



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**  
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## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **1.1. About us**

Paisley Housing Association has 1292 (as at October 2022) properties for rent within five distinct communities in Paisley. These are Town Centre, West End, South Area, Glenburn and Foxbar. Each of the communities has its own individual characteristics and demographics. We also provide a factoring service to 287 homes.

### **1.2. Business Plan**

In 2022 We reviewed our business plan to develop the strategic direction of the business over the next two years. The overall aims of Paisley Housing Association in this period are:

- 1. Providing a high-quality, safe & affordable home environment for those in need.*
- 2. Providing effective services to help our tenants maintain their tenancies.*
- 3. Providing opportunities to ensure the voice of our customers is heard.*

This strategy seeks to deliver on *Providing opportunities to ensure the voice of our customers are heard*, by delivering on this aim it will inform delivery of the other aims.

### **1.3. Strategic Direction**

In developing our business plan it is recognised that we need to engage with our tenants to develop a picture of their needs and aspirations for their communities. This strategy will seek to identify the areas of our business plan where we need to engage with our tenants, what we would like to achieve, the methodology and tools for doing this.

In doing this we will strengthen our response to the strategic objectives to refine our customer service model and invest in partnership working.

### **1.4. Legislation**

#### **The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced a legal framework for Community Engagement. The 2001 Act placed a requirement on landlords to consult with tenants on major housing issues which will affect them.

#### **The Scottish Social Housing Charter**

The section of the Scottish Housing Charter relevant to Community Engagement is:

#### **The Customer/Landlord Relationship**

36: Participation

*Social landlords manage their business so that:*

*Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable.*

## **2. CURRENT POSITION**

Governance of the Association is provided by a Board of 12 members of which a third of the members are tenants, with the remainder living in Renfrewshire or the immediate surrounding area.

67% of our properties lie within the bottom 10% of SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). Paisley Housing Association, has a commitment to investment in developing and investing in our communities. In the last several years this has been demonstrated by:

- Developing 30 new general needs properties in Glenburn, in partnership with Sanctuary Housing Association
- Developing 16 new amenity properties in Westerfield for over 60s
- Continuing work to redevelop properties in Orchard Street.
- Working in partnership with organisations such as Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Foodbank, RAMH and Citizens Advice Bureau to deliver services to support the community.
- Delivering in-house benefits, energy and money advice to our tenants.
- Securing £120,000 funding for a 3 year project to target Homelessness Prevention.
- Delivering a variety of crisis schemes, such as our fuelbank to help alleviate poverty
- Working in partnership with Renfrewshire Council Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Homeless Services and Housing & Social Care Panel (HSCP).

## **3. COMMUNITIES**

Each of our communities has distinct characteristics, which develop unique challenges and opportunities. Through previous research we have also identified 'hotspots' where turnover was increasing, despite an overall trend for decreasing turnover. These hotspots are highlighted below in the relevant community.

### **3.1. Breakdown of Community Characteristics**

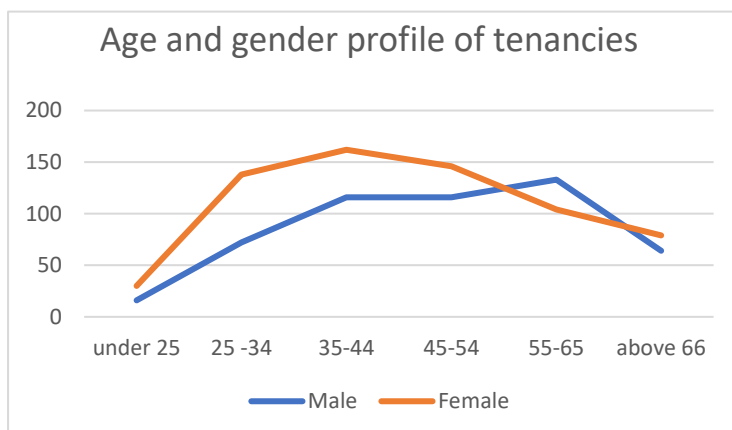
<b>Community</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>South Area</b>	Largely urban area, little green space outwith back courts. A small number of suburban areas with more green spaces. Largely sandstone tenement properties, many mixed tenure Some other types of flats and a small number of Houses Largely good access to amenities such as shops, GP surgeries etc. Limited access to Libraries in local area. Community Centre in local area

