



TENANT PARTICIPATION POLICY

TENANT PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION

Introduction:

As a locally based housing association, Westway Housing Association has always been concerned and committed to tenant participation. The following policy and procedure details how WHA encourages and supports the involvement of tenant through a variety of fora.

1. Policy of the Association

Westway Housing Association aims are:

- (a) To develop accountability “to our tenants and the local communities in which we work, both via the Tenants Forum and through reporting our performances to tenants and the general public.
- (b) To promote and represent the interests of tenants and residents of the Association irrespective of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion or political affiliation.
- (c) To promote the harmonious functioning of a multi-racial community and to work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination within it.
- (d) To promote social, cultural, recreational, training and educational activities for the benefits of the tenants and residents of the Association.
- (e) To affiliate to outside bodies to further these aims.

In pursuit of these aims, the tenants Forum and officers of WHA are committed to the following statement of policy on the participation of tenants in the affairs of the Association:

- (a) The Association is committed to consulting all tenants widely on matters affecting the services providing to them and will consult them on any proposed changes in management or maintenance policy or practices. This is legal requirement – see policy document No:13 attached.
- (b) The Association recognises the rights of tenants to receive information about the services they are provided, the policies of the Association and how to complain. WHA is committed to providing regular information on these matters (see procedure).
- (c) All tenants are encouraged to participate in the general yearly election of Tenants Representative for the different developments. All elected Tenants’ Representatives feed into the main Westway Tenants Forum.

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- (d) To ensure participation at a strategic level, there are elected Tenants' Representatives on the Board.

In general, the Association is committed to following best practice in the field of tenant participation and will ensure that its practices are kept under regular review.

2. Procedure of the Association

Information

Part of the consultation and participation process involves providing information to all tenants and residents of the Association. The Association will ensure that all information tenants receive are easy to read and understand.

Upon signing up, tenants will be provided with a copy of the Association's Tenant's Handbook and Tenants Charter. The Tenancy Agreement will be explained and a copy given to the tenant. Furthermore, rents and service charges will be clearly explained to tenants and advice and assistance given in completing Housing Benefit Forms.

On an annual basis Performances in all housing matters will be published in the Performance Reporting Newsletter. Information and advice regarding tenants welfare will be on display for tenants to access or it can be provided verbally.

In addition, information will be provided on a regular basis on the service delivery, the Association's policies and procedures and on how tenants can complain to ensure a better service provision.

Consultation with tenants

All tenants will be consulted on matters affecting the services provided to them and on any proposed changes in policies and practices. The following lists indicate some of the matters for consultation:

- The Association's policies i.e complaints, rents, maintenance e.t.c
- Housing services provided i.e. cleaning & gardening, Parking Control Management.
- Cyclical maintenance
- Setting and reviewing house rules.

The Association will use various mechanisms and vehicles available to ensure good consultation. Some of the methods employed are:

- Tenants and Residents Forum.
- House meetings.
- Quarterly newsletters, with tenants encouraged to participate in its production.
- Development meetings
- Individual meetings with tenants
- Tenants Satisfaction Surveys/Questionnaires
- Multi-landlord & tenants estate management groups

Tenants Forum

Any tenant can become a tenant representative. On a yearly basis, tenants for the various developments are encouraged to nominate a tenant/ resident to represent their development on the Westway's Tenants Forum. This is a recognised Forum with a Constitution in place. Elected Tenant representatives are listed in the quarterly newsletters and via letters to all tenants on the development.

Meetings held bi-monthly are organising and facilitating by staff. These meetings are chaired by tenants with agendas agreed by both parties prior such meetings. The association on all-important matters of policy consults this Forum.

Westway's commitment in ensuring that tenants participate at a strategic level encourages the Tenants Forum to nominate each year, a member to represent tenants on the Board.

3. Statement of Intent/Future Strategy

Westway is committed to increasing the level of consultation and participation. We recognise that more can be done to encourage tenants to have an active role in the future development and improvement of service delivery. As such, we would need to develop a strategy for tenant participation. This will improve the channels of communication for staff and tenants.

Our proposed strategy will develop from the Tenants Status Survey. This will evaluate tenants satisfaction with the services provided and their aspirations. Tasks, targets and a timetable for implementation can then be drawn.

Furthermore, it will form the agenda for making future consultation relevant to tenants and build on their capacity to participate.

A Tenant Participation Working Group comprising of the Housing Manager, the Maintenance Surveyor, the Housing Officer and the Tenants Forum has been established to drive tenant participation and consultation forward.