

Tenant Participation Policy

Contents

1.0	Ark's Values	2
2.0	Purpose	2
3.0	Policy Statement	3
5.0	Legal/Regulatory Framework.....	4
6.0	Responsibilities	4
6.1	Board of Management	4
6.2	Executive Team	4
6.3	Leadership Team	4
6.4	Managers	4
6.5	All Staff.....	4
7.0	Tenant Participation	5
7.1	Related Policies and Procedures	5
7.2	Key Areas of Focus	5
7.3	Best Practice and External Engagement	6
7.4	Budgeting for Participation	6
7.5	Learning & Development Requirements	6
8.0	Related Policies & Procedures	6
9.0	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).....	6
10.0	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).....	6
11.0	Stakeholder Consultation	7
12.0	Monitoring and Review.....	7
12.1	Monitoring	7
12.2	Review.....	7

1.0 Ark's Values

Ark values should be at the forefront of all policy documents, ensuring that our actions and decisions reflect the ethos of the organisation. Ark's core purpose is to deliver equitable services with a commitment to trust, respect, understanding, equality, and integrity. These values influence how we interact with one another and guide our relationships with tenants and staff.

Trust

We place confidence in our staff to deliver high-quality services. We cultivate trusting, honest relationships, assuring our tenants they can depend on us.

Respect

We treat everyone equitably and listen attentively. Respect is paramount in all interactions, and we expect our team to respond professionally and treat others with fairness.

Understanding

We engage with empathy and open-mindedness, seeking the best outcomes for all. Questioning and challenging are key components of how we ensure the right decisions are made.

Equality

We believe in the inherent equality of everyone. Our staff strives to create an environment where every individual feels valued and included.

Integrity

We act responsibly, uphold high standards of behaviour, and work collaboratively to maintain ethical practices.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define Ark's approach to tenant consultation and participation. This, along with the associated procedure HM05a, encapsulates all the necessary information to form Ark's Tenant Participation Strategy.

It reaffirms that we will engage with tenants and promote involvement. We will foster open communication with tenants, allowing them where possible to influence decisions related to housing policies and services, ensuring we provide services that benefit them. This will involve sharing information, ideas, and plans, thus empowering tenants while holding Ark accountable for its actions.

3.0 Policy Statement

Tenant participation can be defined in several ways. We have chosen to define it as follows:

“Tenant participation is about tenants influencing the decisions that we take about housing policies and services. It is a two-way process involving the sharing of information, ideas and plans. It gives an opportunity to empower tenants and makes us more accountable for our actions.”

Participation may mean different things to different tenants, ranging from receiving clear, accessible information about our services to actively contributing to decision-making processes, such as through participation in focus groups, surveys, or policy reviews.

Ark is committed to:

- Ensuring that all tenants are well-informed about our activities and have opportunities to participate in our decision-making processes at a level that suits them;
- Striving to empower tenants through involvement, making our organisation more accountable and transparent in our actions;
- Promoting tenant participation in the development and provision of our housing services;
- Fostering two-way communication to allow tenants to influence decisions related to housing policies and services.
- Recognise that tenants have different needs and levels of interest in participation. Our approach will be tailored to ensure that all tenants, including those with additional support needs, are able to engage fully.

4.0 Scope

This policy outlines our general approach to promoting tenant consultation and participation.

A comprehensive review of tenant participation and the Strategy was undertaken in 2019 when we consulted with all tenants about how they wanted to be involved with Ark and how they wanted to get information or provide feedback.

As we introduce new digital methods of communicating with tenants, we hope these will provide more effective ways for tenants to communicate with us, for us to provide information to tenants and to allow tenants to get involved where they can.

It is supported by a more detailed Customer Engagement Strategy, which includes specific actions to ensure meaningful engagement with all customers who receive a service from Ark.

5.0 Legal/Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with:

- the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which places a requirement on Registered Social Landlords to have a Tenant Participation Strategy;
- the Scottish Social Housing Charter (2022 Revision), particularly Outcome 3, which mandates that social landlords facilitate easy participation and influence in decision-making for tenants and customers at a level they are comfortable with. This includes ensuring inclusivity for all tenants, particularly those from vulnerable or marginalised groups.
- The Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Legislation, ensuring all tenant participation is inclusive and non-discriminatory.

