

Tenant Participation Strategy



2024-2026

"Osprey Housing believes that effective Tenant Participation and Engagement will help achieve a better, more responsive service delivery and will help us to make informed decisions on improving services and providing good value for money."

"This Strategy has been developed as Osprey Housing strives to continually improve and build on the success of existing Tenant Participation and Engagement"

OSPREY HOUSING TENANT PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Osprey Housing believe that effective and efficient use and implementation of digital technology is vital to our success in maintaining good quality services for all our tenants and providing value for money.

This is encompassed in our Core Values:

- **Ambition and Achievement** – we are a high performing organisation delivering through innovation and challenge
- **Equality and Respect** – we recognise and celebrate the unique value in everyone
- **Quality and Professionalism** – we strive to deliver high standards
- **Agile and Responsive** – we are flexible and quick to deal with change without diminishing our delivery

1. INTRODUCTION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Tenant Engagement is about effective communication with tenants and customers and getting them involved with their landlord to help develop the best possible housing services. This 2024 – 2026 TP Strategy is a review of the previous TP Strategy, carried out by the Tenant Participation Housing Officer taking in to account comments from OTRA, Senior Management and the Housing Services Committee, along with independent feedback from TPAS. Considerations were made regarding Osprey Housings digital strategy commitments and the changing circumstances of how tenant participation is undertaken in this day and age, particularly following the pandemic.

We understand that times are changing and how we engage with tenants is evolving. Alongside our commitment to providing digital options across the organisation, we are undertaking a review of how we deliver our Tenant Participation activities to fit in to the new normal of remote access and coming together, whilst apart. This plan is for the period 2024 - 2026, taking in to account the restrictions faced due to Coronavirus and our longer term goal of remote access tenant participation.

This Strategy is the foundation of our aims, objectives and action plan to ensure that all tenants of Osprey Housing can exercise their rights to get involved with us as defined in Housing Legislation and particularly the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Strategy is designed to empower tenants and other customers to influence and improve our performance and service delivery and, help us reach decisions that are transparent, effective and fair.

We recognise that tenants and the communities where they live are at the heart of our business and, that effective Tenant Engagement is a continuous, evolving process which requires our consistent support and full commitment from everyone at Osprey Housing.

We are fortunate to have Osprey Tenant and Residents Association as an active Registered Tenants Organisation. We are committed to working in close partnership with OTRA; other tenant representative organisations and our customer base more widely in the implementation and ongoing development of this strategy. Tenants wishing to find out more about OTRA can contact our Tenant Participation Housing Officer for more details.

OTRA Commitment Statement

Osprey Tenants and Residents Association (OTRA) strive to uphold the aims and objectives as set out in their constitution:

- Promote and enable tenant and service-user information, consultation and participation across OH communities.

- Uphold equal opportunities and promote good relations amongst all sections of the community served by OH
- Safeguard and promote the interests of OH communities on matters concerning housing services and on social, environmental and community issues.
- Provide opportunity for scrutiny and encourage, support and promote the work of the Scrutiny and Task Panels in achieving the aims and objectives of the Association.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to achieve our aims.

Osprey Housing is at the forefront of the decision making process of Osprey Housing with their views and opinions being taken on board and shaping group policies and procedures.

OTRA will, at all times:

- Understand the importance of Tenant participation in ensuring Osprey Housing delivers its core values and aims
- Be committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for tenants
- Provide innovative solutions for Osprey Housing to deliver Tenant Participation

Benefits of Tenant participation OH aims to achieve

Osprey Housing believes that effect Tenant Participation and Engagement will help achieve a better more responsive service delivery and will help us to make informed decisions on improving services and providing good value for money. Osprey hopes to continually improve and build on the successes of existing Tenant Participation and Engagement.

SECTION 2 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY

1. Background and Legislation

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gave tenants and tenant's groups the right to be involved and to take part in decisions which affect them, later legislation has strengthened tenants' rights. The Act also places duties on landlords to ensure there are ways for tenants to get involved in decisions and to support and resource tenant participation.

When the Housing Act was amended in 2010, new standards were introduced by the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) in April 2013.

"THE CHARTER"

The Charter was developed in 2012 and updated in 2017 with the aim to improve the quality and value of services provided by social landlords. It sets out the outcomes and standards that Local Housing Authorities and all landlords in Scotland are expected to meet and the levels of services tenants should expect from LHA. The Charter covers 16 key areas including participation and communication. The Charter was developed by tenants for tenants.