	Easy Access to railway station with links to Glasgow.
<b>West End</b>	Urban area, little green space outwith back courts Largely sandstone tenement properties, with some tenement properties developed post war. Including Mixed Tenure Excellent access to amenities such as shops, libraries and GP surgeries. Community Centre in local area Easy Access to railway station with links to Glasgow, Greenock and North Ayrshire. Argyle Street Hotspot
<b>Town Centre</b>	Urban area, little green space outwith back courts Largely sandstone tenement properties Excellent access to amenities such as shops, libraries and GP surgeries. Community Centre in nearby area. Easy Access to railway station with links to Glasgow, Greenock and North Ayrshire
<b>Foxbar</b>	Suburban area with more green spaces A mix of post-war tenement properties, houses, cottage flats and one multi-storey Some local shops and a local library No GP surgery in local area Community Centre in local area Rivers Hotspot
<b>Glenburn</b>	Suburban area with more green spaces Modern houses and cottage flats Excellent access to amenities such as shops, libraries and GP surgeries. Community Centre in local area

#### 4. OUR DEMOGRAPHICS

From information held on our IT system, we have some demographic information about our tenants. This is highlighted in the information below:

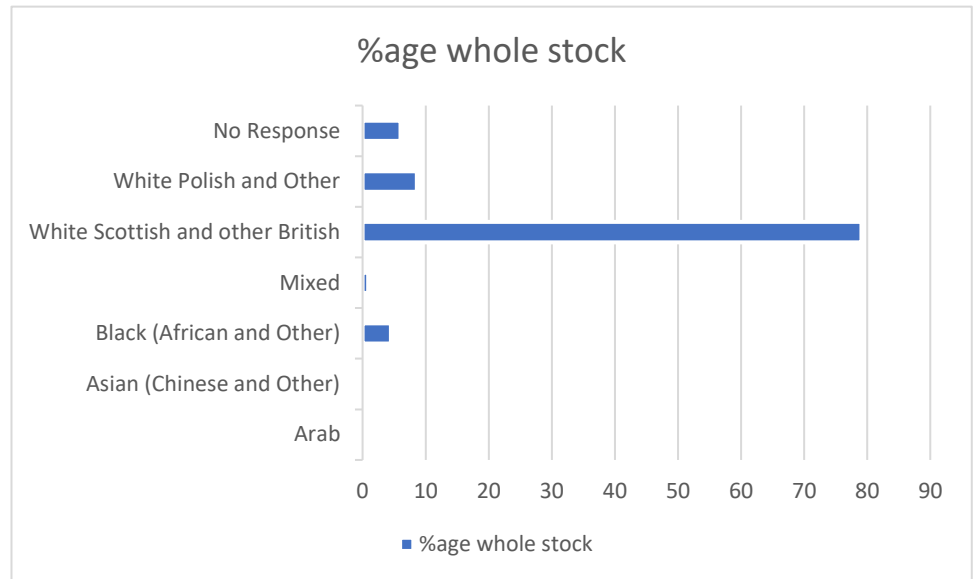
##### 4.1. Age and gender profile of tenants



In general, we have a higher number of female tenants than male tenants. The highest proportion of our tenants are female between the age of 25 to 54, the number of male tenants between the ages of 55 and 65 outweigh the number of female tenants in the same age group.

