



stirling *tenants assembly*

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2018

TO

MARCH 2019



The Stirling Tenants Assembly (STA) is a registered tenant organisation (RTO). It represents Stirling Council tenants and Stirling Council tenant organisations throughout the Stirling Council area.

It is registered with Stirling Council under the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and is consulted by the Council on housing and related issues.

Whilst the STA is supported by the Council, it is an autonomous organisation with its own constitution and elected committee. Its aim is to effectively represent tenants to ensure the highest possible level of housing services. The STA receives enquiries from tenants regarding a range of issues.

Aims of the Organisation

To safeguard and promote the interests of Council tenants who reside within the Stirling Council area on all matters concerning housing, the environment, social and community life of the area. STA will actively encourage membership of tenants equally from Stirling Councils' housing management areas and to give all tenants equal opportunities.

We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month except July in various venues across Stirling District.

You can find us on <https://www.facebook.com/Stirlingtenantsassembly/>
Or on <http://www.stirlingtenantsassembly.co.uk/>

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Willie Derrick Cowie Chairperson

Mags Bain Hughes Cowie Vice Chairperson

Anna Johnston Cornton Secretary

Moira Robertson Crianlarich Treasurer

Alec Lamb Riverside

Delia Waddell Kippen

Duncan Faichney Bridge of Allan

Hugh McClung Braehead

Katherine Brown Cultenhove

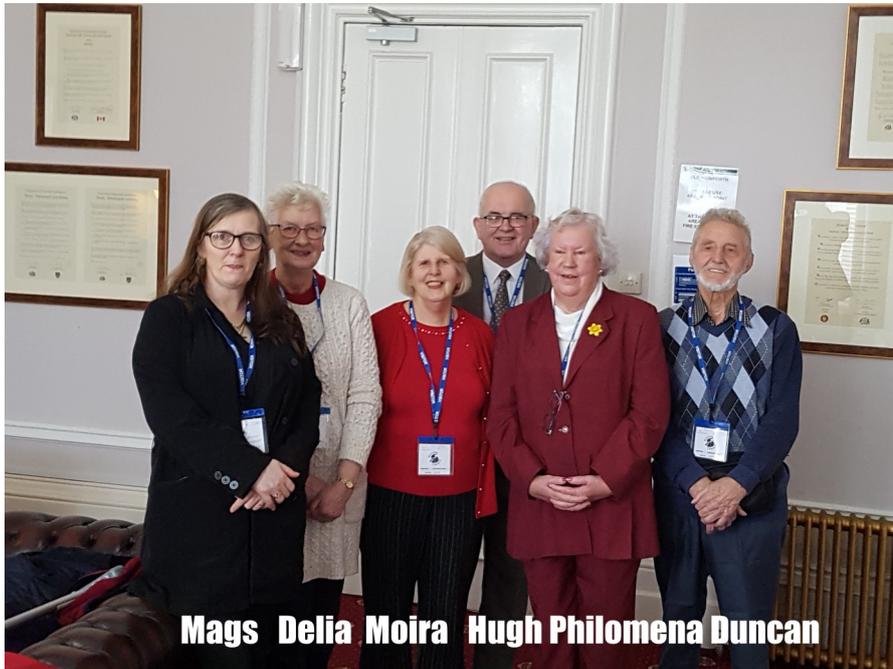
Michael Griffiths Cambusbarron

Philomena McClung Braehead

Richard Waddell Kippen

Robert Cairney

Thomas Allan Brown Cultenhove



‘Tenants Talking to Tenants’

Telephone Survey of New Tenants

Between November 2017 and January 2018 Stirling Tenants Assembly conducted a telephone survey of new tenants. The purpose of the telephone survey was to test tenants’ satisfaction with the allocation process and the standard of their new home when moving in.

The STA would like to thank Stirling Council Housing Services teams and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service for their support and guidance. They would also like to thank all new tenants that took part in the survey.

Background

The Council’s Tenant Satisfaction Survey doesn’t give tenants an opportunity to speak to other tenants about satisfaction with services. In addition, the questionnaire doesn’t investigate the reasons behind dissatisfaction. The STA found that tenants were more likely to speak to them about issues they may not always feel comfortable highlighting to housing officers or other Stirling Council staff. Therefore, a survey was developed to establish an overview of new tenants’ experience of the Council’s allocation process and standard of new homes allocated.

