



Service Improvement Group
Tuesday 2nd May, 6pm, McKechnie Street

Present: KR,MM, BK, MU, SW, HS, MS, BD

Also: Sharon Donohoe, (Development Director, Tenants Information Service, TIS)
and Susan Burn (Community Engagement Officer, Govan HA)

1. Welcome and introductions

Sharon explained her role and the role of TIS to support independent scrutiny work for Govan Housing Association.

2. Information sharing and discussion

Sharon shared a PowerPoint presentation for the introductory meeting, including:

- What is scrutiny?
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- Landlord Performance Reporting
- Next steps

She then had questions for the group.

Question: Do you think tenants influence Govan HA's services, policies and decisions?

- The first response was that no, people did not feel they had influence
- We get letters but no consultation
- We get information but we do not get a say
- Tenants need to be more proactive, it is a two-way process
- Clarity needed over services provided by HA and by Glasgow City Council
- Until recently, not at all

Sharon explained that this group would be the start of us improving this work.

Question: What do you understand by scrutiny?

- A more in-depth look at the procedures not at the staff

The group will work to improve services for all tenants, not for themselves as individuals. Tenants should be actively involved in the self-assessment process required by the HA.

Sharon gave examples from other scrutiny groups, one of whom had made 46 recommendations for change/improvement, most of which were implemented by their board.

Question: Where do you think scrutiny came from?

- Tenants
- Government

Sharon discussed the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Housing Regulator, both introduced in 2012. Susan will send out copies of the Charter. The aim of this Charter was to put tenants in the driving seat. Landlords assess themselves against requirements and report to the Regulator.

BK raised a governance issue around Govan HA having the right to say no to tenant involvement. Sharon noted this and we will look into governance.

Question: What should we scrutinise?

- Home Team
- Repairs

We should be communicating actively with Govan HA and choosing our work priorities for planned repairs. It was acknowledged that effective scrutiny work takes time and this was the start of that journey.

Question: What does scrutiny do?

Further discussion on the Scottish Social Housing Charter and Sharon talked through the 16 outcomes

Discussion on anti-social behavior: comments included a feeling that there was a reluctance from Govan HA to challenge unacceptable behavior. Landlords should be more challenging and forthright. Good tenants are punished when disruptive neighbours move in. What are the sanctions? Sharon explained some of the difficulties for landlords dealing with anti-social behavior with eviction being the ultimate sanction, decided by the courts.

Discussion on poor communication and poor customer service. For example, tenants are not being given times and dates for repairs, but just expected to be in. Why is a time not given?

Discussion on the responsibilities of Glasgow City Council and who holds them to account? The 4 councillors for Govan, which is Ward 5, hold regular surgeries in the Pearce Institute. Their contact details are:

- Councillor Stephen Dornan, SNP, stephen.dornan@glasgow.gov.uk, 0141 287 7040
- Councillor Imran Alam, Scottish Labour Party, Imran.alam@glasgow.gov.uk, 0141 287 5623
- Councillor Richard Bell, Scottish National Party, Richard.Bell@glasgow.gov.uk, 0141 287 7046
- Councillor Dan Hutchison, Scottish Green Party, Dan.Hutchison@glasgow.gov.uk 0141 287 5604

Susan explained that we also meet regularly with Jim Ellis, Neighbourhood Coordinator for Govan for Glasgow City Council.

Question: What do others say about scrutiny?

Sharon gave feedback from other organisations about scrutiny:

“Tenant scrutiny has generated new interest in tenants getting involved. It provides an ideal opportunity for tenants and the Association to work in partnership to plan and improve our business, service and performance.”

“Scrutiny in my opinion, 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.'”

3. Group exercise

The group split into pairs to do a paper-based exercise to increase awareness of the Charter outcomes and how we can evidence that we are meeting these.

4. Govan Housing Association’s self-assessment for 2021/2022

Sharon ran over some of the returns. She explained that the figures for 2022/2023 are being collated currently for the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC), by 31st May, but we will have these for future meetings.

Discussion on how we record data, satisfaction surveys and getting it right first time.

5. Next steps

At the next meeting, the group will:

- agree what they want to be called, eg Service Improvement Group, Scrutiny Group
- agree a constitution, terms of reference, code of conduct
- agree priorities

Sharon reminded members of the importance of confidentiality outwith these meetings.

6. AOB

There is a TIS members’ event in Edinburgh on 18th May, which will focus on scrutiny. We agreed that Marion, Margaret, Brian K and Susan would attend on behalf of the group and report back. Susan will be in touch with arrangements.

7. Dates of future meetings – all at McKechnie Street

- Tuesday 6th June at 6pm
- Tuesday 4th July at 6pm
- Tuesday 1st August at 6pm
- Tuesday 5th September at 6pm
- Tuesday 3rd October at 6pm
- Tuesday 7th November at 6pm

- Tuesday 5th December at 6pm