The Charter ensures that tenant scrutiny and landlord self assessment to report on our performance are now key priorities on the Scottish housing agenda. Tenant scrutiny is more than just another tenant participation activity. It is a way of giving tenants greater influence and the ability to hold landlords to account by having more influence on the business decisions and the performance of their landlord.

There are three key outcomes within the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) that are particularly relevant to our tenant participation activity and reflect our aims and objectives –

SSHC Outcome 2 – Communication: Social Landlords manage their businesses so that;

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

SSHC Outcome 3 – Participation; Social Landlords manage their business so that;

- ✓ *Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.*

SSHC Outcomes 14 & 15 – Rents and Service Charges; Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and customers so that;

- ✓ *A balance is struck between level of service provided, the costs of the services, and for how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them*
- ✓ *Tenants get clear information on how rents and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.*

The Scottish Social Housing Charter can be viewed in full at [Scottish Social Housing Charter November 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-2022/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx) - if you require a printed copy of this document please contact your Housing Officer

2. Key Principles - Why the Strategy has been developed

We want to continue to develop and improve how we work with our tenants and offer a range of ways tenants can participate with the our own and wider community activities. This is underpinned by the following three key principles:-



OPPORTUNITY

- Give all tenants the opportunity to get involved at a level that suits them and engage in ways that are accessible.
- Promoting good practice and innovative ideas for encouraging and sustaining Tenant Participation



CONSULTATION & PARTICIPATION

- Providing tenants with option to comment on policy, service development and any significant proposals that may affect them
- Providing relevant and timely feedback on outcomes



SUPPORT & INFORMATION

- Staff and budgetary support for our Tenant Organisation to meet their obligations and develop their activities
- Make training and resources available

SECTION 3

Aims and Objectives

Osprey Housing constantly strives to improve and develop its services and we see tenant participation as an essential tool in helping us become more efficient, accountable and responsive to changing needs.

Osprey Housing aims to ensure that effective engagement and involvement leads to better and more responsive management and informs decisions about improving service delivery and providing value for money.

Our objectives for successful tenant participation are to ensure that;

- ❖ Our tenants recognise us as an approachable and listening landlord.
- ❖ As a natural inclusive part of our service we ensure equal access and fair delivery of services to all sectors of our communities including young people and families, older tenants, those with disabilities or illness and those with different cultural, language and communication requirements.
- ❖ We provide excellent housing management through improved service delivery and value for money.
- ❖ We support opportunities for tenants, Board members and staff to develop new knowledge and skills.
- ❖ We develop effective communication between staff, Board members and all tenants.
- ❖ We assist Board members, staff and tenants become more aware of each other's perspectives and the organisational and financial limitations.
- ❖ Better links are created between us and the communities we serve.
- ❖ Formal tenant organisations such as Osprey Tenants and Residents Association feel valued and supported in their work.
- ❖ Tenants have access to developing the skills and confidence they seek to influence decisions.
- ❖ There is a culture of mutual respect to allow understanding between all those involved in participation.
- ❖ Tenants' satisfaction with their homes and neighbourhood is enhanced.

- ❖ Board members, management team and staff have increased motivation in delivering and developing services which meet tenant and community aspirations.

Links to other Strategies and Services

This Tenant Participation Strategy is closely linked to other key Group strategies and in particular:

- The overall Strategic Plan (Business Plan)
- Communications Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- IT Strategy
- Service Improvement Plans
- Scrutiny Programme
- Housing Service: Strategic & Operational Objectives
- Welfare Reform Mitigation Plan
- Affordable Warmth Strategy/Action Plan
- Digital Strategy

SECTION 4

WAYS OF CONSULTING & WHAT WE CONSULT ON

Osprey Housing and OTRA are continuing to develop new ways of involving tenant in ongoing consultation on all aspects of Ospreys activities as a landlord.

The close working we have had with OTRA has involved the Tenants Association examining our business plan in detail. In particular, agreeing what rent levels are required to keep Osprey viable; ensure we can keep houses well maintained and that we are able to move forward with plans to improve our service to tenants.

We believe that this more detailed level of ongoing consultation with the Tenants Association is constructive, meaningful and ensures the voice of tenants is at the very heart of what Osprey is doing and where we want to go.

Osprey Housing's overall approach to the consultation process on Rent and Service charges was reviewed in 2017 taking into account Scottish Housing Regulator's recommendation to meet good practice and legislative requirements. The housing team has actively engaged with residents, delivering rent consultation sessions face to face allowing tenants to have an understanding of the business plan and the affect rent levels have on this.

Engagement and Involvement is about effective communication with tenants/customers and getting tenants/customers involved to help develop the best possible housing services.

