

*at home with...*



# Engagement Strategy

Reference / Issue No:	H/4	2
Date of this version:	March 2018	
Next review due:	March 2021	
Lead responsibility:	Housing	
Contents:	12 pages	4 appendices



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Fife Housing Group (FHG) we believe effective tenant and customer engagement enhances our business and helps us to understand how we can improve the way in which we deliver our services. This is why, through this Strategy, we are committed to strengthening the voice of our tenants, owners and other stakeholders to influence the services we provide.
- 1.2 The Strategy sets out our strategic direction for tenant and customer engagement. It reflects our core values and at the same time recognises that the best opportunities for us to succeed are created when colleagues, tenants and all of our customers work together in partnership to achieve common goals.
- 1.3 The Strategy:
  - ✓ creates a framework which encourages a diversity of tenants and other stakeholders to actively be involved in shaping, improving and scrutinising our services;
  - ✓ makes sure all tenants and customers, who want to, have the opportunity to have their say; and
  - ✓ aims to ensure what we do is outcome-led.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1 In reviewing this Strategy we aim to:
  - ✓ continue reflecting our values of being: 'accountable', 'firm but fair', open and honest' and 'versatile', in having honest dialogue with residents through various approaches and with a principle of mutual respect and trust
  - ✓ maximise the opportunities for tenants and other stakeholders to work with us in improving homes, neighbourhoods and related services
  - ✓ emphasise our commitment towards working collaboratively
  - ✓ promote the key principle of tenant and stakeholder engagement
  - ✓ learn from good practice seen within other organisations

## 3. What does 'engagement' mean?

- 3.1 We own and manage just under 2,500 properties. We want to ensure we provide the tenants who live in these properties with homes where they choose to live at a rent they can afford.

- 3.2 Fife Housing Association (FHA), which is part of FHG, is also a Registered Property Factor and this means that we manage many of the services, repairs and maintenance and landscape areas for certain owned property. As Property Factor we have a commercial relationship with these property owners.
- 3.3 The properties that we own are also part of a much wider community and each of those communities are a part of Fife. This then means that we have a relationship with the many other individuals and organisations who, like us, are working to keep Fife as a great place to live.
- 3.4 Engagement is about how we ensure that tenants, factored owners, community representatives, local groups and other stakeholders, take part in certain decision-making processes and are able to influence how we deliver services that relate to housing and the surrounding community.

#### **4. Background to our Strategy**

- 4.1 We recognise that we need to improve our engagement arrangements to meet our ambition to develop effective co-regulation and strengthen the voice of our tenants and customers.
- 4.2 The Housing Scotland Act 2001 places a duty on us, to develop a strategy that outlines how we encourage and enable tenants to participate in the decision-making processes.
- 4.3 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, through the establishment of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, set the standards and expected outcomes that we should aim to achieve, including how we engage with our tenants and customers.
- 4.4 The Scottish Executive Guidance on the tenant participation provisions of the 2001 Act, set out the general principles on tenant participation, information and consultation and whilst this has been overtaken by the 2010 Act with the creation of The Scottish Government it is worth reminding ourselves of some of those statements which remain valid:
  - ‘Tenant participation requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, elected and committee/ board members, and housing officers at all levels, working together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services;
  - Tenant participation practice should be seen as a continuous process where information, ideas and power are shared, common understandings of problems are strived for and a consensus on solutions is worked out;
  - Good tenant participation allows all parties to contribute to the agenda. All participants require to have all the information needed to consider issues properly; that information requires to be clear, timely and accessible and to take account of equal opportunities concerns;

