



EDINBURGH TENANTS FEDERATION

Edinburgh's Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Work Plan

July 2011 to June 2012

Introduction

This Work Plan sets the priorities and associated objectives for the year July 2011 to June 2012. It has been drawn up by the Executive Committee following consultation carried out with our members in March 2011 to establish their priorities for the coming year.

The Work Plan is endorsed by the Federation membership. The Executive Committee is responsible for the day to day management of this workload and is accountable to the membership on a quarterly basis for the execution of the Work Plan. The Executive Committee is committed to reviewing its progress and re-assessing priorities half way through the year.

Priorities

The Executive Committee has outlined the following priority areas of work for the coming year:

- a) to continue to develop on-going work in influencing services;
- b) to support our members in strengthening tenant participation locally and at Neighbourhood Partnership level;
- c) to improve our communications with tenants and more widely;
- d) to develop ETF as an organisation.

The rest of this paper outlines the actions that the Executive Committee proposes to take in order to meet these priorities.

Continuing and developing ongoing work in influencing services

We are committed to continuing the substantial body of work that we are already engaged in, and to continue to work with other organisations on new areas of work as they arise. Our work with the City of Edinburgh Council in influencing services for tenants will continue.

This will include ETF involvement in the following working groups:

- The Tenant Participation Working Group
- The Multi-storey Working Group
- The Mental Health Awareness Group
- The Housing Management and Homelessness Working Group
- The Investment and Regeneration Working Group
- The Asset Management Working Group

Plans and priorities within each area of our ongoing work will be set and reviewed by the relevant group.

Where required we will continue to be involved in induction processes for City of Edinburgh Council staff and in boards where tenants input is required for procurement of services for tenants.

Our work on housing association tenants' issues will continue to be developed by the Housing Association Tenants sub-committee, and will focus on assisting tenants continue to influence rent setting with their landlords.

Building on the relationship that has been established with Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, we will assist tenants of Dunedin Canmore Housing Association to influence issues, and collectively organise, and by publicising the benefits of this work we will continue to build relationships with other Registered Social Landlords.

We will approach Registered Social Landlords for funding to support our work with tenants with Housing Association landlords.

We will review progress so far in Tenant Led Inspections and decide whether to progress this initiative further.

We are keen to see that services to tenants are delivered consistently and to a high standard throughout the city. We will continue to push for the delivery of joined-up thinking within the Council's Services for Communities department, and we will continue our work to establish better support and communication resources for vulnerable tenants and those working with them.



At a national level, we will continue to work to influence tenants' issues. The Scottish Government will consult on the Scottish Social Housing Charter over the Summer. We will work to ensure national and local standards for tenant participation are included in this, and will seek members' views on the Charter. We will respond to relevant national housing consultations as they arise.

We will continue to organise events for our members to come together, discuss matters of common concern, and share each other's company. We will review these events to ensure we are providing opportunities that members enjoy.

Supporting our members and tenant participation locally

We feel that we have a solid, working and positive relationship with the membership, which is crucial for any membership-based organisation. In recent years much work has been done to bring our members together centrally to strengthen the Federation and to discuss and influence citywide policies. We will continue to strengthen links with member groups and encourage increased membership.

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We will continue to support those groups living and working with tenants and residents in regeneration areas in order that they can play their part in planning the future of those areas. We will continue to offer help and support to member groups that request it, and to new groups trying to get established.

We will provide support to member groups to assist building their confidence in holding local service providers to account. Wherever possible our Executive Committee members will visit member groups to listen to their concerns, lend support and give advice. We will provide informal and enjoyable training and information sessions on issues and skills to improve tenants' knowledge and confidence.

We will promote meaningful local tenant participation, for instance through estate walkabouts, block walkabouts and foyer events.

We will help and encourage Registered Tenants Organisations to work together on shared issues of concern and on Housing Area Boards or their local equivalent. We will also encourage them to get involved in influencing Neighbourhood Partnerships, assisting them to have their say.

We will continue to explore ways of reaching out to those tenants that are hard to reach and currently underrepresented in terms of decision-making.

Improving communication

As a Federation we do a lot of very good work but too much of it currently goes unnoticed. Members and tenants generally are often unaware of the work that we do and the difference that we make on their behalf.

We need to be more proactive in publicising what we do, and in encouraging others to give us their views and to get involved. We will increase publicity for the Federation by reviewing our current publicity and making better use of our leaflets, website, Facebook page and the local media.

We will help our members to get publicity for their activities and achievements, by offering support and training when asked, and by publicising their work in *Tenants Voice*, *Federation Matters* and on our website.

We will take on board members' views about our website and seek resources to help us re-design the website.

We will encourage all landlords to include information about the Federation and its work in their communications with tenants, and investigate the possibility of getting all Edinburgh's landlords to include ETF leaflets to all new tenants and send out a newsletter produced by the Federation to all their tenants at least once a year. We will encourage City of Edinburgh Council to include information about the Federation in its publicity.

Developing ETF as an organisation

Our first priority will be to ensure our long term funding. Following the Council's review of tenant participation in June/July 2011, our priorities in this may change depending on how the Council decides to 'commission' the services we provide to members.

We will involve our members as we plan for the future, and will hold an event to find out members' views on the future direction of ETF. We will prepare a business and strategic plan for ETF.

We will explore funding opportunities for our work with tenants of Registered Social Landlords.

We will carry out a review of our constitution to make sure it meets equalities legislation and is fit for purpose for the needs of our organisation.

We will review events for members to make sure they meet member's expectations.

We will carry out a review of Executive Committee meetings and make any changes necessary to assist in the effective running of ETF as an organisation.

We will encourage wider involvement of tenants in working groups, and assist new members to build their skills and capacity through a buddying system.

We will explore new opportunities that will assist ETF to develop as an organisation as they arise. This includes connecting with agencies we currently have a relationship with, and discovering new opportunities for links with other organisations.

We will explore the possibilities of increasing opportunities for individuals to get involved with ETF, and we will look at ways of sharing the experience of members to assist and encourage newer members to get more involved.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to our effectiveness as an organisation. It helps us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, clarifies what we have achieved, what still needs to be done, and what future priorities could be. Ongoing monitoring also ensures we are accountable to our members and to the bodies that fund our work.

The Executive Committee will produce an Annual Report in June 2012 for our members and funders, which will include a breakdown of our financial activities. Throughout the coming year we will produce quarterly reports on activities for our members and funders, which will be discussed at Federation Meetings and by the CEC/ETF Liaison Group. We will organise quarterly Federation Meetings and use these meetings to discuss housing and related issues, informally meet and assess and update the Work Plan as appropriate. Additionally, the Executive Committee is committed to reviewing this Work Plan and its priorities after six months.

The Federation will develop a more outcome-focussed work plan that will highlight the difference our work makes throughout this year.

The Federation will, where appropriate, use evaluation forms to gather participants' views of the services we provide, including an annual survey of our members and those we have worked with. We will meet the monitoring requirements of funding bodies as required; and we will take every opportunity to seek feedback from our members on what they think our priorities should be and what services they think we should be developing and delivering.