We believe this incorporates tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about:

- Housing policies
- Housing conditions: and
- Housing (and related) services. (i.e rents)

The Scottish Government defines Tenant Participation as:

"It is a two way process which involves transparency and the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve the standard of communications; housing conditions and services." (National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999))

We recognise that "engagement", will mean different things to different people – ranging from simply receiving the information that tenants need about our services in a way that can be easily understood to active involvement in decision making by tenants.

We provide a range of flexible options which give our tenants and other customers a variety of choices and opportunities to get involved. It is particularly important to provide flexibility given the diversity of all participants, tenants' needs, aspirations and individual circumstances.

Osprey Housing recognise that tenant engagement is usually associated with housing issues however we will embrace participation or scrutiny in areas indirectly associated with housing. For example welfare rights, governance or wider community aspects.

The consultation process will be continually developed and strengthened over time. However, methods of consultation may include:

- Home visits
- Through OTRA and other tenants groups
- Surveys (using varying methodologies)
- "Point of contact" feedback i.e whenever communicating with tenants
- Website and IT consultative techniques
- Social Media – utilising the chosen platforms to their fullest capacity
- Meetings/working groups and focus groups virtually or face to face
- Conferences/special events
- Specially tailored applications for specific groups including harder to reach. Specifically those digitally excluded and groups who may be difficult to engage with.

Keeping Tenants (and other service users) Informed/Giving Feedback

We will use a range of methods to keep tenants (and other service users) informed and giving feedback following consultation. Methods will be tailored to the particular issues on which information is being provided and agreed with OTRA in advance of information being provided.

Methods will include:

- Letters; information leaflets and newsletters
- Telephone contact) and text messaging
- Personal visits by housing staff
- Special information events such as drop ins
- Website and email bulletins
- Social media – engagement posts, regular information sharing (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OTRA.Online>)
- Meetings/ focus groups
- Local area representatives (Tenant Champions)
- Tenant report

SECTION 5

KEY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

We offer a range of options to engage with tenants. We really do want tenants to get involved in what affects them and their communities, to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all. Tenants views matter! We also understand that maintaining close links with tenants through all means including digital is important to developing our communities and services.

Within Osprey's overall structure for Tenant Participation and engagement there are however a number of ways of getting more specifically involved:

1. OTRA – Osprey Tenant and Resident Association

Times are changing and the old way of running a tenant association are no longer viable. The new normal of remote access needs to be utilised and we recognise the importance of this. At present Osprey utilises a hybrid approach to meetings to maximise participation.

This Association comprises tenants who are interested in shaping our service delivery through working in partnership with us. They meet with us on a regular basis throughout the year to help set the agenda for participation and address on- going issues which require discussion, debate and consultation. They also provide ongoing input when requested in relation to any matters or proposals which affect tenants, for example scrutiny projects, ongoing policy reviews and rent consultations.

Any tenant can join the Tenant Association and the views of members are recognised as sample opinions of the general population of our tenants.

At this time, OTRA has a committee from its membership, has an elected Chairperson and is a Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO)

We understand that not all tenants can meet digitally, therefore we are utilising our Digital Strategy to assist those who may be excluded and will be taking a blended approach of digital and face to face meetings in the future.

We will also identify tenants who may wish to take part but may be digitally excluded by offering them support and assistance to get online as per our digital strategy. It is also hoped that underrepresented groups, such as young people, and people who need additional support to get involved etc will use this as an opportunity and be encouraged to take part as involvement.

The Tenant Association will continue to:

- Meet regularly online
- Receive training and guidance to help them fulfil their role.
- Maintain Registered Tenant Organisation Status.
- Maintain minutes of their meeting
- Publish items in Tenant newsletters that are issued to tenants, to keep them updated with the issues under discussion and the outcome of consultation completed.
- Actively engage with tenants on social media to identify matters to be discussed/reviewed.
- Work in partnership with Osprey Housing

Tenants wishing to raise a matter for the attention of OTRA can do so by contacting Osprey Housing offices. Staff there will direct their query or comments to the Director of Housing Services or Tenant Participation Housing Officer who will report them to the Chairperson.

2. Tenants & Residents groups

If tenants wish, they can set up local groups for their area and we can offer funding and support to help set up. For more information on how to set up a group, the local area Housing Officers and the Tenant Participation Housing Officer will be able to provide assistance.

3. Register of interested tenants

If you want to be consulted or involved from the comfort of your own home, you can join our register of interested tenants, we will contact you from time to time to collect your view. This will primarily be done through the Facebook group (see below) but a list of tenants interested without access will also be maintained for consultation.