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for the overall governance and approval of the Tenant Participation Policy.

6.2 Executive Team

The Executive Team ensures the policy aligns with Ark's strategic objectives and legal obligations, driving its effective implementation.

6.3 Leadership Team

Senior leaders provide oversight and ensure that participation initiatives are being effectively integrated into housing services.

6.4 Managers

Managers are tasked with the day-to-day implementation of the Tenant Participation Policy and Procedure, ensuring staff are informed and actively contributing to tenant engagement efforts.

6.5 All Staff

All staff are responsible for supporting tenant participation activities and fostering an inclusive environment for tenant feedback and involvement.

7.0 Tenant Participation

7.1 Related Policies and Procedures

This Policy is supported by the more detailed Tenant Participation Procedure, HM05a and the Customer Engagement Strategy.

7.2 Key Areas of Focus

The following key areas form the foundation of our approach to tenant participation:

- Keeping Tenants Informed: We will provide regular tenant newsletters and maintain up-to-date, accurate, and accessible information in various formats, including leaflets, digital communications, and our website.
- Encouraging Feedback: We will offer multiple opportunities for tenants to share their views, including major tenant satisfaction surveys, regular service feedback questionnaires, individual meetings, and informal discussions.
 - Consulting on Key Issues: We will consult with tenants on a range of relevant topics, such as the annual rent review and any policies affecting housing management, maintenance, or other services;
 - Raising Awareness of Participation Opportunities: We will actively promote opportunities for tenant participation, including focus groups, tenant associations and online forums, and provide support to help tenants engage effectively;
 - Collaboration with Other Housing Providers: We will explore opportunities for joint tenant participation initiatives with other housing providers in the areas where we operate;
 - Training and Support: We will provide training and development opportunities for:
 - staff to equip them to promote tenant participation;
 - and
 - tenants who wish to become more actively involved in our decision-making processes;
 - Promoting involvement in the Scrutiny Group;
 - Promoting Membership and Attendance at Meetings: We will encourage tenants to become members of Ark Housing Association and to attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM) to further influence our policies and activities.
- We are committed to making improvements where needed, based on tenant feedback, external evaluations, and changes in legislation. Our goal is to provide meaningful opportunities for tenant participation that are accessible to all and that make a real difference to the services we provide.

7.3 Best Practice and External Engagement

Through our membership of Tenant Information Service (TIS), we will:

- Stay informed about the latest best practices in tenant participation.
- Incorporate current best practices into our Tenant Participation Policy and Procedure, including the use of digital engagement and hybrid participation methods.
- Contribute to the development of good practice at both local and national levels.

7.4 Resources for Participation

Each year, as part of our budget-setting process, we will allocate sufficient resources, both financial and staffing, to support the implementation of the Tenant Participation Strategy and ongoing tenant participation activities.

7.5 Learning & Development Requirements

Staff will receive training to support the implementation of the Tenant Participation Strategy. This includes learning opportunities related to effective communication, tenant engagement, inclusivity practices, and legal compliance with tenant participation standards.

8.0 Related Policies & Procedures

This policy is interconnected with other Ark policies & procedures including HM05a - Participation Procedure and G34 - Equality Policy. Together, these policies ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to tenant consultation and participation.

9.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that the Tenant Participation Policy does not disproportionately impact any group and aligns with Ark's commitment to equality and non-discrimination.

10.0 Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been carried out to ensure tenant information used in participation activities complies with data protection laws, ensuring confidentiality and privacy.

11.0 Stakeholder Consultation

In developing this policy, the following groups were consulted:

- Ark's tenants;
- Ark Leadership Team;
- Policy and Procedure Review Group.

12.0 Monitoring and Review

12.1 Monitoring

Ark's Executive and Leadership Team will monitor implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis, with relevant support and management information from Ark's Housing & Customer Services team. Managers have access to LearnPro reports for their direct line management and will review progress and organise staff training as needed.

12.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years from the date of approval in accordance with Ark's policy review framework.