tenants.
- Supporting the work of existing Scrutiny groups such as the Repairs Scrutiny Group and Sheltered Housing Scrutiny Group.
- Ensuring tenants are involved in locality Estate Improvement Groups and community walkabouts.

Principle 4 – Tenant Participation is supported and prioritised

Outcome - To provide resources and support for participation to empower tenants to get involved in the development and review of housing services.

Our objective:

To ensure that Tenant Participation is appropriately resourced.

We will do this by:

- Funding and supporting tenant and resident groups across the city.
- Making sure tenants know who tenant participation delivery partners are, how they can help them and how to make contact.
- Ensuring delivery partners have the resources to deliver on clearly defined SLA's, driven by the objectives and outcomes of the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Ensure training is provided to Housing staff so they can empower and support tenants participate in our local services.

5. Ways to get Involved

Tenants want to get involved in ways that suit them, and through the strategy we'll provide a range of options.

That can include:

- Joining a registered tenant organisation (RTO)
- Starting a new RTO if one doesn't exist in a tenants' area
- Getting involved in other locality groups (e.g. Community Councils)
- Joining a scrutiny group
- Just wanting to be kept up to date and informed of changes through a new digital Tenants Panel

If tenants would like more information and find out more about ways to get involved, they can email service.improvement@edinburgh.gov.uk or contact their Housing Officer.

6. Feeding Back

Tenants will be updated on the delivery of the strategy through regular communications and newsletters, such as the Tenants' Courier, Housing Officer and delivery partner newsletter and storyboards will provide local updates to communities.

7. Background and Legislative Context

[The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) requires social landlords to 'consult tenants on proposals that affect them and take account of their views'. All social landlords must also have a TPS which sets out the support, resources and actions to enable tenants to participate. The current TPS for the period 2020-2023 was approved by Committee on 20 January 2020.

[The Scottish Housing Regulator](#) monitors tenant participation, emphasising the importance of tenants and social landlords scrutinising services together to improve performance and ensure value for money. This now also forms part of the Annual Assurance Statement for the Housing Service.

8. Links to Other Strategies

Below are links to other strategies:

- [City Plan 2030](#)
- [Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2022-2028](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Framework for 2021-25](#)
- [Community Empowerment Strategy](#)
- [Housing as a Human Right](#)

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of tenant participation will be driven by the Service Improvement team, within the Housing and Homelessness Service.

Delivering the strategy will be dependent on embedding the delivery of tenant participation across all housing service areas, especially through locality teams. Local housing teams will be supported by the Service Improvement team and other delivery partners, sharing best practice and providing annual training.

10. Resource Statement

The strategy will be delivered through the Action Plan. Service Improvement will track delivery against the Action Plan and the Key Performance Indicators and measurements for Success as set out.

Updates on delivery of the strategy will be reported to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee annually in the Cyclical Assurances Report.

11. Action Plan

Principle 1: The importance of good communication

Outcome (what we want to achieve): To ensure tenants and residents are well informed, able to influence decisions and can easily access our services.

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator	Measuring success
a. Review all communication methods to ensure they meet accessibility regulations. This includes using plain English, easy read standard is adopted, captions for online content, and document styles and fonts to suit tenants who are visually impaired and meets BSL standards.	Service Improvement and Communications	Year 1 of the strategy	All communications Reviewed	Continuous improvement in the percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services/decisions (Tenant Survey). Baseline figure: 68.1% (2024 TS)
b. Ensure that tenants who cannot speak English, struggle to understand English, or have a sight or hearing loss know that we may be able to provide an interpreter or translate documents if needed. Additional support will be provided to people who struggle to read and write.	Service Improvement and Communications	Year 1 of the strategy	All communications reviewed to ensure accessible	
c. Review locality documentation to ensure tenants and partners have accurate and reliable points of contact to ensure that housing enquiries are always passed to the officer best equipped to offer a clear and helpful response, including those from elected members. Ensure that information is up to date and provide to tenants in a timely manner.	Service Improvement and Localities	Year 1 of the strategy	All communications reviewed	
d. Ensure Housing Officers are more visible and accessible by holding regular drop-in surgeries for tenants and distributing local 'patch' newsletters to explain Housing Officers' role/responsibilities and share local news/useful information (using a consistent citywide template).	Locality Housing Teams, assisted by Service Improvement & Communications	Year 1 of the strategy	All Housing Officers hold at least one surgery a quarter in the community	

