



# Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy



Updated: November 2021  
Reviewed: November 2024  
Next Review: November 2027

**Welcome**

We are proud to present our Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy to you.

As we set out on a new Corporate Plan for the Association, we are aiming to consolidate our strong foundation while shaping the future, and this Strategy is one of our key strategies which will support the achievement of our Strategic Objectives and outputs.

Our communities contain a really diverse and different range of groups, and it's that diversity and rich tapestry of different backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and perspectives that help to make our neighbourhoods such vibrant and great places to live.

We pride ourselves in being a community based and community-controlled housing association and to strengthen this we want to ensure that our communities have the opportunity to be involved in helping us shape the organisation further. Your views, experiences and contributions offer a welcome perspective and we want to ensure that you are heard.

Our recent Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy highlighted our desire to celebrate the diversity within our communities. We recognise and acknowledge differences and needs within our communities, and the value of putting in place actions to address disadvantage or barriers where we find them. Your involvement in Southside Housing Association (SHA) through different avenues will help us to do this.

We are proud to make a difference in the communities that we serve, and to make our neighbourhoods great, vibrant, diverse and inclusive places to live and work, and we hope that this Strategy alongside our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our continued commitments.

We are a community-controlled housing association operating across a number of neighbourhoods throughout the south side of Glasgow. We employ approximately 70 largely office-based members of staff, and a further 30 staff members who work in our communities in concierge, housing support and direct labour roles.

Since we were established in 1971, we have built up our current stock of housing homes through tenement rehabilitation, new build housing programmes and stock transfers. We now have around 2260 units for social rent, and just over 200 for mid-market rental in the areas where we operate. In addition, we provide property factoring services to 880 privately owned properties.

Our main geographical areas which we operate in as a landlord are in Pollokshields (including parts of Kingston and Tradeston), Cardonald and Halfway. These areas account for 90% of our housing stock, while we also provide housing in Shawlands, Strathbungo, Ibrox, Kinning Park, Langside and Mount Florida.

The Association delivers a comprehensive range of services, all focused on the needs of our customers and communities. These services include tenancy and neighbourhood management; repairs and property management; property development; asset management; housing support services; concierge; environmental works; income advice; and community development and support. We work closely with our subsidiary company, Southside Lettings (Scotland) Ltd which provides letting services for a significant portfolio of Mid-Market Rent housing.

## **Our Corporate Plan**

We are setting out on our ambitious new Corporate Plan for the next five years. Our Corporate Plan aims to build upon our organisation's strong foundations and getting it right in terms of our service delivery and good outcomes for our tenants and other customers. Our Corporate Plan also has a focus on the future, and how we can shape that future in terms of the needs of our tenants, other customers and wider communities, making sure our homes are fit to meet challenges like increased energy efficiency and net zero carbon emissions, and making the most of innovation and technology to work smarter and more efficiently in delivering value for money while bringing good outcomes for all.

Our Corporate Plan 2024-29 contains six strategic themes which set out our priority areas for the next five years



Our Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy is one of the key organisational strategies which will underpin and support the achievement of our Corporate Plan objectives and our commitment to community involvement.



We recognise that striving to deliver community involvement and engagement, valuing the diversity of our communities and looking to include everyone in what we do makes us better as an organisation. Having our customers at the heart of everything we do is the right thing to do not only from a moral and ethical perspective, but also from a business perspective in the way we provide our housing and other services to our tenants and other customers.



### Our Vision and Values

As part of the development of our new Corporate Plan we undertook a review of our Vision and Values. Our Vision sets out what we hope to achieve by what we do.

Our Vision	
<i>Impacting and improving people's lives in a positive way</i>	

Our Values represent the ethics and principles that our people value most and which reflect SHA as an organisation. At SHA we want to live our values and incorporate them into everything that we do. Our Values one hundred percent are reflected in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments.