- Processes of decision-making should be open, clear and accountable;
  - Adequate time should be given to tenant representatives to consider the issues properly. Tenants should have the opportunity to work out a common view in advance of meeting landlords' representatives; and
  - Participation must meet the requirements of the legislation surrounding equal opportunities. Good practice in participation removes barriers to effective participation arising from ethnicity, geographic location, special needs, language difficulties, age, sexual orientation, or disability.'
- 4.5 The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which was reviewed in April 2017, imposes a statutory duty on social landlords to manage their business so that: **'tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with'**.
- 4.6 Irrespective of the legislative requirements, we see engagement with tenants and other stakeholders as best practice and a normal element of how we should operate. This should be a two-way process of working together and sharing ideas and information, with the overall aim being to improve homes and services for tenants.
- 5. Why do we need a Strategy and where do we want to get to?**
- 5.1 We want to create an approach to involving and engaging tenants, owners and other stakeholders where their views help to drive forward service improvements. This Strategy, therefore, provides a wide range of engagement options, including a greater use of technology so that we can be flexible in the ways we respond effectively to both external and internal challenges. We aim to achieve this by:
- building on good initiatives already in place;
  - further developing our scrutiny group, Resident VOICES;
  - increasing the options available for tenants, owners and other stakeholders to become involved with us in a way that suits them;
  - exploring ways to use technology to create more flexible ways to consult our tenants and other customers; and
  - looking to recruit new members with skills that strengthen our Board and support our governance structure.
- 5.2 In carrying out the above, we will take steps to ensure that all of our engagement opportunities are fully accessible and inclusive and we will make it as easy as possible for tenants, owners and other stakeholders to provide feedback and engage with us.
- 5.3 We will also provide clear routes into involvement and evidence how we have improved services as a direct result of tenant and customer feedback – this will be done through internal and external newsletters.

## **6. Delivering engagement and involvement in Fife**

- 6.1 This Strategy aims to be open and honest with all residents to whom we provide a service about the many opportunities that they have to become involved with what we do and how we do it.
- 6.2 Our aim is to embed resident engagement throughout Fife Housing Group so that each colleague understands and appreciates that they have a responsibility, irrespective of their role, to ensure that proper and timely engagement takes place within our key activities.

## **7. Strengthening co-regulation**

- 7.1 In order to meet our aspirations for co-regulation we need to meaningfully engage with tenants, owners and other stakeholders to scrutinise and shape the services we provide.
- 7.2 Our approach is based on the premise that we should be accountable to tenants and other stakeholders for services we deliver. This involves creating a culture of transparency and adopting a robust approach that includes evidence based self-assessment, external challenge and regular reporting to tenants.
- 7.3 In the paragraphs below we outline the wide range of opportunities that exist within the Group; options which have been developed to take into account the varied backgrounds of residents, their appetite for involvement, and the diverse needs of customers and the communities they live within.

## **8. Resident-led scrutiny**

- 8.1 Much of our emphasis over the past year has been towards the development of our scrutiny arrangements, and in particular, the creation and support, through learning and development, of our scrutiny group, 'Resident VOICES'.
- 8.2 This team is made up of up to 12 members who are our customers; they may be tenants, factored owners or a community member and places are available on the team for all.
- 8.3 Being a member of this team involves identifying areas of our services that require review, and then independently scrutinising and examining those services to ensure all customers are receiving a good service. As part of this role they will highlight areas where we could improve or learn from others. They play a vital role by contributing this learning towards our programme of service and standards improvement.
- 8.4 In order to strengthen our approach to co-regulation we will commission an independent person to act as a 'critical friend', to support 'Resident VOICES', to effectively scrutinise the wide range of services we provide.

- 8.5 We also plan to carry out a recruitment drive to attract tenants and customers to potentially increase the number of tenants and customers interested in working with us to improve services across a range of roles.
- 8.6 We will also work with Resident VOICES to explore new ways of carrying out scrutiny activities. For instance, one housing association has moved away from the traditional scrutiny model, where scrutiny members select topics for examination, based on performance reports and highlighted weaknesses in service delivery, in favour of a model that focusses on the Group's priorities, and in particular, the priorities of their management team – whilst tempering this with a review of performance - ensuring 'buy in' from Heads of Service and ensuring the Group tackles concerns which are current and relevant.

