

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO) Regional Network.

SHR Liaison Group.

Terms of Reference

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1. Background

- 1.1. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has a statutory duty to protect the interests of tenants and other users, of Social Landlords in Scotland. In order to do this, SHR must understand and take cognisance of their needs and priorities.
- 1.2. SHR actively involve tenants and other service users in its work, as set out in its published strategy. SHR engage with them to help make its work accountable, relevant and targeted.
- 1.3. The SHR & RTO Regional Network Liaison Group (Liaison Group) is formed to help achieve this objective; to ensure SHR has meaningful structured contact and dialogue with the four Regional Networks, who represent social landlord tenants across Scotland and their views are obtained and considered.

2. Purpose of the Liaison Group

- 2.1. The Liaison Group is a forum for SHR to have meaningful dialogue with representatives from the Regional Networks of tenant organisations and other landlord recognised groups
- 2.2. The Regional Network representatives will provide SHR with the views of their Regional Networks, on issues that are presented to them by SHR, about its processes and strategic and regulatory duties and plans.
- 2.3. The representatives of the Regional Networks may present and discuss matters at the Liaison Group meetings, which are within the remit of SHR, and SHR will provide comment.

3. Remit of the Liaison Group

- 3.1. The Liaison Group will meet once every quarter, but additional meetings may be convened at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3.2. The Liaison Group will only discuss and present views on strategic and general matters which are within the remit of SHR.
- 3.3. There will be no discussion and views recorded about individual cases or regional specific matters.

- 3.4. SHR will identify and present to the Liaison Group subjects that it wishes their views and opinions on.
- 3.5. Liaison Group members will have open and honest discussions about each agenda item and the approved minutes of these meetings will be published on the SHR website.
- 3.6. The named representatives will provide feedback and minutes on each Liaison Group meeting to the Regional Network they represent.
- 3.7. The Co-ordinator may propose agenda items for discussion and Liaison Group attendees will contribute the views, ideas and opinions of the Regional Networks, to the agenda item discussions.

4. Group membership (Chair and secretariat)

- 4.1. SHR will Chair and provide secretariat for the Liaison Group.
- 4.2. Membership of the Liaison Group will consist of:
 - Sixteen named representatives (Four from each Regional Network) and one co-ordinator from the Regional Networks of tenant organisations, eight of which plus the co-ordinator will attend each meeting.
 - two members of SHR (includes Chair and secretariat).
- 4.3. Additional members of SHR staff and/or Board members, may attend at the invitation of the Liaison Group.
- 4.4. A quorum for a Liaison Group meeting will be:
 - five Regional Network representatives, and
 - two SHR staff.

5. Roles and responsibilities of membership

- 5.1. The Chair will prepare and arrange circulation of the agenda for each Liaison Group meeting not less than seven working days before each meeting.
- 5.2. Suggested agenda items will be sent to the Chair by the Co-ordinator for consideration no later than ten working days prior to a meeting. Agenda items will only be accepted from the Co-ordinator.

- 5.3. Members must consider whether any agenda item will require them to declare an interest. Any declarations of interest should be made at the start of each meeting. If however, the requirement to make a declaration is not identified until discussion of an agenda item has started, the declaration must be made as soon as it is realised that one must be made.
- 5.4. A declaration of an interest may prevent the member in participating in the discussion of the agenda item and, if requested by the Chair, the member may be required to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion on the agenda item.
- 5.5. Draft minutes will be produced within twenty eight days of a meeting and circulated to each member of the Liaison Group, and any person approved, by the Chair, to receive the minutes, for comment.
- 5.6. The Co-ordinator will respond to the Chair within seven working days, and either, provide suggested changes to the minutes, or inform the Chair that they are content with the minutes.
- 5.7. If amendments are required to the draft minutes, these will be made within seven working days and the re-drafted minutes re-circulated to the Co-ordinator for reply within seven working days of receipt. Once all representatives are content with the draft minutes, the Chair will confirm that the minutes have been approved and they will be circulated and published on the SHR website.
- 5.8. All representatives will present the approved minutes of the Liaison Group meetings to their Regional Network.
- 5.9. All representatives should feedback to the Liaison Group any comments or views from their Regional Networks, if they are asked to do so.
- 5.10. SHR representatives will circulate the minutes to designated officers within SHR's Divisions, for comment and will feedback any comments received at the next Liaison Group meeting, as required.
- 5.11. The Chair will prepare and submit biannual reports to the SHR Board, detailing the views and priorities of the Liaison Group. The Chair will feedback to the Liaison Group any comments received from the SHR Board regarding the reports or about any other matter.

