



East Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Shiorrachd Inbhir Àir an Ear



TENANTS *and* RESIDENTS  
EAST AYRSHIRE

## **Tenant's Participation, Engagement and Scrutiny Information Booklet**

This booklet will provide you with information that covers Tenant Participation, Engagement and Scrutiny and how it takes place across East Ayrshire. It will also provide an overview of the different ways in which you can take part. It gives contact information and signposts you to other forums for engagement. It also highlights some tenant experiences and testimonials.

## **Have your say. Tenant participation, engagement and scrutiny**

### What is Tenant participation?

Tenant Participation is a two way process involving the sharing of: information, ideas and knowledge. Its aim is to improve the standard of Housing conditions and services. Since the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, tenants across Scotland now have increased rights to information, consultation and participation. We are committed to involving our tenants, service users and other customers in making decisions about the services we deliver. We want to know what you think about housing conditions and services, where the gaps are and what your thoughts are on Housing Service delivery improvements.

### How does involvement benefit you?

When working well, tenant participation delivers clear benefits for tenants, staff and property owners alike. The benefits of effective tenant participation for everyone include:

- Meet new people
- Develop new skills
- Better service delivery and improved value for money
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills
- Better communication between staff and tenants
- Better links between the community and landlords
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions
- Staff and tenants being more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial limitations
- Breaking down misunderstandings, helping to remove any mistrust between landlord and tenants, and building mutual respect and understanding
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood

## How can I get involved?

### As an individual

By joining East Ayrshire Independent Tenant and Resident Forum, (ITRF) you will have the opportunity to have your voice heard either: by completing online surveys, taking part in scrutiny work, giving comments on our policies or occasionally, if you wish, attending consultation events. To join ITRF please contact our Customer Liaison Team on **07561676479** or **07561676502** or by completing the online survey at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EACITRF/> Membership is on a voluntary basis and you can become a member by completing a form that provides us with some information about you, your home and your areas of interest.

### Tenants & Residents Associations (TARA's)

Sometimes being a lone voice may feel like being in the wilderness, so for many people joining a tenants and residents group is the answer. As a member of any group, you will work together with your neighbours to influence services in your neighbourhood and, if you wish, become involved in wider policy reviews that affect all tenants in East Ayrshire. Many groups also organise community events and benefit from improved community spirit.

You will have the opportunity to attend your local Registered Tenant Organisation Forums and meet with Housing staff to discuss and resolve issues in your neighbourhood, and to conduct estate walkabouts with our staff to identify problems and agree solutions for your area.

### Registered Tenants Organisations (RTO)

A tenants and residents group must meet a set of criteria in order to register as an RTO with the Council. They must be representative of the tenants in their area and must have in place procedures to ensure that all tenants can take part and have a say on issues of concern to them.

We have a statutory duty to inform RTO's of housing issues and listen to their views on our proposals.

### Consultation Forums

These forums are for people who again are not part of a tenant and residents group but wish to have a voice in relation to Housing Services provision. The forums are also in areas where there is not any tenant representation through the channels previously mentioned. This forum will give opportunities for tenants and residents from across the whole of the authority to influence and scrutinise the Council services.

## Tenant Scrutiny

Tenant and resident scrutiny of our landlord service is a way to give tenants and other customers' greater influence and ability to hold their landlords to account and provides an opportunity to develop partnership working between tenants, other customers and landlords to deliver excellent services.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) sets out the standards and outcomes that:

- tenants can expect from social landlords, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them
- homeless people can expect from social landlords in terms of access to help and advice, the quality of temporary accommodation, and continuing support to help homeless people access and keep a home
- owners can expect from the property management services they receive from social landlords
- Gypsies / Travellers can expect in terms of the maintenance and management of sites

### Is there a group in my area?

Please ask at any of the Local Customer Service Centres for a copy of the Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) register to see where there are currently active groups, or look on our website at [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

### How can I set up a new group?

If there is already a group in your area then you should join that group. However many areas do not have tenants and residents groups and we will help you set up a group.

### We will help you by:

- Giving advice and assistance
- helping you arrange and publicise meetings
- helping with your constitution and election of your committee
- providing training
- Provision of a start-up grant and annual administration grant
- Help with registration
- arranging for the relevant staff to attend your group meetings

### What are RTO forums and estate walkabouts?

RTO Forums are regular meetings between representatives of the Registered Tenants Organisation's (RTO's) within a geographical area and Housing staff to address local issues.

Estate walkabouts are inspections of the neighbourhood involving representatives of the RTO's, independent tenants and the local housing staff to identify and address problem areas.

### **East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents (EAF)**

The EAF, established in 2010. Is an umbrella organisation made up of representatives of tenants and residents associations from across East Ayrshire. The role of the EAF is to support and develop representative and democratic tenants and residents groups so that they can play a full part in decisions about their housing and neighbourhood.

### **Support available -**



EAF in partnership with East Ayrshire Council and independent tenant advisor, the Tenants Information Service (TIS) can provide support to assist tenants and residents set up tenants and residents groups in their communities. This includes:

- Organise public meetings
- Surveys to assist you seek views and priorities
- Develop committees, a constitution and set up a bank account
- Information and training for committees and office bearers
- Apply for funding and
- Much, more

If you are interested in finding out more please give get in touch using contact details.

## Tenant testimonials and positive outcomes

- Tenant Led Inspections have helped to develop a good working relationship with staff and Senior officers within the council, as they have also gained an understanding of a tenants point of view.
- Being in the TARA has helped us address antisocial behaviour, improve our housing and local area, organise activities and events.
- Scrutiny has improved my understanding of the way in which the council works and helps me to make sure 'it does what it says on the tin'.
- Our scrutiny inspection of the housing improvement programme has been good as it gave us an opportunity to see the services provided to tenants improved.
- Having a TARA has helped us access funding for activities and equipment to benefit our community.
- Estate walkabouts really help us work with the council to make sure work is done and issues are resolved.
- Being in the Federation means, we can work with the Council to influence and improve policies and services for all tenants.
- As part of the Federation and local groups, we get involved in consultations with the Council, Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator and learn how things work across Scotland.
- Meeting officers means we know how services work and how performance is monitored and improved.

## Contact Details

<b><u>Customer Liaison Team</u></b>	<b><u>East Ayrshire Federation</u></b>
Civic Centre North,	c/o Centre stage Village
John Dickie Street,	Suite 7 Neighbourhood
KA1 1HW.	15 Elmbank Drive
Tel: 07561676479 or 07561676502.	KILMARNOCK
Email: <a href="mailto:customerliaisonteam@east-ayrshire.gov.uk">customerliaisonteam@east-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>	KA1 3AE
	Tel: 01563 631000
<a href="https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/Tenant-Participation/Tenant-participation-and-involvement.aspx">https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/Tenant-Participation/Tenant-participation-and-involvement.aspx</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:secretary@eafederation.com">secretary@eafederation.com</a> <a href="mailto:admin@eafederation.com">admin@eafederation.com</a>
<b><u>Social Media Channels</u></b>	
<b>Twitter:</b> @East Ayrshire	<b>Twitter:</b> @ayrshire_east
<b>Facebook:</b> East Ayrshire Council	<b>Facebook:</b> East Ayrshire Federation
	<b>Web</b> <b>Site:</b> <a href="https://eafederation.com/">https://eafederation.com/</a>