## **9. Increase the number and diversity of involved tenants and customers**

- 9.1 In order to increase the volume and diversity of tenants and stakeholders to engage with us, we plan to develop further our Register of Interested Residents. This is a database of tenants and other stakeholders who have agreed to act as a sounding board for the organisation. They will be able to participate in ways that suit them and choose what they get involved in. We already have around 50 members on this database and plan to market and grow this using the Critical Friend appointment, to reflect our diverse customer base and use it to actively consult and seek feedback.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1 The views of our scrutiny group, Resident VOICES, regarding the content and format of this Strategy were sought as part of this review. In particular we sought feedback from the group on the following:
- The suggested methods for gaining involvement;
  - How we can best encourage involvement with groups that may be harder to reach or that historically may have felt excluded (this could include residents who have a disability, young people, people from black and minority ethnic communities, for example);
  - Our support for residents' associations;
  - How we seek to assess the satisfaction of those who receive services from Fife Housing Group;
  - Our consultation processes; and
  - The style and readability of this strategy.
- 10.2 All suggestions and observations made during this consultation were taken into account as part of this review.

## 11. Regulatory compliance

11.1 This Strategy complies with the following Charter outcomes:

**Outcome 1: Equalities** – ‘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.’

**Outcome 2: Communication** – ‘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’.

**Outcome 3: Participation** – ‘tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with’.

## 12. Methods of engagement

12.1 We aim to build on the ways we communicate with our customers and we believe that seeking and collating tenant’s views plays an important part in doing this. Our main methods of communication at present are attached in Appendix C.

## 13. Equality accessibility

13.1 This Strategy complies with equality requirements to ensure fair treatment for all tenants and customers without discrimination or prejudice. At all times we will, therefore, consider the interests of everyone, regardless of sex, faith or religion, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, mental or physical health, disability or marital status.

13.2 Where required, we will provide all necessary documents in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

## 14. Roles and responsibilities

14.1 The Board has ultimate responsibility to ensure that engagement and involvement processes are accessible and fairly applied.

14.2 The Group’s Director of Housing is responsible for ensuring that this Strategy is consulted on with tenants, customers and board members and for its review, implementation and proper application.

## 15. Performance management

15.1 Any concerns regarding the adherence to this Strategy will be reported to the Board.

- 15.2 We produce a range of performance indicators, including our performance in relation to our engagement.
- 15.3 Every two years we commission a Customer Satisfaction Survey and this will ask a range of questions of tenants relating to engagement. The outcomes of this survey will be reported to Board, tenants and the Scottish Housing Regulator through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

## **16. Review**

- 16.1 This policy is due to be reviewed every three years or earlier if a material change or regulatory standard requires this.

## Appendix A - Abbreviations and other terms

From time to time we can all slip into using abbreviations and shortened names and terms and, whilst we always try to make sure that we minimise our use of abbreviations and acronyms in our publications, occasionally they will get through. We have therefore included a short guide below to help.