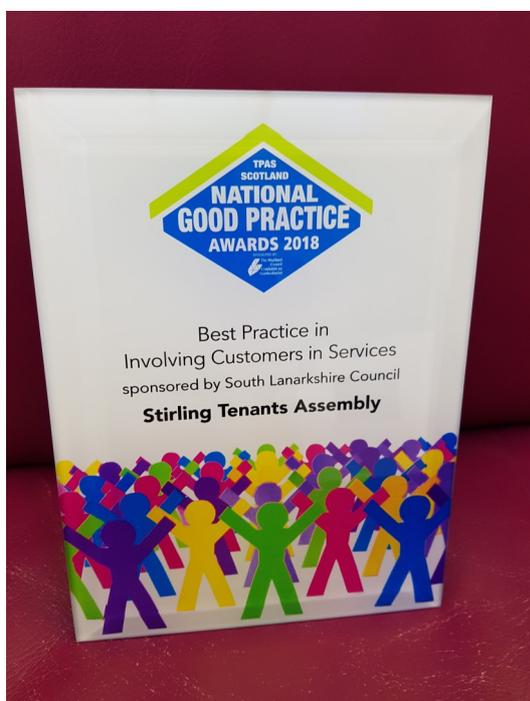
Methodology

Stirling Tenants Assembly designed a telephone survey with support from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Stirling Council Housing Services. The survey questionnaire aimed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

The STA is aware of the need to promote tenant participation within Housing Services. Therefore, in addition to questions about the allocation process, new tenants were asked questions about the STA and whether they’d like to get involved in the STA or any of the other groups that Stirling Council uses to consult with and provide information to tenants.

Telephone surveys were completed by members of the STA, in pairs. Prior to making phone calls, the tenants involved in the phone survey took part in a training session delivered by TPAS.

A report of the findings was published and presented to Stirling Council.



Colin Cassie, Independent Tenant Advisor [TPAS] nominated the STA for a TPAS Scotland National Good Practice Award 2018 for Best Practice in Involving Customers in Services and we were delighted to win.

We were presented with the Award at the TPAS Conference held in Aviemore in November 2018.



Donald Gray, Area Housing Manager, South Lanarkshire Council presented us with the award—you might recognise a couple of famous faces in the group; Isa and Tam from Still Game.

The less famous faces are Left to Right

Donald Gray, Anna Johnston, Hugh McClung, Moira Robertson, Philomena McClung, Willie Derrick and Mags Hughes.

Some members of the STA are privileged to attend the TPAS Conference which is held towards the end of every year. There are many workshops, and here's just a flavour of what was on offer:-

An Introduction to Producing a Housing Podcast

Universal Credit—when will my landlord get paid

South Lanarkshire's Scrutiny Journey

Fuel Poverty , Energy Efficiency and the Role in Housing

Go Connect

Housing Beyond 2021

Youth Housing

And some lifestyle workshops such as It's a Wonderful Life [Play] British Red Cross support, Right Home in the Right Place and If Music be the Food of Love—Play on.

All those who attend learn a lot and bring what they have learnt back to the rest of the committee.

The STA Committee members undertook several training and information sessions and consultations during the year including

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 Assignations, Sub-Letting, Joint Tenancies and Succession to a Scottish Secure Tenancy.
- Guide to Successful Tenant Participation
- Homelessness
- Housing Beyond 2021—Stakeholders Engagement
- Housing Revenue Account Guidance
- Stirling Local Housing Strategy 2019 Consultation
- Scottish Housing Regulator— Our Regulation of Social Housing—a Consultation.

Some STA members also attend the Repairs Group, which looks at policy and how to improve the Repairs Service.

This year we reviewed the Repairs Policy and changes were proposed to the wording and to the response times. The policy has yet to be agreed but is in a draft form.

We also look at the Performance Reports and when targets are not met, comment on the reasons for failure and may propose ways to improve.

We find ways to remedy complaints; we identify where things have gone wrong by bringing up local issues and working with SC staff to sort them out and try to ensure they won't happen again.

