

Tenant Participation Policy

Mount Green Housing Association is committed to ensuring that residents of its properties have access to a range of opportunities for participation in the management of the association and development of its services. In addition, the association will encourage the development of local initiatives to improve the quality of life of the communities living in its homes.

The three key issues which drive Mount Green's approach to tenant participation are:

- information
- consultation
- influence

Information

All residents will receive regular newsletters and information bulletins. These publications will:

- Inform tenants of organisational developments and invite comments
- Inform tenants of Mount Green's performance as a landlord and compare that performance with similar organisations
- Inform tenants of local developments that are likely to affect them or be of interest generally
- Inform tenants of national developments and significant legislative changes that are likely to affect them and to which they may wish to respond or for Mount Green to express a view on their behalf, e.g. changes to housing law, benefits, etc.

All tenants will receive a regular rent statement, informing them of the position of their rent account and inviting queries/clarification, as necessary.

The association will publish, in consultation with tenants, performance plans and targets for improvement in services. Such plans will invite tenants to be involved in the review of service delivery and the development of service specifications.

All tenants will receive a tenants handbook, outlining Mount Green's housing policies, repair procedures and important contacts and related information.

From time to time, residents will be invited to events to receive information and discuss particular topics as an alternative to receiving written information.

All information will be provided in plain English and can be translated on request. It will be also be available in tape and Braille formats.

Consultation

The Housing Act 1985 sets down specific requirements for consultation where a landlord wishes to vary the terms of a secure tenancy agreement. It also requires Housing Associations to consult tenants on matters of housing management and defines such matters as 'the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition

of dwelling-houses ,or the provision of services or amenities.....’ Although statute does not dictate requirements for consultation for assured tenants in relation to matters of housing management, the Housing Corporation via the Tenants Guarantee, requires housing associations to apply the same criteria as for secure tenants.

In addition to complying with this requirement for consultation, Mount Green will:

- consult on its services in terms of levels of satisfaction relating to standard, accessibility, cost, frequency, etc.
- consult on priorities for improvements
- consult on design of new property/reinvestment/cyclical programmes

Consultation will be in the form of open meetings, focus groups and regular tenant surveys. Such consultation will also take account of the wider community and other organisation stakeholders, as appropriate.

To ensure that as many people as possible are able to participate in consultation exercises, venues will be chosen that are easy to access and times chosen to enable maximum attendance. Where possible, transport and childcare will also be arranged. We will also be sensitive to the needs of different groups within the community and the possible need for separate consultation arrangements to be established to ensure their views are heard.

Written consultation will be deemed to have been sufficient if 50% of those invited to respond do so.

In addition, regular surveys of maintenance standards will be carried out via reply paid correspondence and regular telephone surveys to tenants following repairs will be carried out.

Influence

In order for communication and consultation to be meaningful, the association must be able to demonstrate that it has enabled tenants to influence the services delivered by the association and the decisions that determine those services.

This will involve feedback on issues that have been consulted on both in terms of the responses given by residents and the outcome, identifying how the consultation has influenced the way in which the association is taking the issue forward, e.g. improvements in a particular aspect of service delivery.

As well as a range of methods of consultation and feedback, formal mechanisms will be put in place to further enable tenants to influence the management and service standards of the organisations. These will include:

- formally recognised residents associations
- a residents consultative committee
- tenant membership of Mount Green’s management sub-committees and working towards membership of Mount Green’s board of management
- development of a tenant editorial board for the association’s newsletter

Residents Associations

Mount Green Housing Association will facilitate the formation of formal resident associations where residents wish to establish them.

Mount Green will support the establishment of a constitution and election of Officers of the residents association. Once established, Mount Green will provide funding support for the administration of the residents association.

Officers of the residents association will be offered training and conference opportunities to assist them in their role.

Resident associations will be encouraged and enabled to link with other active tenant groups and become members of national tenant organisations.

The resident association will also be encouraged and enabled to manage its own fundraising.

Community Development

Where residents express a desire to improve an aspect of their community, Mount Green will work with them to establish the feasibility of achieving the desired improvement.

If an action plan is agreed Mount Green will

- identify the project within its own business/corporate plan
- provide funding support either as finance or in kind
- link with appropriate agencies able to assist with the project
- support a fundraising strategy
- enable a consultation process with those affected by the project