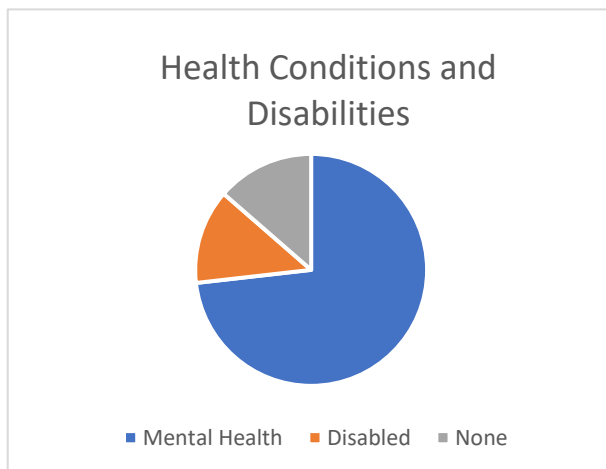
## 4.2. Ethnicity

We hold some demographic information on the ethnicity of our tenants, The vast majority of tenants are of White Scottish and White British ethnicity. There are sizable minority groups of White Other (Primarily Polish and other European) and Black African. Due to the smaller amount of these other groups we will have a greater challenge to ensure that their views are represented.



## 4.3. Disabilities and Ill Health

When looking at people with disabilities nearly 90% of tenants were registered as having a disability. Nearly three quarters of tenants are registered as having a mental health condition, with the remaining tenants as having a variety of other disabilities. The majority of this data is collected by a self declaration from tenants at application stage, therefore, it is likely that this is exaggerated. Whilst there is no doubt that many of our tenants will have some form of mental health condition, we may need to improve the robustness of this data. A mental health condition can range from having mild anxiety condition through to a variety of psychotic conditions. It may be that providing further nuances to this field may improve the quality of the data and our ability to engage with these groups and ensure representation.



## 4.4. Other Protected Characteristics

We do not hold reliable data on religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment. We are collecting equalities data in November 2022 this should provide data in an anonymised form which will allow us to better ensure representation from these groups and comply with GDPR by not holding data that we don't need on individual tenants.

## **5. CONTEXT**

We are developing this strategy at a challenging time, at present our tenants will be affected by increasing volatility in the energy market, increasing inflation affecting cost of living (i.e. food, fuel and transport costs), predictions of challenges in the labour market through below inflation salary increases and potential job losses or reductions in working hours. In addition the lingering effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on the economy.

This however creates an opportunity to develop robust services which are able to cope with our tenants needs at a time of great challenge.

## **6. OUR APPROACH**

In order to develop our services so that they best serve our communities we will:

- Seek to maintain a Board which has a strong membership from our tenants and the communities we serve.
- Seek to use a diverse range of channels to gain insight on both a quantitative and qualitative basis. Examples of these are set out in our tools below.
- Where possible, seek to have a range of perspectives that broadly reflects the demographics of our tenants, where we are seeking perspectives from a particular community we will seek to reflect the demographics from within that community.
- Seek to engage with community groups to add further data.
- The data gathered will be used to inform internal decision making to achieve the most robust service for tenants.
- Where appropriate, share the data gathered (in anonymous form) with other partners, such as Renfrewshire Council, Scottish Government, SFHA, GWSF and FLAIR.
- consult on an issue basis, targeting the consultation to the group(s) affected by a policy decision. This will allow tenants to be engaged with decisions whilst avoiding consultation fatigue.
- seek to use large scale consultation only where required and will only seek to gather data which is necessary, with a preference to keep any consultations to a small number of questions.
- Where richer data is required, seek to consult only with a small group of tenants.

## **7. EQUALITIES**

In delivering this strategy we will seek to ensure that the data that we gather from tenants is representative of our communities. We will seek to improve the data that we hold about our tenants and their households in relation to the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act 2010. The timescales for improving our equalities data are:

- Collection of data in November 2022

- Analysis of Data in December 2022
- Staff Training on Equality Impact Assessments in January 2023
- Service Review by March 2023

By doing this we will be able to conduct an Equalities Impact Assessments on all policy decisions to ensure that we take protected characteristics into account.