Abbreviation	Term	Meaning
<b>AGM</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	Meeting held every year at which we approve the financial statements, appoint Board Members and approve any changes to our rules.
<b>ARC</b>	<b>Annual Return on the Charter</b>	The annual report of our performance that is made to tenants and the Scottish Housing Regulator.
	<b>Benchmarking</b>	How we compare our performance against those of other RPs and organisations.
	<b>Best Value</b>	<p>A widely-used method for testing the robustness, based on ‘the four Cs’ (see below) of key services provided to customers together with support facilities. The four best value Cs are:</p> <p>Challenge – why do we have this service?</p> <p>Comparison – how do we compare to others?</p> <p>Consultation – what do customers and other stakeholders think?</p> <p>Competition – testing against what others can provide</p>
<b>BM</b>	<b>Board member</b>	People who have applied and been appointed to serve on the board and bring a wide range of skills and experience.
	<b>Board</b>	The name for the group of up to 15 members who are responsible for the strategic direction and overall management of Fife Housing Group.
	<b>Business Plan</b>	The resources and financial part of our strategic planning. This is the document which is reviewed annually based on the approved budget and in which we ensure that the finances are sound to support the aims and objectives of the Group.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>CEO</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	The person appointed by the board, and employed by Fife Housing Group, to lead the organisation's operations, to work with the board on strategic matters and to implement their decisions.
	<b>Chair</b>	The board member appointed, by the board, to lead Fife Housing Group's board.
<b>CoSLA</b>	<b>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities</b>	An organisation to which many local authorities belong and it is a joint forum for discussing and presenting views to the public and the Scottish Government.
<b>EGM</b>	<b>Extraordinary General Meeting</b>	Any meeting of the shareholding members done outside of the AGM where, for example, changes to rules can be done.
<b>FHA</b>	<b>Fife Housing Association</b>	The parent company of the Group.
<b>FHG</b>	<b>Fife Housing Group</b>	The name that includes both Fife Housing Association and also our subsidiary company PACT Enterprises Limited.
	<b>Financial Statements</b>	The annual accounts produced by the Group based on the year-end of 31 March and supported by an external auditor's report.
	<b>Governance</b>	How the Group is run and strategy determined – the overarching control and direction from the Board. Includes the role and powers of the committees and the Scrutiny Group.
<b>HA</b>	<b>Housing Association</b>	The preferred title for organisations registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator and providing homes and related services for those who need them. You may also hear 'Registered Provider (RP)' and 'Registered Social Landlord (RSL)' but at Fife Housing Group we prefer the term Housing Association; it is after all what we do.
<b>ICT</b>	<b>Information and Communication Technology</b>	A catch-all terms for computers, internet services, website, telephones etc.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>IIP</b>	<b>Investors in People</b>	A regular review and accreditation of the Group's commitment to colleague support, communication, learning and development processes.
<b>JD</b>	<b>Job Description</b>	A written description of any of our roles – including board members.
<b>KPI (PI)</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	These are indicators of the most important performance areas which are monitored on a more frequent basis.
<b>LA</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>	The local council – such as Fife Council.
<b>PACT</b>	<b>PACT Enterprises Ltd</b>	Fife Housing Association's subsidiary that provides homes closer to market rents for those who do not qualify for the housing provided by the Association. PACT's surplus can be used by the Association to improve services and housing for tenants.
<b>PI</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	A measure of how the Group has performed against set standards or targets over certain periods. Reported to Board at each meeting.
<b>PF</b>	<b>Property Factor</b>	Business that manages the common parts of land owned by two or more persons
	<b>Quorum</b>	The minimum number of attendees at a meeting to ensure that decisions are legally-agreed. The quorum levels are set out in every Terms of Reference.
	<b>Risk Assessment / Risk Management</b>	The constant review of the vast range of risks to which the Group across all of its activities is exposed, to determine the most appropriate method of managing them and thus minimising the risk.
<b>RPI</b>	<b>Retail Price Index (RPI)</b>	One of the measures used by Government to show inflation – this is published monthly – and is used in the rent increase formula.
<b>RSL</b>	<b>Registered Social Landlord</b>	Also known as the preferred title 'Housing Associations'. Housing organisations registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator.
	<b>Rules</b>	The legal written constitution which determines how the Group should operate e.g. how long board

