

CUNNINGHAME HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD - CONSULTATIONS

Freedom of Information

How Do We Consult with Our Tenants and Service Users?

Cunninghame Housing Association uses a number of ways to meaningfully consult with our tenants and service users. Tenants have options as to how they wish to get involved and offer their ideas and suggestions.

If we have any plans to change our policies or services which will affect tenants or their community, we will consult tenants and relevant groups at a very early stage. This means you will be able to take part in the beginning of the process.

We consult tenants on the following:

- Our policies – if we plan to change existing policies, or create new policies, that affect tenants
- Our standards of service or the way we manage, repair and maintain our housing
- Any proposed change to rents or service charges
- Our planned improvements, major repairs or programme of maintenance work
- How satisfied tenants are with their home and with us as a landlord
- Our new-build developments
- Our social and economic development programme – for example, creating local employment

Our consultations will last at least four weeks, during which time tenants and groups can get advice and information, gather views, consider all the information and give us their views.

Individual Tenants

There are a number of ways in which individual tenants can let us know what they think and have their say.

- Through our newsletter
- Through our website at www.cunninghame-housing.org
- By letter, phone, email or text
- By speaking to a member of staff
- By attending local meetings
- By taking part in a survey
- By visiting our office
- By asking for a home visit if you cannot get involved in any other way.

We keep a list of tenants who may not be members of a tenant's group but who are keen to be kept informed of and consulted on key issues. Tenants on our register can let us know which topics or issues they are interested in (for example, repairs, rents) or can register an interest in all our services. They can also indicate their preferred methods of how they want to communicate with us.

When we are planning changes or consultations, we will contact everyone on our register of interested tenants, give them relevant information, and ask them for their views. We may invite them to attend meetings, such as our 'Cunninghame forum', and will pay their travel expenses.

Tenants' and Residents' Groups

These are groups of tenants and residents who organise themselves to form independent groups to help improve their homes and communities. We help and encourage new groups to set up and support existing groups.

As well as making various resources available, we will also provide opportunities for training and a chance for groups to meet up and share information.

We will make sure that groups have access to information and training so that they can make informed decisions.

This makes our tenants and residents groups an integral part of our consultation process.

Cunninghame Scrutiny Group (CSG)

This is a group consisting of volunteer tenants and residents from across North and East Ayrshire. It is responsible for independently reviewing how good we are at delivering housing services, recommends and implements agreed improvements to our policies and procedures.

It works to ensure that tenants and service users interests are at the heart of how housing is delivered across all of our geographical areas.

It produces reports with recommendations after each scrutiny exercise which are presented to the Associations Board of Management. It meets 4 weekly and is funded and supported by the Association.

We gain the benefit from our CSG's experience and independence when they are involved in any of our consultations.

Cunninghame Forum

We will continue to develop and support what we call the 'Cunninghame Forum'. This is an opportunity for tenants' groups and individual tenants to come together to:

- meet our senior staff;
- comment on our performance;
- review policy and procedures;
- plan and organise community events;
- plan, develop and monitor the activities we carry out to involve tenants; and
- share experiences and good practice.

The Cunninghame forum has a membership of over 40 tenants, meets at least 3 times a year and are involved in a number of consultations each year. They form part of our Annual Rent Increase Consultation. Their views and recommendations are reported to our Board of Management for consideration in addition to all other responses to the proposed percentage rent increase.

Communication and Events Working Group (CEWG)

This is a group consisting of volunteer tenants and residents who review and design our tenant publications. These include our Cunninghame 4U newsletter, our Annual Performance Report for Tenants and our Tenant Participation Strategy.

The group is also responsible for planning and arranging tenant's events such as our Annual Tenants Conference and assisting our tenant groups with any major tenant events such as Community Fun Days.

The CEWG are another useful source of ideas and opinions in consultations which are relevant to them.

Other Ways

We use other ways to consult with our tenants in addition to the above. These include the use of newsletters, our popular Annual Tenants Conference, open days, focus groups, local meetings and events. These less formal methods are a great way of reaching a wider cross section of our tenants.

Rent Restructure Consultation

The Association employs external consultants for major consultations to ensure a fair and independent approach. A recent example of this was during our rent restructure consultation which was conducted over an 18 month period to establish the fairest way of how to make our rents easier to understand and more consistent.

The consultation was managed on the Association's behalf by Arneil Johnston a very experienced housing and finance consultancy organisation. Over 300 tenants responded to the questionnaire along with our Cunninghame Forum and tenant's and resident's groups. From this Arneil Johnston were able to recommend a new rent structure which uses the type of property and number of bedrooms due to the overwhelming support by tenants for this method. This was subsequently accepted by the Association's Board of Management and was implemented from 1st April 2019.

This consultation helped to ensure the rents are now fairer, open, transparent and consistent across the Association.