



Good Practice Briefing

Accreditation for ACHA

ACHA were the first RSL in Scotland to receive the TPAS Accreditation award for tenant participation.

TPAS developed the Accreditation scheme to give recognition for good practice in tenant participation.

ACHA received Accreditation in April 2009 and was able to demonstrate an organisational commitment to developing and sustaining tenant participation.

TPAS believe that ACHA should be applauded for their commitment to tenant participation which is why they have been awarded a TPAS Accreditation.

ACHA formed in 2006

Established following a housing stock transfer in 2006, ACHA is clearly focused on the need to involve tenants in the management of its 5,300 homes spread throughout Argyll and Bute.

ACHA covers a vast geographical area and has housing stock in towns, villages and island locations. Clearly this poses the association with unique challenges for both service delivery and tenant involvement.

ACHA has offices in Rothesay, Dunoon, Bowmore, Isle of Islay, Campbeltown, Ardrishaig, Lochgilphead, Oban, Mull and Helensburgh.

Tenant participation is not new to the tenants and staff of Argyll and Bute. Many tenants

and staff had been involved in tenant participation prior to the housing transfer.

Organisational commitment

ACHA has places for ten tenants on its Board of Management whose work is supported by four area committees which also have a tenant majority. This creates options for tenants throughout Argyll to be involved at the highest level in strategic decisions about the provision of housing and related services.

The management structure of Argyll Community Housing Association is therefore particularly dependent on the need to develop and sustain tenant involvement.

A shared vision

ACHA's tenant participation strategy was developed in partnership with tenants. Tenants' representatives and ACHA agreed a shared vision for tenant participation and adopted their own unique mission statement.

The strategy is endorsed by forewords from the tenants' panel, the chair of ACHA and the Chief Executive of ACHA. This indicates the organisation's commitment to tenant participation and in particular the partnership approach used in developing the strategy.

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Effective leadership

For tenant participation to be successful, tenants groups should be supported to grow at a local level, pursuing their own aims and objectives and setting their own agendas. Effective groups will command greater respect from their landlord and are likely to be able to influence decisions about housing and related services.

Landlords seeking to develop an organisational culture that values tenant participation need to show that the governing body and the staff team all believe in a shared vision for tenant participation.

Direction and commitment to tenant participation is apparent at all levels in ACHA. The Chief Executive has championed the need to engage with individual tenants and tenants groups. This is essential for any organisation that aims to provide a service that people want and are pleased with.

Randomly 'door stepping' tenants has become part and parcel of the Chief Executive's work. This approach has demonstrated to tenants that the organisation is open to new ideas and genuinely interested in the views of tenants. This approach also reinforces the value that the whole organisation places on tenant participation.

Enthusiastic staff

TPAS identified a genuine enthusiasm for tenant participation amongst staff at all levels throughout ACHA.

Involvement options at all levels

Involvement options at all levels mean that tenants can get involved in local housing issues as well as influencing big decisions that will affect the whole organisation.

Estate Management Action Plans (EMAPs) are widely used at a local level. ACHA's 'Estate Management Action Plans' have been developed as a vehicle for tenants to

influence decisions at a local level. Tenants are able to work with local officers to identify projects for environmental improvements in the areas where they live.

Resources for tenants groups

Local registered tenants' organisations receive a wide range of resources from ACHA.

In addition to start up funding, annual grants for groups and access to training, groups also have the option of computer equipment. Indeed, ACHA will provide every RTO with a computer and broadband connection on request.

Given the challenge of geography and the time commitment involved in tenant participation, TPAS commend ACHA for providing tenants representatives with computer equipment.

TPAS believe the use of information technology enables tenants to engage with their landlords and be kept informed about service development in an extremely effective way. It also helps the landlord maintain close contact with RTO's.

Some groups have also negotiated the use of local premises to use as a base for their group's activities. ACHA pay the rent on community flats for a small number of local groups.

Promoting good practice

This briefing is intended to highlight good practice that can be replicated by other landlord organisations.

Working towards TPAS Accreditation can help organisations develop their approach to involving tenants. Contact TPAS to find out more about TPAS Accreditation.

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