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator	Measuring success
e. Housing Officers support engagement with tenants and residents by carrying out walkabouts of their areas with tenants.	Locality Housing Teams	Year 1 of the strategy	All Housing Officers hold at least one walkabout a quarter in the community	Continuous improvement in the percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about services/decisions (Tenant Survey). Baseline figure: 68.1% (2024 TS)
f. Locality Housing staff support tenant participation as a key element of their roles and help improve communication with tenants by providing local service information and 'good news' stories for publication within the Tenant's Chronicle and ETF Tenant's Voice.	Service Improvement and Localities	Year 1 of the strategy	One article provided per each edition.	
g. Take account of tenant feedback to improve the Tenants' Courier, the Council tenant newsletter. This will involve using a lighter, friendlier tone for better engagement. We'll also explore a digital version to provide more frequent information to tenants each month.	Service Improvement	Year 1 of the strategy	Tenants' Courier reviewed to adjust language Develop and trial an online Tenants Courier	
h. Explore new tenant welcome packs with some provisions to assist tenants in moving in and starting their tenancies positively. The packs could help to enhance the officer/tenant experience from the outset.	Service Improvement and Localities	Year 2 of the strategy	Packs include information about how tenants can participate	
i. Make better use of digital tools to engage and reach out to as many tenants as possible in ways that best suit them, including using social media platforms.	Service Improvement	Year 2 of the strategy	Increase in digital ways of engaging, including increased use of social media to target tenants	
j. Support tenants to develop digital skills by working with partners and signposting to existing delivery services, e.g. advertising through Tenants Courier.	Service Improvement	Year 1 of the strategy	Support services advertised in Tenants' Courier and other publications	

Principle 2 – Improved opportunities to participate

Outcome (what we want to achieve): The Council listens to tenants and make sure their views and priorities are considered before decisions are reached

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Measuring success
a. With ETF, continue to support existing Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs), Community Councils and help form new groups with tenants. Ensure that groups find ways to participate that suit them best, e.g. face to face or online	Service Improvement and Tenant Participation Partners	Year 1 of the strategy Ongoing	Number of groups remains the same or increases	Continuous improvement in the percentage of tenants who are satisfied with their opportunities to take part and influence decision-making (Tenant Survey). Baseline figure: 82.4% (2024 TS)
b. Provide a range of tenant participation options, including making better use of digital options so that tenants can have a say, E.g. use of emails and text surveys on key service areas. Refocus the Tenant Panel as a digital and online network to share information and reach out to tenants.	Service Improvement	Year 1 of the strategy Ongoing	Increased use of email and text to contact tenants and provide ways for them to feedback and participate Tenants Panel relaunched as tool to drive digital engagement Annual Tenants Survey carried out	
c. ETF and the Neighborhood Alliance (NA) to create 'story boards' to showcase their tenant participation work, the benefits it brings, their notable successes and the support they can provide. 'Story boards' can be placed in public spaces, e.g., GP surgeries, sheltered housing day rooms, schools, etc.	Service Improvement and Tenant Participation Partners	Year 2 of the strategy Ongoing	Two story boards to be provided by each delivery partner per year	