4. Walkabouts

If you want to rate your estate, A "rate my estate" tool is available which will enable the tenant champions (see below), and other tenants, to provide ongoing feedback on their schemes so that Osprey Housings service delivery continues to develop.

5. Tenant Champions

Champions are tenants in local areas who wish to get involved at a local level, addressing issues that are relevant to them rather than across Osprey Housings stock. The individuals will be known to the relevant area Housing Officers who will liaise with them frequently to deliver progress updates on issues and matters raised.

6. Social Media

A closed Facebook OTRA page has been established which all tenants across the organisation have been invited to join. The regular newsletters give information on how to join. The purpose of the page is to get news, polls and other interactive posts to tenants at a time that suits.

The page is for tenants to give us feedback on a variety of matters including policies and procedures under review

The page is full of information such as upcoming TP events which may be of interest. OTRA group will use the page to consult, engage and inform tenants.

7. Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Osprey Housing were initially active participants in the CIH Early Adopters Pilot Scheme and established a fully trained Scrutiny Panel consisting of tenants, staff and board members.

The Panel have terms of reference in place to specify the scope of Osprey Housing and will be used to challenge our service standards and performance. The Panel will undertake a programme of scrutiny activities on an annual basis in partnership with the Senior Leadership Team.

The panel will be closely involved in future Policy change, performance outcomes and

direction of service delivery and we are excited to be leading the way in Tenant Scrutiny. As group membership of the Panel changes, continuous and ongoing training will be provided to enable them to fully engage in the scrutiny activities. To find out more or get involved, tenants should contact their Housing Officer.

8. Board Membership

Tenants of Osprey Housing are entitled to seek election to and if successful, thereafter participate as a full member of the OH Board or OHM Committee of Management. As with the election of any Board or Committee of Management this would be subject to a process of nomination and evaluation to ensure that the nominee is eligible and would bring requisite skills; experience and knowledge to the Governing bodies that are needed at any given time and, would enhance that which already exists.

9. Satisfaction Surveys

Satisfaction surveys are used to find out what tenants think of any part of our service. They are primarily used for repairs and incoming/outgoing tenants, but options to roll them out across the entire organisation are being looked at. The results are monitored and reported to help us improve our performance and will be used when producing our Tenants Report. This is a simple but effective method of participation on aspects of service delivery. Osprey Housing have developed a variety of Tenant Satisfaction surveys and methods of collection to ensure we are continually collecting and reviewing outcomes against the SSHC and ARC performance.

10.NETRALT and TPAS Engagement

Osprey Housing are active participants in North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and use this as a forum to interact with Landlords in the local area. Members of OTRA are also encouraged to attend alongside the TP Housing Officer & Director of Housing Services. NETRALT is designed as a platform to share best practice, experience, skills and knowledge and allows Landlords to achieve best value for money in TP through sharing resources and organising joint activities.

The TPHO will also actively engage directly with TPAS, attending regular TP Officer meetings in order to gain and share insight into new ideas or ways of engaging with tenants. The TPHO will share these ideas and if necessary, incorporate them into the TP Action Plan.

11.OHM Membership

Tenants are actively encouraged to become a Shareholding Member by completing an Application form and paying a token £1 for share ownership. Following the results of the Transfer of Engagements process at the end of 2020, this may no longer be applicable beyond March 2021.

SECTION 6
DELIVERING THIS STRATEGY – OUR ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2023

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	LEAD PERSON
Increase membership of existing RTO	Promoting membership ongoing throughout tenant communications and tenant events	Ongoing	OTRA/OG
	Follow up contact with interested tenants within a month of initial interest	Ongoing	TPHO
	Promoting the existing RTO and options available for participation. Continue	Ongoing	OTRA/OG
Promoting the Tenant participation	Maintain Facebook/social media presence. Encourage digital participation	Ongoing	OG
	Newsletter articles and other relevant media raising awareness	Twice per annum	OTRA/OG
	Housing Team continually promoting during day to day activities	Ongoing	HO
	Existing RTO members raising awareness and promoting participation to other tenants	Ongoing	OTRA
	Engaging with other organisations/RTO's and local initiatives	Ongoing	OTRA/OG
Supporting the RTO to grow and develop	Encourage diversity within tenant participation and ensuring accessible to all	Ongoing	OTRA/OG
	Promote membership of Governing Bodies by raising awareness and offering support through the process	Ongoing	OTRA/OG
	Training opportunities shared and supported	Ongoing	DHS/TPHO HO
	HO to support/encourage tenants in their area to get involved	Ongoing	DHS/TPHO
	Facilitate and administer meetings	Ongoing	HO
	Housing team to lead on Scheme Champions and associated estate walkabouts/action plans/TSS	Ongoing	TPHO/DHS
	Ongoing Social Media engagement (OTRA & Osprey Housing Pages)	Ongoing	TPHO/DHS
Continue to undertake "Rate my estate" visits	Ongoing	TPHO/DHS/IT	
Encourage/incentivise tenant involvement	2021	TPHO/DHS	