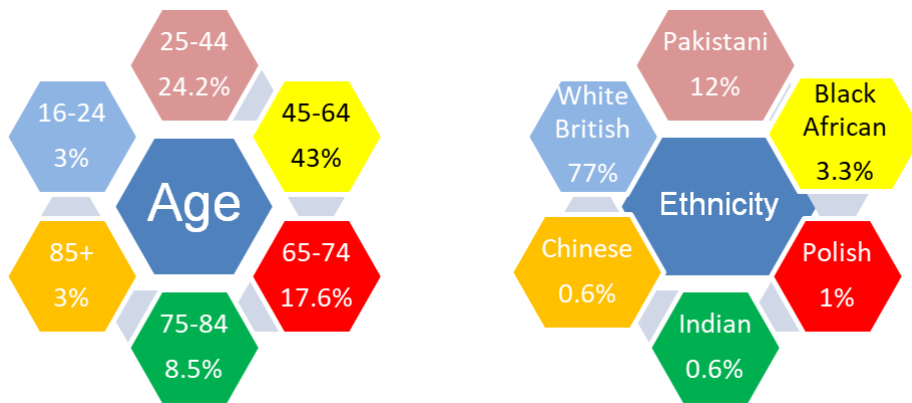
Our Values	
 Respect	<i>We will put people first, prioritise relationships, be kind and helpful and treat others as we would want to be treated.</i>
 Integrity	<i>We will conduct ourselves with honesty and transparency.</i>

 Positive	<i>We will focus on positive outcomes and be solution focused.</i>
 Responsible	<i>We will be dependable professional, reliable and consistent.</i>

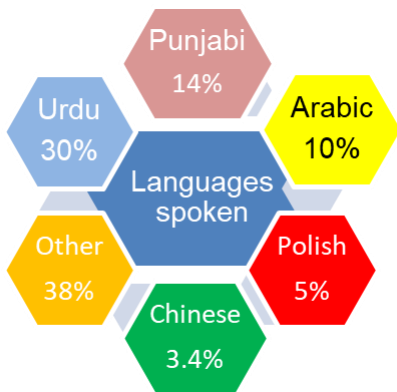
**Local Context**

The communities within which we operate are among the most diverse neighbourhoods in Scotland. The Pollokshields council ward area which contains a number of SHA neighbourhoods is one of the most ethnically diverse council ward areas in Scotland with approximately one-third of residents being from a black or minority ethnic group, or in global terms a ‘Global Majority’ group.

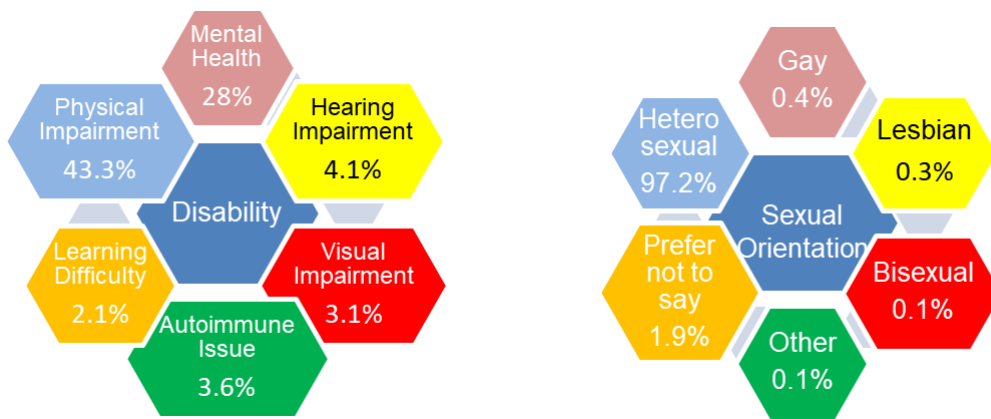
To be able to identify where we can address the needs and shape our services to all of our tenants and other customers, we needed to know who they really are. That is why we carried out a large-scale survey of our tenants in 2023 to try to get to know more about the wide range of people living in SHA homes. It provided us with some really valuable data:



**Figure 1- 84% of tenants have English as their first language and the remaining languages are broken down as follows:**