## **8. EVENTS**

We will seek to organise events and campaigns which are of interest to the community, this will include our annual Children's Christmas Party restarting in 2022 and our annual Garden Competition which will restart in 2023.

## **9. EMPLOYABILITY**

### **9.1. How we support local employability**

The Association is committed to providing high quality jobs within our communities. We believe in the benefits of work, but also that there is a distinction between 'high quality jobs' which offer a Living Wage, regular hours and long term contracts, as opposed to transient jobs without a guarantee of regular hours. At present we fulfil this by:

- Using local contractors where possible, ensuring that money spent on our services remains within the local community.
- Considering the use of community benefit clauses within our contracts, where appropriate and where the contracts represent best value.
- Making use of schemes such as funded work placements, kick start scheme and graduate placements/internships to help people to develop skills and improve career prospects.
- Making use of internal and external training opportunities for staff, to develop skills and improve professional development.
- Providing 'better off' calculations, to allow tenants to make informed choices about employment opportunities which promote the financial benefits of work.

### **9.2. Developing how we support employability**

Through this strategy we would seek to develop our commitment to employability advice for our tenants by:

- Improving partnership working with other organisations within the community, which can promote 'high quality jobs' to our tenants.
- Developing partnerships which improve our ability to support those who are able, to move closer to the labour market,
- Promoting training opportunities to our tenants to support them to gain 'high quality jobs'.
- Seeking funding opportunities to strengthen employability advice provisions, focussing on gaps to existing services within the communities.

## **10. SERVICE MAPPING**



We currently have a services directory, which we use to advise tenants and staff of services which may be of use to our tenants. As part of this strategy, we intend to update and expand this directory to make it more interactive and easier for tenants and staff to use.

To do this our intent is to make this an online tool as part of our website, making it easier for our tenants and staff to identify services available. We also intend to drill further down into our distinct communities to identify what services are desired by the residents of the communities and use this as data to further develop our customer service model, partnerships within our community and new services.

## 11. TOOLS

### 11.1 Selecting methodology

It is likely that we will seek engagement from tenants on a variety of different issues throughout the period of the business plan. Examples of these issues are:

- Rent Consultation (conducted annually)
- Developments
- Community Issues
- Environmental Issues (e.g. aesthetic of the surrounding environment)
- Sustainability/Net Zero issues
- Tenant Satisfaction

This is not an exhaustive list. In designing for specific engagements, we will endeavour to select the most appropriate methodology of data gathering and engagement.

### 11.2. Current Tools

The suggested tools, along with pros and cons are highlighted below. Although, it should be noted that not all avenues will be available at any given time.

Tool	Pros	Cons	Suggested use
Board	Scrutiny from trained and experienced people who come from our tenants and the local community		To scrutinise policy and procedure. Ensuring appropriate governance and compliance.
SMS Survey	A high response rate. Trialled in 2022 Rent Consultation and achieved 40% response.	More likely to have negative responses and criticism less constructive.  Cost of text message package	Exercises where a low number of questions being asked and where a high response rate is required

	<p>Tenants more likely to be open with views.</p> <p>Easier to get responses where English is not first language.</p> <p>Can easily ensure that views are sought from a diverse demographic</p>		
Email Survey	<p>Cheaper than SMS Survey</p> <p>Easier to have longer questions, or to provide more context.</p> <p>Easier to get responses where English is not first language.</p> <p>Can easily ensure that views are sought from a diverse demographic.</p>	Lower response rate than SMS	Exercises where higher numbers of questions are being asked and where high detail response are required.
Online Survey	<p>Using online platforms (e.g. Microsoft Survey and Survey Monkey)</p> <p>Easier to have longer questions, or to provide more context.</p> <p>Easier to get responses where English is not first language.</p> <p>Can easily ensure that views are</p>	Response rate not known	Exercises where higher numbers of questions are being asked and where high detail response are required.