	Continued promotion of OTRA Facebook Page in communications Identify key groups not represented in OTRA (by Age, location etc) and develop a specific engagement plan		
Tenant Newsletter	OTRA to put forward suggestions and article ideas Review and agree content before issue Real life stories to be included to showcase the difference Osprey Housing makes	Twice per annum – Spring and Winter	OTRA/TPHO
Annual Return on the Charter	Reviewing and approving the submission prior to GB signoff Approving content of ARC Tenants Report	May – annual October - annual	OTRA/DHS
Tenant Satisfaction Surveys	Use of estate walkabouts to measure TSS Embedding continual collection of data across organisation SLT and OTRA to review TSS outcomes quarterly basis TSS outcomes report to GB on quarterly basis OTRA Facebook page Polls/engagement posts Use of "Rate my estate" Mystery shoppers	Ongoing Ongoing Quarterly Quarterly Ongoing	HO SLT SLT/OTRA SLT TPHO/DHS
Tenant Scrutiny	Training for all tenant members Training for relevant staff Awareness across organisation on scrutiny – annual all staff input Agree Scrutiny Programme Promote through social media/newsletter	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing 2024 Ongoing	OTRA
Policies & Legislation	OTRA to be involved in policy reviews for tenant facing policies and strategies SLT to use OTRA for consultation where appropriate for procedure reviews	Ongoing Ad hoc	SLT/OTRA SLT
Promoting Good practice in Tenant Consultation processes	External consultations – tenant member involvement Share consultations with all tenants on relevant subjects (ie, rent reviews) Implement online consultation options Face to face opportunities for tenant consultation events where appropriate	Ad hoc Ongoing Ongoing Annual events	OTRA DHS DHS DHS

	Use all communication options when notifying tenants of legislation changes that may affect them	Ad hoc	SLT
TP Budget	Monitor TP expenditure on a quarterly basis Monitor TS expenditure on a quarterly basis Annual audit of the RTO accounts to be carried out	Quarterly Quarterly Annually	DOF/OTRA DOF.OTRA OTRA

SECTION 7 MONITORING & REVIEW

Tenant participation is an ongoing and evolving process which is at the core of our service delivery and should lead to benefits for all concerned.

The strategy will be regularly reviewed, and we will consult with tenants and tenants groups to review our strategy at least every 2 years. The review will be undertaken with a view to assessing its effectiveness and appropriateness, focusing on:

- Updating the action plan
- Progress on the scrutiny program
- Tenant and staff training requirements
- Reviewing outcomes from meetings
- Feedback and follow up from surveys
- Progress on improvement plans
- Number of events held/levels of engagement

To ensure that agreed objectives are being met and to highlight which activities are working well and which are not and where adjustments to the process are required in the light of changing circumstances, a regular review (at least once every 6 months) of the Action Plan will be carried out taking in to account changing circumstances.

The Action Plan has been developed and will be reviewed by OTRA and the Management Team ensuring timescales are appropriate and being met and all proposed actions are being delivered.

SECTION 8 RESOURCES & TRAINING

During the annual budgeting process Osprey Housing and OTRA work together to review and determine annual resource requirements.

Osprey Housing is committed to providing:

- Financial Support through the allocation of an annual sum agreed with OTRA who in turn determine a program of activities on which the budget will be spent. This will normally accommodate associated expenditure such as costs of providing lunch/teas etc; out of pocket expenses; attendance at training/conference events; travelling expenses etc
- Provision of meeting rooms within Osprey Housings offices
- Access to IT and support networks
- Dedicated staff support

SECTION 9 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Osprey Housing want to make sure that all tenants are treated in a fair and equal manner regardless of any ethnic or national origins, race, colour, age, gender, sexuality, political or other belief, religion, marital status, illness, disability or other status.

So that everyone can access information about the organisation, arrangements will be made for information to be available, on request, in different styles, languages or formats. Translation and interpretation services will also be made available if this is required.

To ensure as far as possible maximum attendance from tenants, many of whom live in rural areas, every effort will be made to hold public meetings at times convenient to tenants and in locations which are fully accessible.