6. Presentation and retention of information

- 6.1. The Chair of the Liaison Group will select the agenda items for each meeting based on the matters that SHR would like to present to the Regional Networks for comment and opinion.
- 6.2. The Chair will consider any item for inclusion as an agenda item, if it is submitted to the Chair by the Co-ordinator, and the subject matter falls within the remit of the Liaison Group to discuss (See Section 3.7).
- 6.3. There may be times when Liaison Group members will be asked to discuss documents and other information of an Official nature, which has not been made public and is not intended to be made public.
- 6.4. There are provisions in legislation on the categories of confidential and exempt information and members must always respect and comply with the requirement to keep such information private.
- 6.5. It is unacceptable to disclose any information which members have been given privileged access to, either orally or in writing. Liaison Group members should ensure all information and documents discussed at the Liaison Group meetings are not made available to outside bodies or individuals, and should never be used for the purpose of personal or financial gain, or used in such a way as to bring SHR into disrepute.
- 6.6. SHR can be required to provide copies of Liaison Group documents, if requested to do so by any person. Therefore, members must ensure that documents do not contain any material that may be deemed inappropriate.

7. Budget and expenses

- 7.1. SHR has allocated funds to meet the cost of Liaison Group members' travel to and from meetings with the SHR and for any catering that is required.
- 7.2. Liaison Group members should present a claim for their expenses to SHR, as soon as possible after the cost has been incurred, using the appropriate Expenses Claim Form (available from SHR).

- 7.3. If travel is by:
- Public transport: a receipt, or the travel ticket (which records the cost of the ticket) must be presented with the Expenses Claim.
 - Motor car: the cost of mileage is paid at £0.45 per mile; £0.05 per mile for each passenger and a receipt must be produced if a claim is presented for car parking costs.
- 7.4. If travel is by any other means, or a member expects to incur other travel costs in attending a Liaison Group meeting, they must discuss this with SHR prior to travel, if it is their wish to seek reimbursement of the cost from SHR.
- 7.5. SHR will not meet the cost of any overnight accommodation, unless this has been approved in writing by SHR, prior to the expense being incurred.
- 7.6. SHR will not make any payment for a member's travel time to and from a meeting nor for attendance time at a meeting.

8. Members' code of conduct

- 8.1. All Liaison Group members must act in a polite and courteous manner and treat with respect the views and opinions of their fellow members.
- 8.2. In the event that there is concern expressed that a member has not acted in accordance with the remit and roles and responsibilities of the Liaison Group, the Chair can ask the other members of the Committee to vote on the imposition of a sanction, as listed at 8.4, on that member.
- 8.3. The subject of the vote will be informed of the concerns of the Group and may speak to the Group prior to the vote. The subject of the vote may not cast a vote and will be required to leave the meeting for the duration of the vote.
- 8.4. In the event of an even split of votes, the Chair will cast the deciding vote. If authorised by a majority vote, the Chair will impose one of the following sanctions on a Liaison Group member:
- Censure – the Chair may reprimand the member and/or remove them from all, or part, of a Liaison Group meeting, but otherwise take no further action against them;
 - Suspend – the Chair may remove the member from the remaining part of a Liaison Group meeting and suspend the member from attending one or more future meetings; or

- Disqualify – the Chair may remove the member from the remaining part of a Liaison Group meeting and remove the member from membership of the SHR Liaison Group.
- 8.5. Where a member is suspended or disqualified from the Liaison Group, the Chair will notify the Regional Network the member represents and inform them of the reason for the suspension or disqualification. The Regional Network will be invited to appoint a new representative to join the Liaison Group, either for the period of the suspension, or as a permanent placement.