Members were given a presentation by Homelync: they are piloting installing a web-based app and a home hub which connects the latest smart home sensors to the internet, providing insight to both tenants and landlords.

The benefits to tenants:

- Saving approx. 8-10% on electricity
- Reduced property damage
- Reduced insurance
- Improved heating
- Assurance that fire detection is working
- Potential issues can be identified earlier

- ◆ Less repairs visits will be necessary
- ◆ Tenant can be contacted before an issue is reported

Benefits to Council:

- ◆ Savings on repairs
- ◆ Savings on insurance
- ◆ More efficient capital investment
- ◆ Joined up and proactive services
- ◆ More efficient services
- ◆ Identification and reduction of fuel poverty
- ◆ Reduction of CO2 and water wastage

What would be installed:

- ◆ Water leak sensor – clips onto water mains pipe and provides information about water flow and highlights potential minor and major leaks in house.
- ◆ Boiler fault detection – is installed on boiler and provides information including temperatures and boiler faults. This can be used to save money on bills and ensure boiler is running efficiently.
- ◆ Smoke alarm – integrated sensor on newly installed smoke alarms flags up any potential faults and improves fire safety.
- ◆ Electricity optimiser – installed next to the fuse box and reduces electricity bills. Also protects electrical components within the property.
- ◆ Humidity, temperature, motion sensors – are part of the hub and are used to calculate thermal efficiency, air quality, and better scheduling of repairs.

5 tenants volunteered to have the equipment installed and it has now been in place for a few months.

The final analysis has yet to be completed.



Tenants visit to Moray

Stirling Tenants Visit Moray Council

On 10 April 2018 a group of tenants from Stirling took part in a learning journey to Moray Council in Elgin, Moray which consisted of discussions between the Stirling Tenants Assembly (STA) and Moray Tenants Forum

The event was chaired by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service. It provided an opportunity for two tenant organisations from different parts of the country to learn about each others' activities and how tenants are involved in shaping decisions about housing services.

Stirling tenants delivered a short presentation about their own activities. However, they were keen to learn about Moray Council's tenant involvement structures.

The two tenant organisations also discussed how to attract and retain tenant members, how to successfully influence housing services, what types of activities they have found most useful. The meeting was of particular interest given the shared challenges both organisations and councils share in providing services across rural areas.



2 members represent the STA at Housing Advisory Meetings [HAG]; this group consists of Housing Portfolio Holder [Cllr. Evelyn Tweed] Chief Housing Officer [Lorna Cameron] other councillors involved with housing and tenants. Officers attend to give reports and updates on items being discussed.

There are usually 4 or 5 meetings a year and this year some of the items discussed have been:-

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) and the follow-up Draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Rent Consultation

Welfare Reform updates

Disposal or lease of assets in the Housing Revenue Account [HRA]

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Improvement Plan

Anti-Social Behaviour updates

Members also respond to Scottish Government Consultations and this year these include :-

Fuel Poverty Consultation

Housing Beyond 2021

Hugh McClung is on the Joint Housing Policy and Delivery Group [JHPDG]

He is also Chairperson of Region 4 Regional Network [RN] and attended a RN Reception. He brings reports back from both these meetings. Philomena McClung is also on the RN.

Several members attended the Scottish Housing Regulator [SHR] Briefing Session; the SHR reviewed how it regulates Local Authorities and Housing Associations landlords.

The STA is supported by an Independent Tenant Advisor who works for TPAS Scotland.

Unfortunately Colin Cassie left for pastures new on 23rd November 2018; interviews were held for a replacement and we were pleased to welcome Leza Lafferty who started on 15th April 2019. We met her at the STA meeting in April and are sure that she will be a great help and support to us. She can be contacted on 01786 237661 or laffertyl@stirling.gov.uk

The STA approached Stirling Campus, Forth Valley College to produce a video to show how tenants can get involved with Tenant Participation.

Hugh introduces the STA and Willie and Robert star in it. Councillor Evelyn Tweed, Portfolio Holder for Housing encourages tenants to get their voice heard by participating.. The students produced it and it is almost ready for distribution..

A podcast is also being made by the Forth Valley College, and is narrated by Hugh McClung.