

Scottish Social Housing Charter Review – Scottish Government Consultation

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues:

The Scottish Government released a consultation seeking views on the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The last review of the Charter standards and outcome took place in 2016, and they are looking for feedback on whether they should be kept exactly as is or if they need any changes. You can view the full consultation paper [here](#).

The consultation closes on 9 September 2021. [Click here](#) to submit your response.

1.0 The Working Group

The Scottish Government is consulting on the Scottish Social Housing Charter with a view to developing an updated version of the Charter which, following approval from the Scottish Parliament, will be released on 1 April 2022. The Charter was originally introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 with standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve. Please note that this only covers social landlords and not private sector landlords.

The purpose of the Charter is to give all customers an understanding of what should be expected of a social landlord, it provides landlords with an understanding of what they should be delivering, it allows the Scottish Housing Regular to monitor, assess and report

on performance, and it allows landlords and customers to have information on performance to judge their value for money in comparison with other social landlords.

2.0 Consultation Questions

1. Over the last 5 years, do you think the Charter has contributed to improvements in landlord services?
2. Would you keep charter outcome 1 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

EQUALITIES (Charter outcome 1)

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that: every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

3. Would you keep charter outcome 2 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

COMMUNICATION (Charter outcome 2)

Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

4. Would you keep charter outcome 3 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

PARTICIPATION (Charter outcome 3)

Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

5. Would you keep charter standard 4 exactly as it is, change this standard or don't know.

QUALITY OF HOUSING (Charter standard 4)

Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020

6. Would you keep charter outcome 5 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS (Charter outcome 5)

Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

7. Would you keep charter outcome 6 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT, ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, NEIGHBOUR NUISANCE AND TENANCY DISPUTES (Charter outcome 6)

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that: tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

8. Would you keep charter outcomes 7, 8 and 9 exactly as they are, change these outcomes or don't know.

HOUSING OPTIONS (Charter outcomes 7,8 and 9)

Social landlords work together to ensure that: people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them. Tenants and people on housing lists can review their

housing options. Social landlords ensure that: people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

9. Would you keep charter outcome 10 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know

ACCESS TO HOUSING (Charter outcome 10)

Social landlords ensure that: people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

10. Would you keep charter outcome 11 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT (Charter outcome 11)

Social landlords ensure that: tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

11. Would you keep charter outcome 12 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

HOMELESS PEOPLE (Charter outcome 12)

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that: homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

12. Would you keep charter standard 13 exactly as it is, change this standard or don't know.

VALUE FOR MONEY (Charter standard 13)

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that: tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

13. Would you keep charter outcomes 14 and 15 exactly as they are, change these outcomes or don't know.

RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES (Charter outcomes 14 and 15)

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that: A balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them. Tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including any details of individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

14. Would you keep charter outcome 16 exactly as it is, change this outcome or don't know.

GYPSIES/ TRAVELLERS (Charter outcome 16)

Local councils and social landlords with responsibility for managing sites for Gypsies/Travellers should manage the sites so that: sites are well maintained and managed, and meet the minimum site standards set in Scottish Government guidance.

15. Is there anything else you think the Charter should cover? If so please tell us what and why you think it should be included?

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE encourages our members to respond to the Scottish Government consultation on the Scottish Social Housing Charter to ensure that the views of local authorities are

represented in the conversation about updating the outcomes and standards for social landlords.

APSE's membership has been an active part of improving the standards of social housing in Scotland and beyond. A great deal of best practice has been shared by our network through our regular [seminars](#) and [advisory groups](#), and through [our research publications](#) with organisations like the Town and County Planning Association.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by clicking [here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by clicking [here](#).

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