

AHP Tenants Panel News Sheet

August 2007

By Tenants; For Tenants

WELCOME TO OUR TENANTS PANEL NEWS SHEET

We'll send you updates like this periodically to let you know how we are progressing with tenant consultation and participation.

So far the Panel has met on four occasions since the start of the year, our latest meeting being held on June 16th at the offices of AHP near Kemnay.

We now have a core group of eight Panel members drawn from across Aberdeenshire and we would welcome more members. If you think that you might be interested in becoming a Panel member just contact Judith at the TIGHRA office and she will arrange for you to receive information about our next meeting.

So, what have we been doing at the meetings?

Well, an important part of our work has been to take forward ideas to further improve the maintenance and repairs service. Together with officers we have looked at ways to ensure that the repairs satisfaction slips (which you all get to complete when repairs are carried out) provide an accurate picture of whether the service meets tenants' needs effectively and efficiently.

Also, some members of the Panel have been involved in a working group with officers to look at ways to improve different aspects of the maintenance service. From the workshops, an improvement plan is being put together for future action.

You can help the process along by making sure that you always return your Repairs Satisfaction Slip with information to let the maintenance office know whether repair works have been carried out satisfactorily.

Another very important part of our work has been to revise the Tenant Participation Strategy. Overleaf you will find details about this and we would urge you to take up the opportunity to read the full strategy and comment on the proposals. We will take your feedback into account before finalising the details of the strategy.

TENANTS PANEL GOES OUT AND ABOUT!

The Panel were 'out and about' in the northern part of Aberdeenshire on Tuesday 17th July to visit some areas where AHP tenants live or will shortly be moving in. The towns and villages visited were Newmacher, Newburgh, Peterhead and Fraserburgh, where the residents at Jarvis Court kindly provided a 'fly-cup' and an opportunity for a chat about how consultation for tenants in sheltered housing can be developed.

TIGHRA assists and provides services for AHP Tenants Panel. Contact Judith McCullough at 01467 672233 if you would like to receive a large print News Sheet.

TIGHRA Ltd. Fairfax House, 64 Market Place, Inverurie, AB51 3XN; email judith@tighra.org

Important News About Your Tenant Participation Strategy

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership is currently revising the Tenant Participation Strategy. This strategy is important because it is the plan for future action to ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to influence their housing service. An effective strategy will help to ensure that the Association makes decisions that work for tenants.

You can receive a copy of the strategy from the AHP office along with a short questionnaire to return with your comments on the proposals. The strategy and questionnaire can also be downloaded from the website www.a-h-p.org.uk. We've outlined the main points of the revised strategy here for your reference.

Sections 1 and 2: Introduction and Background

These sections explain AHP's commitment to enabling and supporting tenant participation and describe the law which ensures tenants' rights to be informed and consulted about services.

Section 3: Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

There are twelve objectives which describe the intentions of the Association and tenants to create an environment where tenants can exercise their rights to participate easily and effectively.

Section 4: Development of the Strategy

Describes how the strategy has been developed and the people who have been consulted.

Section 5: Key Elements of the Strategy

- Describes the ways which AHP will inform, and communicate with, tenants.
- Outlines the processes for consultation and the issues which will be consulted on.
- Explains the group structures which tenants may wish to use for collective consultation.

The group structures proposed are: The Tenants Panel, Local Tenant Groups and a third group which we could call an Armchair Panel.

The Armchair Panel is proposed as a group structure for tenants who would like to be involved on a regular basis but who find it difficult to attend meetings of the Tenants Panel. Those with disabilities, with young families, work commitments or those who live in the supported housing may find this group suits their needs. Panel meeting papers, surveys and guidance or information materials would be sent to group members by post or email – depending on their requirements. We would particularly like your opinion on this structure and about whether you would like to join such a group.

Section 6: Monitoring and Review

This section describes how the strategy will be kept updated and reviewed to meet the needs of tenants as participation opportunities develop.

Section 7 and 8: Resources and Training

In order for the strategy to be effective it is important to know what resources are required to support its implementation. This section outlines the resources committed by the Association.

Section 9: Equality and Diversity

All tenants should have equal access to participation opportunities and housing services. This section underlines AHP's commitment to ensuring that this can happen.

Section 10: The Action Plan

The last section describes the schedule of actions to be taken during 2007 to develop tenant participation. The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed for 2008/09.