	sought from a diverse demographic.		
Postal Survey	<p>Easier to have longer questions, or to provide more context.</p> <p>Easier to get responses where English is not first language.</p> <p>Can easily ensure that views are sought from a diverse demographic</p>	<p>Cost of postage – staff time In sending letters &amp; recording responses</p> <p>Cost of prepaid return envelope</p> <p>Low response rate</p>	To be used in conjunction with email and SMS survey to ensure that no group disadvantaged in ability to give views.
Paper Surveys handed out in office	<p>Cheap</p> <p>Able to get detailed views</p>	Low footfall in office at present	Not recommended due to low footfall
Phone survey – carried out by staff	<p>Easier to provide clarification on questions to ensure that they are understood.</p> <p>Able to ensure a demographic spread of views sought</p> <p>Rich answers as further probing questions can be asked</p>	<p>Reliant on tenants answering phone</p> <p>Intensive on staff time</p>	Where detailed responses are being sought from moderate numbers of people.
Phone survey – carried out by consultant	<p>Professional survey staff able to spend time directing interviewees</p> <p>Detailed quantitative information</p> <p>Detailed reporting for analysis</p>	Costly	Recommended for large scale satisfaction surveys or for specific pieces of work which are externally funded.

Social Media	Able to give detailed information to tenants.	Difficult to collate responses.	
Tenant View Bank	Rich source of qualitative data  Detailed responses for analysis.	Difficult to ensure demographically representative.  May be a challenge to gain sufficient numbers to make it effective	Recommended for early stage consultation on policy changes or for local community/street based issues
Focus Groups	Rich source of qualitative data  Detailed responses for analysis.	Difficult to ensure demographically representative.  May be a challenge to gain sufficient numbers to make it effective	Recommended for early stage consultation on policy changes or for local community/street based issues
Community Tenant Groups	Good for identifying local community issues	Difficult to ensure demographically representative.  Difficult to set up and maintain.  Challenge to ensure views representative of more than the members of the group	Only recommended in conjunction with another approach.

## 12. COMMUNICATIONS

At present, outwith arising issues, we communicate with our tenants on a regular basis but at non-standard intervals often in line with major mailings such as the rent consultation.

As we now have a high prevalence of tenants who are confident using the internet and email, we feel that we can improve communications with our tenants about the work we are doing through the use of an email bulletin on a bi-monthly basis. This would also be made available on our website with a link to the bulletin being sent by SMS where email is not available. We would only use hardcopy by post where email or SMS is not available. This would improve our tenant's knowledge of the services we provide and allow greater feedback on the services.

### **13. NEXT STEPS**

The goal through the timespan of the business plan will be to develop our tenant engagement through the options highlighted and to identify better ways to engage. We have already demonstrated the success of the quantitative tools such as SMS Survey and Email survey for tasks such as the Rent Consultation. Avenues of getting qualitative data from our tenants are not currently being used in a consistent fashion. It is our intention to develop the following areas:

1. Improve the data we hold on protected characteristics to ensure we can fully take these into account on policy decisions.
2. Commencing delivery of a Paisley HA bulletin by December 2022
3. Develop an action plan for tenant participation and community engagement which will include actions, dates, lead officers and performance indicators to measure success.
4. Identify budget needs for tenant participation over the next financial year to ensure we have sufficient budget to meet costs of our planned events and other forms of consultation. Seeking to supplement this through external funding
5. A tenant view bank, we will seek to form a diverse group of interested tenants to join a bank where they may be asked to participate in detailed surveys or interviews to give their views on a variety of issues including (but not limited to) their local area/street, what the association can do better, what they would like in their community. Any interviews/surveys for this would be conducted on a one to one basis.
6. Focus Groups, we will seek to form focus groups where tenants can join virtually or in person to discuss with their peers areas where the Association would like to develop. So that detailed views of tenants can be taken into consideration in policy decisions.
7. By developing the tenant view bank and focus groups we will aim to provide a route to promoting tenant membership on the board. With an interim target of 33% of board members.