

TENANT PARTICIPATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) is a community controlled organisation run by a Management Committee which is a group of local residents committed to encouraging tenant participation. MHA recognises that participation is a two way process involving the sharing of information and ideas where tenants are able to influence decisions and participate in activities. MHA actively encourages tenants' participation to help the Management Committee and staff in decision making and setting priorities, enhance service delivery and maximise greater tenant satisfaction.

2. Key Principles for Good Tenant Participation

MHA considers the following to be key principles of good TP:

- Φ TP requires a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between residents, Management Committee and staff at all levels.
- Φ Should be seen as a continuous process where information, ideas and power are shared, common understanding of problems are strived for and a consensus on solutions is worked out.
- Φ Allows all parties to contribute to the agenda. All participants require to have all the information needed to consider issues properly; that information requires to be clear, timely and accessible and to take account of equal opportunities concerns.
- Φ Process of decision making should be open, clear and accountable.

3. Aims of Tenant Participation

To maximise tenant involvement MHA strives to ensure that residents are:

- Provided with up to date information
- Consulted on issues which affect their tenancy or the wider area.
- Play an active part in the running of the Association
- Encourage feedback on services, proposals and general MHA issues.

4. Information

The Association will advise residents of decisions that have been proposed or implemented using a number of different methods:-

- (a) New Tenants Package - Each household is given a package at the start of their tenancy. This includes information relating to rent payments, Membership details and a Tenants Handbook which summarises the main area of MHA service provision. This information is available on tape, in Braille and different languages.

- (b) Owners Handbook - Whenever there is a change of ownership a handbook is provided. This contains information relating to property management service, membership of the Association, maintenance, estate management and general information on Milnbank Property Services Company.
- (c) Newsletters - MHA produces regular newsletters which residents are invited to contribute to and provide comment on.
- (d) Close meetings - Which can be held at any time and called by either tenants or MHA Staff. If necessary, a Committee member or an outside agency can be in attendance.
- (e) Managers Surgeries Are held on an on-going basis throughout the year to provide an opportunity for residents to engage with the Management Team.
- (f) Focus Groups - There are currently 4 Focus Groups operating within MHA.
- (g) Scrutiny Groups - There are current 2 Scrutiny Groups operating within MHA.
- (h) RTO - MHA has 1 RTO at the Great Eastern Development.
- (i) Website - Various aspects of TP feature in MHA's website www.milnbank.org.uk
- (j) Reception TV & Notice Board -A TV is located in the office reception with the aim being to provide up to date information on what's happening within MHA and the area in general.
- (k) Annual Report - An Annual Report is produced yearly in order to report on our services and performance during each financial year.

5. Consultation

MHA acknowledges its legal obligation to consult on changes which will have a substantial effect on tenants. The methods of consultation used will vary according to the issues concerned. For example, issuing a letter and a freepost

envelope for return, carrying out a home visit, call a public meeting, Focus Group etc.

Feedback on the quality of the existing service delivery will be obtained using a 3 yearly comprehensive tenant's satisfaction survey and supplemented with satisfaction surveys on a continuous basis covering a selection of MHA services. MHA also sets up scrutiny committee's where relevant in order to consult on specific issues (e.g. ARC Return Outcomes). The feedback received from tenants will be examined by MHA. This includes internal compliance audits and validation checks undertaken by an external consultant.

6. Participation

MHA is committed to help TP from all groups within the community and in order to involve as many residents as possible, the facility of MHA's Community Halls are provided to encourage a range of activities within the neighbourhood.

MHA encourages tenants to take out membership in order to enable them to attend Annual General Meetings.

MHA promotes and give support and encouragement to those tenants wishing to form a group in whatever form that they take e.g. Street Committees. Members of staff will be happy to attend such groups when invited and will give advice and assistance on seeking appropriate training. Groups which exist solely to provide community or social activities will also be encouraged e.g. Neighbourhood Watch. In addition, MHA recognises that it is essential to encourage tenants to become members of the Management Committee or other established groups in order to give them a voice and to gain a tenants perspective on matters discussed.

MHA aims to ensure all the places on the Management Committee are filled. In order to support diversity and equal opportunities, childcare and travelling costs will be met by MHA to facilitate full participation.

7. Policy Review

This policy is formulated and monitored by the Services Committee and reviewed annually or as otherwise deemed necessary as part of the Tenant Participation Strategy.