

Tenants Together (Scotland) SHR Liaison Group - 19 August 2025

Minutes

Attendees:

TTS: Shona Gorman (SG), John Duffy (JD), Margaret Dymond (MDy), Scott MacLeod (SM), Gordon Saunders (GS), Liz McKnockiter (LM)

SHR: Helen Trouten Torres (HTT – Chair), Marieke Dwarshuis (MDw), Kelda McMichael (KM), Caroline Cameron-Russell (CCR), Nicola Harcus (NH – items 1-5), Ross McAneny (RM – items 1-5)

Apologies: June Anderson (TTS) and Liz Richardson (TTS)

1. Welcome and introductions

HTT welcomed all attendees with a special mention for the new TTS member Liz McKnockiter and returning TTS member, Gordon Saunders.

HTT also welcomed Nicola Harcus (Assistant Director of Regulation) and Ross McAneny (Regulation Analyst) to the meeting who were there to present at item 5.

2. Declarations of interest

MDy – TPAS Board member

SG – Link Housing Association & Link Group Board member

GS – TIS Board member

SM – Albyn Housing Association Board member

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. Action Log

The meeting agreed that with the completion of TTS005 (KM to arrange a presentation on cladding for the 19 August meeting) at this meeting, all outstanding actions were complete.

5. Cladding: Risk and Regulation

HTT reminded the meeting that in April the Group had received the briefing note on the findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Group requested a presentation on this; and the impact on the sector, tenants and SHR, which was the purpose of NH and RM attending to present.

RM explained that the presentation was relative to the current situation only and that matters related to cladding were currently being investigated in more detail by the Scottish Government, so information could change in future. The presentation covered:

- What is Cladding
- Types of Cladding
- Risks Associated with Flammable Cladding
- The Cladding Remediation Programme
- The current role of the Scottish Housing Regulator
- Scottish Government's Cladding Data Collection
- Impact on Social Landlords and Tenants
- Next Steps

GS asked if there were any implications in the Scottish Government programme related to tenure mix, RM advised that the initial assessment of buildings within scope would be funded, regardless of tenure. Where issues were identified, remediation costs and liability should be investigated by building owners at that point.

HTT queried the reliance on landlords making a return as it was her understanding that Scottish Government were aware of some buildings within scope and enquired what would happen if landlords did not submit a return for these, RM advised that the Scottish Government would likely cross refer, but that this would be for the Scottish Government to consider.

HTT asked how SHR would ensure tenants were kept informed of outcomes where landlords were found to have cladding that needed remediation and whether this would be cause for tenants to raise a Serious Concern. NH advised that in such a case, SHR would engage with landlords via the Notifiable Event process to understand what action they were taking and how they were informing and engaging with tenants.

6. Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee scrutiny of SHR

KM reminded the Group that within the pre-meeting briefing pack there had been a briefing note related to both the [letter SHR received from the Committee](#) in March and [SHR's response](#) in June, this summarised the main tenant engagement related points. Group members had been asked to consider the tenant focused action points. And KM noted SHR were very keen to hear their thoughts to allow SHR to collaboratively shape a clear plan. The tenant engagement related action points from SHR's response were:

- continue to look for ways to promote the Serious Concerns approach to tenants, including residents of Gypsy Traveller sites;

- discuss with Tenants Together Scotland, and review the material produced by the Edinburgh Tenants Federation (EFT), to identify ways to further enhance our direct engagement and visibility with tenants.

KM invited comments and said that she would send on EFT material to the Group as not all members had seen this.

Action: KM to send EFT comic material to SG to circulate to Group members (TTS007)

LM commented positively on the visual aspect of the EFT material, SG agreed and added that East Ayrshire Council also have good tenant participation materials and added that it was important to get the balance right so that materials grab attention but are not too light-hearted. HTT asked that if Group members were aware of tenant related materials that they would like to share as an example for consideration as part of this exercise, then to please send to SG to share with SHR.

SM commented how important it was to ensure the language was right in alternative communication styles, in particular that these were not too “parent/child” but more “parent/parent”. Communications should not be viewed as patronising. SM added that Albyn had been actively pursuing a podcast approach, the first part of which was detailed research into audience types and reach, SM added that he was happy to share this research with SHR (SM shared this immediately). SG agreed that tone was important, dealing with tenants as customers, not “just tenants”, SM added that he had observed that this approach had led some RSLs to change job titles (e.g. from Housing Officer to Customer Advisor).

KM also said that SHR must pay heed to the accessibility requirements in place for public bodies like SHR. This means the content and design of SHR’s website must be clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it. The Group then discussed options to design visual materials, but to also ensure that a plain English text only version was available in such instances. GS added this was a really important point as certain individuals struggled to read white text on dark backgrounds.