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
		members should serve on the Board, how meetings are held etc.
<b>RA (TRA)</b>	<b>Residents' Associations</b>	A group of neighbours or community members who get together to set-up an organisation to improve the local area and/or increase involvement in decision-making. Also referred occasionally to 'Tenants' and Residents' Associations' but as all tenants are also equally residents we discourage the use of TRA.
<b>RRA</b>	<b>Register of Residents' Associations</b>	The list of groups who have applied for recognition by Fife Housing Group and have met the criteria.
<b>SFHA</b>	<b>Scottish Federation of Housing Associations</b>	An established lobbying, policy-making, information and support network made up of most housing associations in Scotland.
	<b>Shareholding member</b>	Any tenant who has applied for and been granted a share. These tenants are entitled to vote at general meetings.
<b>SHQS</b>	<b>Scottish Housing Quality Standard</b>	An acceptable housing condition standard set by the Scottish Government.
<b>SST</b>	<b>Scottish Secure Tenancy</b>	Housing Associations are expected to set affordable rents and give additional contractual rights to tenants. An SST cannot be ended solely by a landlord's notice to quit. A landlord wishing to end this tenancy must serve a notice seeking possession and go to the Sheriff's Court. The Housing (Scotland) Act sets out the grounds on which the courts can grant possession.
	<b>Stakeholder</b>	Any person or organisation that we work with and will involve as required in our decision-making. Tenants are major stakeholders.
<b>SWOT</b>	<b>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats</b>	A way of assessing the various elements that can affect the delivery of our business plan.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>ToR</b>	<b>Terms of Reference (Remit)</b>	A document that sets out the basis for the role of each board, committee or panel within Fife Housing Group.
<b>TP</b>	<b>Tenant Participation</b>	The various ways in which the Group encourages residents to become involved in their community and the work of the Group, whether it be through Scrutiny Group, community café, Board and Shareholding membership etc.
<b>TIS</b>	<b>Tenant Information Service</b>	Third sector organisations that promote and seek to inspire innovative tenant participation and involvement practice, through lobbying, publications, training and networking support.
<b>TPAS</b>	<b>Tenant Participation Advisory Service</b>	These organisations, along with other providers, may be used from time-to-time to provide support for tenant groups within Fife Housing Group.
<b>VFM</b>	<b>Value For Money</b>	A way of assessing the value Fife Housing Group and tenants may get, based not only in monetary terms but also efficiency and effectiveness.

## Appendix B - Our action plan 2018/21

The plan below sets out our aims for the three years up to 2021. We recognise that we cannot achieve this alone and that tenants and customers will be integral to our success in engagement. We look forward to meeting with our tenants and customers on this exciting journey:

Aim	What it will mean to tenants and other stakeholders	When it will happen			To be led by
		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
<b>Strategy</b>					
Publish Strategy	Raise awareness and will signpost to get involved	✓			Director of Housing
Advertise Strategy in newsletter and on website		✓			Communications and Marketing Manager
Carry out recruitment drive		✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager
<b>Involvement</b>					
Review and update Register of Involved Residents	Information used will be current and it will raise awareness and generate interest	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager
Promote involvement and engagement widely to residents and other stakeholders	Raise awareness and will signpost to get involved	✓	✓	✓	All colleagues across Fife Housing Group
Provide facilities and resources for the Resident VOICES to meet and operate effectively	Scrutiny Group is better able to carry out its role and is supported	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager
Deliver four community café events each year	Raise awareness and will signpost to get involved	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager
Publish and carry out a programme of	Raise awareness and will	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager /

Aim	What it will mean to tenants and other stakeholders	When it will happen			To be led by
		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
walkabouts/inspections	signpost to get involved				Communications and Marketing Manager
Provide support to existing residents' associations to encourage them to register with us	Greater opportunities to get involved with Fife Housing Group and access to annual grant	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager / Housing Officers / Engagement Officer
Encourage the establishment and registration of new residents' associations	Greater opportunities to get involved with Fife Housing Group	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager / Housing Officers / Engagement Officer
Review the grant claimable by Registered Residents' Associations in line with budget-setting process	Ensure that residents' associations are properly supported to do their work	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager / Housing Officers / Engagement Officer
Maintain the Register of Residents' Associations	The information used, and promoted to other residents, will be up-to-date	✓	✓	✓	Engagement Manager
Advertise vacancies for board membership including on the Fife Housing Group website	Raise awareness and will signpost for tenants to apply to get involved	✓	✓	✓	Chief Executive
<b>Communication</b>					
Commence rent increase consultation process by September annually to ensure final consultation questionnaire concludes by 30 November at the latest.	Opportunity for tenants to have their say, to gather feedback and influence how we may increase rents. Ensures that we avoid the Christmas period and are better able to report to Board in a timely manner.	✓	✓	✓	Director of Finance and Governance / Director of Housing / Engagement Manager / Communications and Marketing Manager