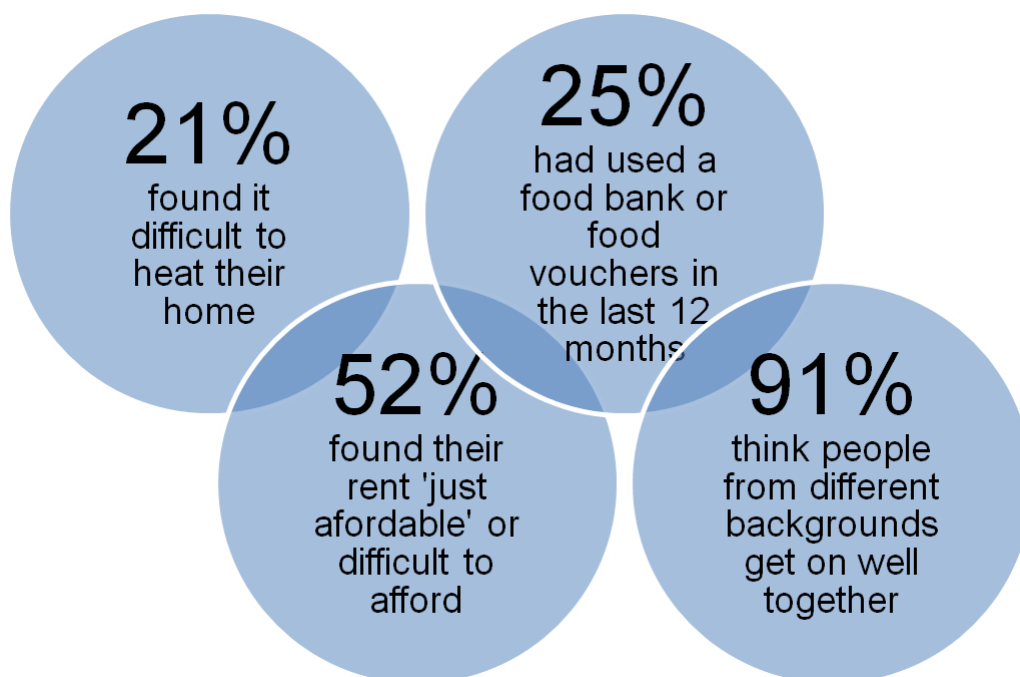
**Figure 2 - of 41% of tenants who are disabled**



Our housing stock predominately lies within two distinct areas of the south (Pollokshields/Southside Traditional) and south-west of Glasgow (Cardonald/Halfway), and while the basic requirements of a good quality, warm, energy efficient and affordable homes are universal, we can't simply take a 'one-size fits all' approach to the needs of our tenants and other customers. That's why our equalities profile data and socio-economic data that we have collected allows us to target our services based on local data and evidence.

### What else do we know?

We know the last few years have been a real challenge for everyone in terms of a cost-of-living crisis, rising energy costs, inflation, and interest rates. Our tenant survey also provided us with some valuable socio-economic data about how our tenants and other customers are managing, and about our neighbourhoods more generally.



National data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation also shows the range of needs and socio-economic diversity of our communities. Our tenants and other customers in parts of Halfway and Pollokshields East neighbourhoods are among the 5% most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland, conversely 19% of SHA housing lies within SIMD data zones which are higher than the Scottish national average.

Our Corporate Plan, supported by this Strategy aims to use our local and national data to take an evidence-based approach to shaping existing services, and where appropriate, developing new ones to target specific needs or gaps across our neighbourhoods.

## **Our Strategy**

This Strategy describes how we will promote and implement community involvement and engagement with customers and the wider community.

The Strategy and associated Action Plan use the term 'community' and 'customer' to mean the residents living in our homes, or in the communities in which we operate our services within.

The Strategy uses the broad terms 'involvement' and 'engagement' to cover a wide range of activities and approaches that will be embedded within our new Corporate Plan.

The Strategy is considered within the context of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act which was passed on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and the National Standards for Community Engagement (2016).

The Action Plan will sit with the cross departmental Community Involvement and Engagement Steering Group, will be reviewed annually and will report to the Management Committee annually.

## **STRATEGY OBJECTIVES**

As a community-controlled social landlord, we welcome the involvement of customers in the management of their homes and the improvement of services. We believe that this empowers customers and benefits the wider community. It also helps us in our efforts to continually improve our services and performance.

Equally, we are clear that customer involvement is a right, not a duty. It is up to each person to decide if and how they would like to get involved and for us to shape our Strategy accordingly and remove barriers to involvement.

