



Getting Involved



What is tenant participation?

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Chartered Institute of Housing say that tenant participation is “a two-way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening.”

The first District-wide Tenant Participation Compact was introduced in January 2000. The Compact is an agreement between SLDC, SLH and tenants and was negotiated at a series of working party meetings leading up to its launch. Tenants have decided the compact should be called ‘Agreement’.

The Agreement contains standards for services and information and is reviewed by tenants annually. The Agreement also lists the ways in which tenants can be involved in the management of their homes. Some of these are described in this leaflet. If you would like a copy of the Agreement please call your local South Lakes Housing office and we will be pleased to send one to you in a format convenient to you, for instance in large print or a language other than English.

Why does South Lakes Housing and the Council want to work with tenants and Leaseholders?

We aim to consult and involve tenants and Leaseholders of all ages and backgrounds. This ensures South Lakes Housing delivers an excellent, efficient housing service, and that tenants influence decisions taken about their housing service.



Tenants' Committee

The Tenants' Committee is open to any Council tenant and membership currently numbers a maximum of twenty, five from Lakes, five from Ulverston and ten from Kendal. It is the formally recognised body that represents South Lakeland tenants.

Tenants' Committee meets with SLDC and SLH to help develop policy and strategy, set standards for service delivery, agree priorities and monitor performance.

Tenants' Committee have nominated four representatives onto the ALMO Board and has representatives on the SLDC Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Tenants' Committee can also make recommendations to the Housing Portfolio holder and the South Lakes Housing Board.

Area Discussion Groups (ADGs)

These Groups give residents the opportunity to discuss key local issues with SLH, SLDC and Councillors, and are held around the District.

The ADGs will appoint members to a Grant Approval Group, which will decide priorities for allocating Estate Improvement funding.

TIC Club (Tenant Involvement Club)

Any tenant or leaseholder who is willing to give their views is invited to join the TIC Club. Members specify how they want to be involved and are contacted when an opportunity to give their views arises.

Cumbria Tenants Forum

South Lakes Housing tenants are also members of the Cumbria Tenants' Forum. Two elected tenant representatives and an Officer attend these meetings.

Residents' associations

There are lots of reasons for residents to get together and form an association. Here are just a few of the main ones:

- To campaign for something, such as play facilities.
- To increase community spirit in your area.
- To organise social events.
- To have a representative voice with the Council and South Lakes Housing.

South Lakes Housing provides support to resident associations by:

- Providing a start-up booklet for people wanting to set up an association in their area.
- Providing financial support through start-up grants for new groups, and maintenance grants for existing groups.
- Offering advice, training and information.

To find out if there is a residents' association in your area, or if you wish to contact other associations, contact your Housing Officer.

Tenants newsletter

Tenants' Committee help run an editorial team which produces a newsletter on a regular basis. This newsletter gives you information on any significant issues affecting your home and an up-to-date list of who to contact for various housing services.

If you have something going on your estate or in your village please tell us about it by sending an article or letter to the Editorial Team, South Lakes Housing, Little Aynam House, Little Aynam, Kendal LA9 7AH.

Email: info@southlakeshousing.co.uk

Training

South Lakes Housing provides free training events which are open to all tenants. Some training events are also open to Residents' Associations.

If tenants want to be more involved in helping to make decisions about their housing, they need to know more about a wide range of issues. Events staged in the past have dealt with issues such as: running a residents association; tackling anti-social behaviour; and tenant involvement in the maintenance service. Look out for our training programme in the newsletter.

If you are interested in finding out more contact the Tenant Participation team.

Other ways you can get involved

Opportunities include:

- Tenant Reader Panel – ensures our publications are easy to read and understand
- Editorial team – produces the Tenants Newsletter and looks at other publications and the website
- Village/Estate voices – represent an area or village
- 'Mystery Shoppers' – test whether we are delivering a quality service
- Service Improvement groups – held regularly for tenants to voice their views on their 'pet' subject, for instance repairs.
- 'Focus Groups' – are held now and again to let South Lakes Housing know what tenants think about a particular aspect of their service
- Estate walkabouts are held around the district – keep an eye out for the programme and contact us if you'd like to join in.
- Surveys – if you would like to participate from home you can just fill in a survey.

When you sign your tenancy agreement you will be given a 'menu' for participation, which lists most of the ways you can help to test and improve our service. Whether you can just give us just a few minutes or a few hours of your time, we are waiting to hear from you.

Need help with childcare or travel?

South Lakes Housing can pay your expenses, help you with travel arrangements and the cost of care for relatives and children who depend on you.

So, why not get involved?

Contact your Housing Officer or the Tenant Participation Team on 01539 717717 or Email: info@southlakeshousing.co.uk

Tenant Participation Standards

- We will provide a ladder of participation within 10 different ways for you to be informed, consulted or involved in taking decisions about improving the housing service via the Tenant Involvement Club.
 1. Written information
 2. Surveys, questionnaires, mystery shops, audits and inspections
 3. Occasional events
 4. Regular meetings
 5. Walkabouts and/or estate roadshows
 6. Area Discussion Groups
 7. Residents' Associations and Village voices
 8. Training and awareness sessions
 9. Tenants' Committee
 10. SLH Board

- We will provide a programme of 10 training and development opportunities to help you feel confident about taking part at the level you want

- We will hold Area Discussion Group meetings in Kendal, Lakes and Ulverston four times a year for you to have your say

- We will deliver a newsletter edited by tenants to your home four times a year

- We will deliver a programme of 30 tenant audits and mystery shops to help measure the quality of the housing service

- We will offer grants for estate improvements that any tenant can apply for

- We will arrange 10 roadshows and 6 walkabouts per year across the district

You can get a copy of this document in different formats such as large print, Braille, audio, or in a different language by calling 0845 057 0080 or check our website www.southlakeshousing.co.uk

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