SG felt that SHR’s profile could be raised within the general tenant population, she noted many tenants are not aware of SHR and what they do. It was suggested that SHR could engage with external support agencies to raise awareness, for example Citizen’s Advice. LM noted that she had checked her council website and the only mention of SHR she found was a copy of the SHR Serious Concerns leaflet – so could landlords do more to let their tenants know about SHR?

KM thanked everyone for their input and asked if the Group would like to pick this up at the November in-person meeting as a large chunk of the afternoon agenda, all agreed. KM asked members to gather ideas and send these on.

Action: TTS Liaison Group members to consider good examples of tenant communications and to share these with SG for onward distribution to SHR (TTS008)

Action: (TTS009): The November meeting will include an extended session to consider future SHR tenant engagement.

7. What Matters Most to Tenants – National Report Headlines

KM advised that SHR would be publishing its National Report on the Charter 2024/25 at the end of August, this sets out an analysis of landlords' ARC returns. Each year within the report, there is a section featuring areas which matters most to tenants. KM presented the current list of key areas which was based on feedback from tenants. KM asked for views on what the Group would like to see as key areas.

Group members agreed that the areas currently featured still represented what was important to them, but that they would also like to see some additional tenant satisfaction information (keeping informed and participation). The Group also asked if it may be useful to include a reference to allocations in the report. KM advised that she would pass these comments on to the team drafting the report.

Action: KM to pass Group comments on what matters most (National Report on the Charter) to drafting team (TTS010)

KM further explained that SHR have committed to publish an updated version of its strategy on how it involves tenants and others in its work by 31 March 2026 and that this could be discussed in more detail at future meetings, the Group agreed.

She also noted that SHR communications colleagues are looking to review the SHR overarching communications strategy and plan to undertake stakeholder communication research to gather original feedback from SHR's stakeholders on the value they place on SHR's various communications products. They will then use the analysis to enhance SHR's approach, guide future priorities for communications work and to support the development of SHR's Communications Strategy. The team are currently considering how they do this but will look to engage with TTS during this process.

8. Tenants Together (Scotland) Updates

SG updated on the following:

- The TTS AGM was held Saturday 7 June online, this was successful and saw new members join, they will be trained and supported. SG noted that training needs are diverse.
- SG, SM and Colin Stewart attended the recent SFHA conference in June where Colin presented and also sat on a panel, as did SM.
- An in-person meeting was held in mid-August, which SG commented was a great opportunity for new members to meet other members face to face.
- There is a wide range of technology used and wi-fi accessibility across membership, which can make online meetings challenging and the aim is to include as many members as possible; TTS are considering how best to handle this.
- Colin Stewart (TTS Chair) will attend the CIH Governance conference in September.

- TTS have been invited to judge at CIH awards this year, SG, GS and Colin Stewart will be on the panel.
- TTS are working on progressing with their Strategy and action plan, Fawn Russell of TIS has supported them on this from the outset but will soon go on extended leave, TTS are considering how this will move forward in the interim.

SG commented that there was only so much a small but dedicated group of volunteers could realistically achieve. TTS have ambitions but recognise that they also need to be realistic. The Scottish Government Tenant Participation team can provide some level of admin support however this is limited due to resourcing.

TTS members asked a question related to SHR's Thematic Review on preparing Annual Assurance Statements, specifically that one of the recommendations was that landlords should consider how they get tenants' and other service users views on the organisation's performance as part of their assurance framework. KM provided some good practice examples on where this is currently taking place. SG added that TTS members had been tasked with asking their own landlords how they did this and there had been some positive responses on this with examples of tenant scrutiny groups being heavily involved in reviewing information.

TTS members queried how SHR promoted their thematic work. KM advised that SHR use a variety of methods to share its thematic work. For example, press releases and sharing on social media, SHR also attend tenant and housing events and mention these at any such engagements. Additionally, when SHR visit and talk with landlords – SHR colleagues will update them on recent SHR news.

TTS members had some specific queries related to RAAC data collection and looked for reassurance that those who had newly discovered RAAC, despite previous returns stating otherwise, would be monitored by SHR. KM offered reassurance that if additional properties with RAAC are confirmed, SHR will be seeking assurance that any immediate risks to tenant & resident safety are mitigated, and that the landlord in question has a plan for how it will manage any long term risks in the properties. TTS members further queried if RAAC was only measured within homes or also included outbuildings. KM advised that as part of the RAAC return, SHR asked landlords to include non-domestic properties owned or managed that have RAAC. SHR obviously can't specify the scope of RAAC investigations for all landlords, but SHR would expect investigations to cover homes in the first instance but also any other buildings or properties owned or managed by the landlord which could be used or accessed by tenants and service users and if this poses any risk to residents. As part of investigations, SHR are aware that landlords have also included communal areas such as stairwells and landlords have put in place management plans to address any areas of risk.