Aim	What it will mean to tenants and other stakeholders	When it will happen			To be led by
		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
Publish three tenant newsletters per annum	Inform tenants about current issues, plans and important advice and guidance	✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager
Involve tenants in the planning and editing process for newsletters	Opportunity for tenants to gather feedback from other tenants and influence how their newsletters look and the content they deliver	✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager
Publish a factored owner newsletter per annum	Inform factored owners about current issues, plans and important advice and guidance	✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager
Survey factored owners on their newsletter	Gain feedback on content to be able to tailor future issues	✓	✓	✓	Factoring Officer
Draft articles for each newsletter edition that encourage involvement from residents	Raise awareness and will signpost to get involved	✓	✓	✓	All colleagues
Publish a diary of events on the Fife Housing Group website	Raise awareness and will signpost to get involved. Could encourage other tenant groups to host events	✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager
Complete and report on a full customer satisfaction survey including tenants, factored owners and those on the Fife Housing Register	Gather vital feedback from all customers which will help us to improve and influence how we deliver services in the future	✓		✓	Engagement Manager
Carry out and report on a pulse customer satisfaction survey of tenants	Gather up-to-date information from a sample of tenants which will help us to improve and influence how we deliver services to		✓		Engagement Manager / Business Support Manager

Aim	What it will mean to tenants and other stakeholders	When it will happen			To be led by
		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
	tenants in the future				
Carry out and report on a pulse satisfaction survey for factored owners	Gather update from a sample of factored owners which will help us to improve and influence how we deliver services to owners in the future		✓		Factoring Officer
Invite residents who are shareholding members to the Fife Housing Group Annual General Meeting (AGM)	Improved awareness of issues raised at the AGM and could produce an interest in applying for board membership	✓	✓	✓	Director of Finance and Governance
Produce our documents and newsletters in plain language, accessible formats and other languages as requested	Information and advice is fully accessible to everyone who requires it	✓	✓	✓	Communications and Marketing Manager

## Appendix C – Our methods of engagement

**Communication** - Our main methods of engaging with our customer are summarised below:

- ✓ Via colleagues day-to-day
- ✓ Resident Scrutiny (Resident VOICES)
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Letters
- ✓ Satisfaction surveys
- ✓ Walkabouts and Inspections
- ✓ One off ad-hoc events
- ✓ Community Cafés

**Consultations** - We will continue to consult with tenants where we are considering making a significant change to a service or policy that affects the management or services to their homes – for example, each year we will carry out a major consultation regarding the level of increase that we are considering applying to tenants' rents. Such consultations will be carried out in a manner that enables tenants the opportunity to provide their view and gives sufficient time for comment. The Fife Housing Group Board will always be made aware of the responses received from these tenant consultations.

**Repairs and improvements surveys** - We will continue to routinely carry out satisfaction surveys following repair and maintenance work, including the renewal of major components such as windows, kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems etc. This is another opportunity for tenants to have their say – whether positive or negative, all feedback is appreciated.

**Resident Inspectors** - We plan to establish a small team of resident inspectors. These are residents who have a keen interest in property standards and who have volunteered to partner our technical colleagues from time-to-time in inspecting certain properties; making recommendations on how we can improve our services.

**Community cafés** - We plan to continue delivering a programme of four community cafés each year. These are regular programmed events held across our major tenanted areas, such as West Fife Villages, Kirkcaldy, Methil and Rosyth. They offer tenants and other residents the opportunity to come and talk to us, in a relaxed environment over a cup of tea and a piece of cake, about any issues and also to meet with a range of useful partner agencies such as Police Scotland, Community Safety Partnership and Frontline Fife.

**Estate walkabouts** - We plan to continue delivering a comprehensive programme of estate walkabouts throughout Fife each year. These are organised by our Housing Officers and take place regularly with individual tenants, residents' associations, local representatives and other partner organisations such as the Fife Community Wardens in certain areas to highlight issues that need dealing with and agree solutions.