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Measuring success
d. Hold quarterly interactive workshops/working lunches with ETF (and tenants more widely) on a wide range of relevant topics to provide information, gather feedback and foster a sense of community.	Service Improvement	Year 2 of the strategy Ongoing	Four events held annually	Continuous improvement in the percentage of tenants who are satisfied with their opportunities to take part and influence decision-making (Tenant Survey). Baseline figure: 82.4% (2024 TS)
e. ETF to engage and work with young tenants and help them get involved in a way that suits them.	Service Improvement and Tenant Participation Partners	Year 3 of the strategy	Produce a summary on what works to engage with young people, including learnings	
f. Promote ETF at sign up to ensure that tenants are aware of where to get support to become involved in a way that best suits them.	Housing Locality and Tenant Participation Partners	Year 1 of the strategy Ongoing	Information on ETF to be included in welcome packs	
g. Work with the Housing Assistant Tenant Participation Champions to train area-based Housing Officers on tenant participation. This training will help officers to better engage with tenants in their local areas.	Service Improvement and Localities	Year 1 of the strategy Ongoing	Annual training/ update on tenant Participation to be provided to all officers (or at recruitment)	

Principle 3: Tenant Led Scrutiny is Strengthened

Outcome (what we want to achieve): The quality and standard of services provided to tenants is improved leading to higher tenant satisfaction

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicator	Measuring success
a. To support the Tenant Led Scrutiny group to independently review housing services and make recommendations for improvements.	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners and Council Officers	Year 1 of the strategy	A work plan, setting out scrutiny project identified by tenants and progress will be provided.	Scrutiny groups will provide recommendation reports, which will be assessed for deliverability before identification of improvements through service action plans.
b. Support existing groups to continue work to scrutinise service delivery in key areas, e.g. Repairs Scrutiny Group, Housing Repairs Scrutiny Group and Stair Cleaning Groups	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners	Ongoing	Each group holds at least one session per quarter	
c. Invite an ETF member to attend at least one Estate Improvement Group across the four localities to ensure consistency in the delivery of locally nominated land improvements .	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners	Ongoing	ETF attendance at Estate Improvement Group Meetings	
d. The Council and ETF will work in partnership to agree the rent consultation process.	Service Improvement and ETF	Year 1 of the strategy	A clear rent consultation process agreed	Increase in the number of tenants who can get involved and feel well informed

Principle 4: Tenant Participation is appropriately resourced and prioritised

Outcome (what we want to achieve): To provide resources and support to provide participation opportunities so tenants can get involved in the development and review of housing services.

What we'll do to achieve this	Responsible	Timescale	Key Performance Indicators	Measuring success
Provide support and funding for tenant and resident groups. Including providing grant funding for groups to start up and ongoing support to operate (e.g. room booking)	Service Improvement	Ongoing	The number of tenant and other locality groups remains the same or increases	Continuous improvement in the percentage of tenants who are satisfied with their opportunities to take part and influence decision-making (Tenant Survey). Baseline figure: Baseline figure: 82.4% (2024 TS)
Promote and support delivery partner organisations to increase visibility and recognition of organisations. Include a rebrand and rebrand of ETF.	Council Officers/ Tenant Participation Delivery Partners	Year 1 of the strategy	Increase of ETF Membership and number of groups supported by NA Increase awareness of tenant participation delivery partners	
Four Welcome sessions arranged by Tenant Participation Delivery Partners to give the opportunity to new tenants to meet partner TP organisations at signups to explain the support/ role of ETF and the Neighbourhood Alliance - encouraging sign up to digital communications/ blogs.	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners / Council Officers	Year 2 of the strategy	Four sessions held over period of the strategy	
SLAs of Tenant Participation delivery partners are driven by delivering the objectives and outcomes of the new strategy and increase tenant participation.	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners	Year 1 of the strategy	Annual SLAs to be agreed and reflect objectives	
Tenant Participation delivery partners share good news stories and community successes through the Tenants Voice publication.	Tenant Participation Delivery Partners	Year 1 of the strategy	Tenants Voice to include good new stories on a regular basis (one per quarter)	
Funding, training and resources are provided to Council officers so that they can meaningfully support the delivery of tenant participation.	The Council	Year 1 of the strategy	Dedicated staffing resource identified	