We have the following objectives for this Strategy:

1. Meet our agreed Customer Service Standards during all contact with customers.
2. Provide a range of opportunities for involvement and engagement, appropriate to individuals' preferences and our services and programmes.
3. Listen to and apply customer feedback to improve service delivery, ensure value for money and to help us meet our Business Plan.
4. Provide the opportunity for all sections of the community to have the opportunity to take part, in line with our values of inclusion and equality.

## **LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONTEXT**

There are a number of statutory and regulatory provisions which guide and inform what we must do in terms of meeting tenant participation, community engagement, tenant scrutiny and consultation obligations. These are set out below.

There are also National Standards for Community Engagement which provide a code of good practice principles in relation to organisations and their approach to community engagement. These are also set out below.

### **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is the key piece of legislation in relation to social landlord's obligations with regard to Tenant Participation. This is set out in Chapter 3 sections 53 and 55 of the Act.

Section 53 of the Act provides that an registered social landlord must prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy and that they must maintain a register of Tenant Organisations and keep it open for inspection at all times.

Section 55 of the Act provides that every registered social landlord must notify all Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure Tenant of any proposal concerning:

- Its policy in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance where the proposal if implemented, is likely to affect the tenant (this would include rent increases, changes to allocations systems etc.)
- Standard of service in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance which it intends to provide
- Its Tenant Participation Strategy
- A disposal which would result in a change of landlord.

### **Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement/Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 also introduced the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).

A revision of the model tenancy agreements introduced by the Housing Scotland Act 2014, came into effect in 2019. The Associations Management Committee approved the Association's revised SST and SSST agreements in March 2019.

Section 8.4 of the SST and SSST set out the full provisions with respect to tenant consultation.

### **Housing (Scotland) Act 2010**



The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter which sets out sixteen outcomes (fourteen of which apply to RSLs) which social landlords must meet when performing their housing activities.

Outcome 3 sets the standards and outcomes RSLs must meet in relation to Tenant Participation:

“..Social landlords 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..”.

## **The Regulatory Framework and Tenant Scrutiny**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 also introduced the Scottish Housing Regulator’s Regulatory Framework which set out how it regulates social landlords in Scotland. The Framework encompasses the Standards of Governance and Financial Management, Regulatory Requirements, legal duties and Constitutional requirements which RSL’s must meet.

Tenant Scrutiny is a tenant centred approach to landlord activities which delivers benefits to tenants, landlords and communities alike.

Regulatory Standard 2.4 sets out the expectation that:

“The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The Governing Body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions”

Regulatory Requirement CH2 also sets out that:

“Social landlords must involve tenants in the scrutiny of its performance”.

## **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives new rights to community bodies and new duties to public service authorities

Part 3 of the Act (Participation Requests) is focused on extending and improving community participation in improving outcomes for communities. It is the legislation that enables communities to request to participate in decisions and processes which are aimed at improving outcomes. Although not a designated public service authority within the Act, RSLs may have a role in assisting community groups to make a participation request to a designated public service authority.

## **National Standards for Community Engagement**

The Scottish Community Development Centre developed the National Standards for Community Engagement in 2016. The National Standards for Community Engagement are

a set of good practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement.

The National Standards set out good practice expectations with regard to the following:

- Inclusion
- Support
- Communication
- Methods
- Planning
- Working Together, and;
- Impact

## **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT**

We have obligations under the public sector equality duty – general duty. In line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. We have a duty to meet the following when making decisions and setting policies:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity, and;
- Foster good relations between different protected characteristic groups

We will promote involvement by people from all sections of our communities and recognise the rich diversity within, and our need and responsibility to adapt and offer creativity in supporting participation.

In meeting our statutory and regulatory obligations in relation to community involvement and engagement set out above we will ensure we act in ways which meet our legal requirements, including:

- Consult with individual customers on changes to their rents and service charges and all housing service policies that will significantly affect them
- Provide tenants with information upon request as set out in the Tenancy Agreement
- Make sure we do not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of the nine "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010.
- Achieve the outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter when we are providing housing services to our tenants and other customers.

## **CONTEXT FOR CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Governance Structures**

Our Management Committee offer a direct route for our communities to participate in the running of our organisation. The Committee oversee the strategic direction of the organisation supported by our staff.