- ✓ If you want to join us on a Walkabout in your area please contact your Housing Officer or Factoring Officer who will be pleased to have your input.
- ✓ If you don't have a Walkabout scheduled for your area but there is an issue in your neighbourhood that we need to know about then why not gather a few neighbours together - we will come and visit you to try and sort out the issue.

**Mystery shopping** - We plan to deliver a programme of 'mystery shops' each year. This is where a small group of tenants will carry out what is basically a 'reality check' on the standards that we believe are in place; for example they may be asked to make 10 telephone calls to the office to assess how well these enquiries were handled and then fill in a feedback sheet. Tenants and customers who wish to join as a 'mystery shopper' will receive training to enable them to test out and report back on our approach to customer service.

**Real-time mystery shopping** – We plan to contact tenants who have pre-booked repairs appointments in advance, to ask if they would be prepared to provide feedback on their experience of the repair service before, during and after the repair is completed. Following the repair being carried out, contact again is made asking the tenant to rate the service and standard of work.

Discussions held with the Property Manager and the Business Support Manager regarding the introduction of a similar mystery shopping process for our repairs service has been positive. This should now be introduced, providing an opportunity for us to gather valuable 'real-time' information regarding how well our repairs service is operating.

**Editorial Panel** - We are constantly looking for ways to improve how we communicate with our customers. We publish a number of different documents including; articles for our website, the tenant newsletter, our Annual Report and information leaflets, to name but a few. We plan to develop an Editorial Panel whose members will work largely from the comfort of their own home, reading and providing comments on draft newsletters, leaflets, letter templates etc. looking particularly at the content, format, readability, language and importantly the tone to make sure the document is useful and is easy to read and understand.

**Customer Focus Groups** - We aim to build up a group of residents who are prepared to provide feedback to us on our performance through surveys. It's one of the easiest ways to get involved - and probably the one with the shortest time-requirement; it can be done from an armchair, but it is still an important role tenants and customers can play to help support our improvement.

Where residents have agreed to be part of a Customer Focus Group, we will send them a survey every few months which will take around 10 minutes to fill in and they then send it back to us. We will then review the things they tell us and take any necessary action.

Members of our Customer Focus Group may also be invited to one-off events and training to build awareness of Fife Housing Group.

**Text Surveys** - This is a simple and quick way of becoming involved with us; whereby tenants and customers are sent short surveys by text to respond with their views free of charge.

**Shareholding Membership** – We will continue to encourage all of our tenants and customers to become members of Fife Housing Group. Those who agree to join us will be entitled to be formally consulted on some key issues and receive invitations to various events and consultations. Applicants for Shareholding Membership are required to pay £1 and be approved by the Board - in return they will receive a share certificate and a copy of our rules.

**Board Membership** – Any shareholding member who is keen to take their membership further and feels that they have the skills or experience to be involved in the Board of Management may wish to consider applying for Board Membership. Before deciding on submitting an application to join the Board, there is an open invitation for those interested to come along and observe a Board meeting taking place.

**Tenants' Handbook** - Every tenant is provided with an emailed copy of a handbook when they take over their property and this will be updated from time-to-time (a printed copy may be requested). Contact details are included within the handbook to encourage tenants to contact us at any point if there is something that they are unhappy about. When we re-issue the Tenants' Handbook we will consult on its format and content.

**Learning and Development** – We will continue to provide involved residents with opportunities to participate in learning and development events that will help them to learn new skills or support the development of existing ones. This may include attendance at relevant conferences and working groups.

**Residents' Associations** - Residents' Associations are groups of people, whether they are tenants or owners, living in an area, a road or a close for example, who have come together to take up issues of common concern in relation to their housing, community and general environment.

We will continue to support existing Residents' Associations and promote the development of new ones, where it is established there is an interest.

For any of Fife Housing Group's tenants wishing to set up a Residents' Association we will continue to offer grants for specific purposes of up to £50 a year. We will also continue to assist these groups with booking venues for meetings and support them to source funding opportunities.