TTS members had some queries related to the National Report related to damp and mould and specifically concerns over the results relating to the information landlords are providing to tenants. They also highlighted the increase in reports to landlords and the use of external agencies to represent such cases. KM highlighted the joint briefing on tackling damp and mould which was published in 2023. She also noted that landlords have been asked to

include a specific statement within their Annual Assurance Statement on the assurance they have with how they manage reports of damp and mould. Following the first return (May 2026) on the new ARC indicators relating to damp and mould, SHR will review the usefulness of the new indicators and, if resources allow, carry out a thematic review of landlord's approach to preventing and resolving cases of damp and mould. KM added that although the uptick in reported cases could be concerning, some landlords have welcomed this, seeing it as a positive outcome from their encouragement of tenants to report it; and that there is more tenant awareness around damp and mould than ever before. KM also reminded Group members of SHR's Serious Concerns process in relation to continued and widespread mismanagement of damp and/or mould cases by a landlord.

TTS members enquired if there may be opportunities to work in partnership with Tenant Advisors (TAs) on issues of key importance to tenants/ service users. SG added to this that it could be that TTS could delve more deeply into completed TA exercises to add more weight.

KM advised that the liaison group and TAs have previously worked together on joint initiatives, for example, the joint focus group regarding the last regulatory framework review focus group. Looking ahead, there may be opportunities to collaborate again, such as during the upcoming review of the Tenant and Service User Strategy (due end March 2026). KM indicated she would consider this request further.

9. Chair update

HTT reiterated that SHR really were keen to work with TTS to consider tenant related materials together and that if any Group members had any proposed agenda items for future meetings to please send these on to SG to gather and send on to SHR.

MDw updated the Group that as previously notified via email, a new Chair (Garry Coutts) and a new member (Doris Jamieson) had been appointed to SHR's Board. MDw provided an overview of the new SHR Board members' bios and added that she was looking forward to meeting them at the next SHr Board meeting.

MDw updated that since the Group last met there have been one SHR Board meeting (27 May) and a Board workshop (24 June). Minutes of SHR Board Meetings are available on the [SHR website](#). MDw provided an overview of these for the Group.

10. Tenant Advisors & National Panel

KM updated that the proposed Tenant Advisor (TA) programme of work for 2025/2026 and into 2026/27 has been agreed. The first exercise was recently completed and SHR staff are analysing the responses. This was a review of landlord websites for accessible tenant information, with a serious concerns focus. The next exercise should take place shortly.

One of the proposed areas of focus is on Rent Consultation / Affordability. Group members suggested total household costs should be considered when looking at affordability, not just rent, as in these difficult times, the whole picture was key.

KM further updated that SHR plan to recruit a new set of TAs by the new 26/27 year.

On the National Panel, KM reminded members that SHR had provided them with a link to the National Panel Report when it was published on 24 July, as well as presentation slides from a recent presentation to staff and the SHR Board on the results.

KM added that the National Panel survey got a fantastic 49% response rate (206 respondents) and the qualitative engagement strand involved 29 Panel members as well as an additional 39 users of homelessness services and 24 residents of Gypsy/Traveller sites. KM asked if Group members would like a presentation on the National Panel report at a future meeting, the Group confirmed they would.

Action: KM to organise for a presentation of the National Panel report to be given at a future TTS SHR Liaison Group meeting (TTS011)

11. SHR Updates

KM provided an overview of recent SHR News and updates. This included recently updated landlord engagement plans; and other SHR news. She also confirmed that the National Report on the charter will be published at the end of August.

Group members asked re the Meet the Regulator event SHARE were hosting, KM confirmed this would be held on 24 September and that Helen Shaw (Director of Regulation) would attend with other SHR Regulation Group team members. She noted that all event administration or booking queries should be directed to SHARE as this was their event.

12. AOB

HTT asked if Group members would like a blog to be produced of these meetings for publication, similar to the Systemically Important forum and the Rural & Islands landlord group blogs discussed in the last agenda item, members confirmed they would. KM reminded them that this would not be ratified pre-publication as per minutes, but that it would be kept high level so as not to breach terms of reference. It was agreed SHR would provide an example blog based on this meeting.

Action: KM to produce an example blog document based on TTS SHR Liaison Group minutes (TTS012)

SG also raised a discussion point related to the length of meetings and where perhaps the agenda could be condensed going forward. It was agreed that this would be considered in advance of the next meeting.

Action: SHR and SG to consider meeting content and length (TTS013)

13. Date of next meeting

HTT reminded all that the date of next meeting was 11 November 2025, due to start at 11am, but that this would be delayed to 11:15am to allow those who wish to, to observe a

Remembrance Day silence in their own way. The meeting would be held at SHR offices in the ground floor conference room. SHR's CEO Michael Cameron and SHR's new Chair, Garry Coutts will attend to meet and take questions. Members were asked to start thinking about travel arrangements.

HTT thanked all for attending.