## **Membership**

Residents of our communities who have become shareholding members of the Association have the opportunity to participate in our AGM and decision making processes and nominate our members to take a place on our Management Committee who are ultimately responsible to the shareholding membership.

## **Tenants Groups**

There are no Registered Tenants Organisations within our neighbourhoods however there are a small number of active community groups in our Cardonald and Halfway area. We encourage the establishment of resident groups and will work alongside them to address issues and make improvements to our communities.

## **Community Development Activities and Volunteering**

SHA have an established Community Initiatives Team with a growing role in community development activities. SHA deliver a programme of activities from our community hubs and also support the involvement of other organisations to deliver activities and services from our bases. Our bases are as follows:

- 150 Berryknowes Avenue
- 15 Queensland Gardens
- Independent Living complexes at Herriet Court and Nithsdale/Newark
- 423 Shields Road

We rely on our committed Community Initiative Volunteers to support the delivery of our breakfast groups and our holiday food programme. Their time and skills are vital to the delivery of our programmes and we offer a supportive and developmental environment for them to learn and develop. Many of our volunteers regularly share their stories of how much they have gained personally from their volunteering role, whether that be confidence, a boost to their wellbeing or an opportunity to learn new skills.

Building on existing relationships with other organisations SHA continues to explore joint working and partnership opportunities.

## **Supporting Local Organisations and Tenant Participation**

We have strong working partnerships with a number of local organisations and for some we support them through the provision of premises. We have particularly strong working relationships with local food providers such as foodbanks and larders.

We encourage applications to our Community Donations budget where local organisations can demonstrate that they are making a positive contribution to our communities. This is outlined further within our Donations Policy. In addition we will agree a Tenant Participation Budget annually to support a range of events, activities and promotions that encourage our tenants to take part in our communities and projects.

## **Community Engagement and Involvement Toolkit**

There are many ways in which our communities can become involved in our projects and service improvements. As part of our Action Plan we will develop a Community Engagement and Involvement Toolkit. This will offer a simple and accessible way of communicating the range of opportunities for involvement and will include the following:

- Residents Groups
- Estate Walkabouts
- Participation Register
- Gala days and Community Events
- Membership/AGM
- Joining our Management Committee
- Email Engagement / Portal Engagement
- Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Customer Scrutiny Team
- On-going Service Satisfaction Surveys
- Registered Tenants Organisations and Community Groups
- Community Partnership Meetings and Community Councils
- Newsletters and other Publications
- Complaints
- Social Media and Website

Our Community Involvement and Engagement Action Plan provides further information on our planned areas of involvement.

We will make sure that our involvement and engagement approaches are proportionate and represent a good use of resources. For example:

- We will use the Consultation Register to identify customers who have expressed an interest in being consulted.
- We may supplement this if the matter at hand has significant implications for customers as a whole, for example by holding local consultation meetings or conducting customer surveys.
- We will allow greater time for consultation on issues that will have the greatest impact on tenants (for example, annual rent review proposals; rent restructuring; changes to the repairs service).
- We will use technology to our advantage to reach a wider range of people.

We will always provide customers with feedback about the range of views they have contributed during consultation exercises. We will do this by:

- Publishing information in our Newsletter
- Issuing consultation reports or individual letters

## **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

Customers and members of the community can communicate with the Association in person at our offices in Cardonald and Pollokshields, in writing, and by telephone or email.

The Association will provide customers and the community with information about our services and policies that is clear, easy to read and in plain, easy to read language. In doing so

- We will consider any requests for information in a format that meets an individual's needs.
- We will comply fully with the obligations stated in the tenancy agreement to provide a range of information, upon request.

### **Funding to support our Strategy**

It is intended that we will support the work within our Action Plan through a range of budgets across the organisation, depending on the area of involvement, alongside our Tenant Participation budget.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Our Management Committee has overall responsibility for approving and reviewing this Strategy and Action Plan.

The Community Involvement and Engagement Steering Group will be led by the Director of Housing and Communities. The Group will have cross-departmental representation and will have responsibility to oversee the delivery of the Plan and provide a report to the Management Committee on an annual basis. The group will meet quarterly.

The Strategy and Action Plan will be formally reviewed every three years, although adjustments to the Action Plan may be made and approved by the Management Committee on an annual basis.