We currently have two Residents' Associations that represent residents in specific areas, although we do have a number of others currently considering formation. They are each managed by a committee which is democratically elected by its members.

Residents who would like to join or start a Residents' Association should get in touch by contacting us on: Freephone 08000 274 007.

**Holding local events** – We aim to build on the success of our senior citizens event held in 2017, targeting specific groups, including the elderly, to address any concerns, address social issues like loneliness and provide information on support available.

We also plan to hold information days, possibly sometimes with an act or public speaker. These events are likely to be based on, ‘come along and tell us what works well and what doesn’t’.

**Organising hot topic groups** – We recognise that, periodically, multi-faceted ‘burning issues’ can develop in individual blocks, individual streets or in local communities. In order to prevent such problems escalating in an area or when common themes can be identified, we believe holding discussions with ‘hot topic groups’ could be a potential way forward to addressing such problems.

Where appropriate, ‘hot topic groups’ will, therefore, be organised with local residents. During these meetings, participants will be asked to highlight their top three concerns, these will then be discussed and agreed actions put in place. We will have to take care though to ensure that we are not raising expectations where we are not able to deliver.

## Appendix D - I'm interested in getting involved...

Hopefully, after reading our Strategy, you are interested in learning more about the various volunteer opportunities that you may have to get involved with Fife Housing Group? If so, please complete the form shown below – this does not commit you to anything other than perhaps having a chat with one of our colleagues and finding out more about getting involved.



### Expression of Interest Form

[This form can also be completed on our website: [fifehg.org.uk](http://fifehg.org.uk)]



<b>Contact details</b> [we will never pass these on to third parties without your consent]			
<b>Name</b>			
<b>Address including postcode</b>			
<b>Home telephone</b>			
<b>Mobile telephone</b>			
<b>Email address</b>			
<b>Please put a tick next to each activity you may be interested in:</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time commitment (approximate)</b>	<b>Please tick if you are interested in finding out more</b>	
		<b>Send me information</b>	<b>Please call me to discuss</b>
Consultation	Ad hoc, say two hours per quarter		
Scrutiny Group	Three hours every month		
Resident Inspector	Two hours a month		
Community Café	One hour to attend		
	Four hours if helping		

Activity	Time commitment (approximate)	Please tick if you are interested in finding out more	
		Send me information	Please call me to discuss
Text Surveyor	Ad hoc, small time commitment		
Walkabout/Inspection	One hour to attend		
Mystery Shopper	Variable to suit, monthly		
Editorial Panel	Two hours per quarter		
Customer Focus	Ad hoc, small time commitment		
Shareholding Membership	Say a couple of hours, twice a year		
Board Membership	High commitment, five hours per month minimum		
Registered Residents' Association	Varies and will be agreed by the members of each association based on their workload		
<b>About you</b>			
Are you a member of a Residents' Association?		Yes	No
If 'yes' please give the name of your association:			
<b>Ethnic origin – please answer in both box A and box B</b>			
<b>A</b>		<b>B</b>	
African		White	
Asian		Black	
South-East Asian		Mixed	
British		Other	
Scottish			
Irish			
Other European		Prefer not to say	

<b>Would you classify yourself as living with or affected by a disability or limiting illness?</b>	Yes	No	
<b>Do you have a visual impairment that makes reading documents difficult?</b>	Yes	No	
<b>Do you have access to a computer or have someone who can access a computer for you?</b>	Yes	No	
<b>If you do have access to a computer how good would you say your computer skills were?</b>	Poor	OK	Good
<b>Is there anything we can do to help you to get involved?</b> <b>If 'Yes' please use the space below to detail:</b>			

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this expression of interest.

Please forward your completed form to:

Engagement Assistant, Fife Housing Group, 7 Pitreavie Court,  
Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, Fife KY11 8UU

One of our colleagues will be in touch with you shortly.

'No  
decision  
about me,  
without  
me...'

South African saying