

TENANT PARTICIPATION ADVISORY SERVICE

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Introduction

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) is a social enterprise that exists to promote good and effective working relationships between tenant and landlord organisations across Scotland. TPAS is a membership organisation directed by a Board of Management elected from our tenant and landlord members. Strictly speaking we are not a tenant organisation but can collect views from our tenant or landlord members to represent a collective view.

We were pleased to be asked to attend the committee to give oral evidence, but due to work commitments we were unable to attend. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this very short summary.

Due to the short timescales we were unable to conduct a survey of our members, but we did ask our Board to respond.

Our views

Tenants views - No comprehensive process has been gone through to gather tenants views of the SHR and the new regulatory regime, we feel this type of exercise would be worthwhile. Perhaps in two or three years when the new regime has had time to settle down and embed, this exercise could be undertaken. A series of small local events across Scotland with a survey would work, but the focus should not only be on the central belt and with already involved tenants. TPAS would be able and happy to undertake this project with funding from the SHR or the Scottish Government. We understand that the SHR has its national panel but additional efforts should be made to seek tenants views.

The Charter and reporting process – The Charter and the emphasis from the SHR on tenants monitoring landlords performance has increased the opportunities for tenants to get involved with their landlord in a new and meaningful way. Tenants across Scotland who have never been involved before are taking a significant role in monitoring and improving services. Not all practice across all landlords is excellent, but the recent upholding of a landlords Significant Failure on tenant participation sends out a strong message to landlords, not least that tenants views are being listened to and taken seriously. We hope that this will encourage “reluctant” landlords to do more to enable tenants to get involved in monitoring performance.

The on line comparative tool is useful for tenants to see a picture in time to compare their landlords with others. We understand it is a snapshot, but it lacks contextual information – this is both helpful in terms of tenants being able to question and challenge their landlord over what seems to be poor

performance, but less useful where tenants would not bother to question or challenge and just think their landlord was poor. Perhaps a short section on “if you think your landlords is poor, here is how you can find out more or challenge your landlord?”

Finally TPAS can collect views from our tenant and landlords, a more comprehensive approach to collecting tenants views could be taken. We did suggest that the tenant Regional network views could be sought for the committee, and while I understand they are supported and resourced by the Scottish Government they represent their local tenants and I am sure would have been keen and able to be able to take their views and that of their communities to the committee.

Tenants Participation Advisory Service
3 December 2014