TTS SHR Liaison Group – 03 February 2026 (online)

Attendees:

TTS: Shona Gorman (SG), John Duffy (JD), Margaret Dymond (MDy), and Scott Macleod (SM).

SHR: Helen Trouten Torres (HTT – Chair), Marieke Dwarshuis (MDw), Kelda McMichael (KM) and Caroline Cameron-Russell (CCR)

Apologies: TTS: Liz McKnockiter (LMcK), Gordon Saunders (GS), June Anderson (JA) and Alasdair Mackenzie (AM).

Welcome and Introductions

HTT welcomed attendees and acknowledged the sad passing of two former Liaison Group members.

Declarations of Interest

JD – North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants
MDy – TPAS Board member
SG – Link Group Board member
SM – Albyn Housing Society Board member

KM reminded those present that minutes of the Liaison Group meeting held on 11 November 2025 had been agreed outside the meeting, as per agreed Terms of Reference, and were published on SHR's website.

Action Log

HTT advised one action remained outstanding (TTS013 - **SHR and SG to consider Liaison Group meeting content and length**), and that this would be considered under an agenda item to discuss this in more detail later in the meeting. This would allow all present to use today's meeting to gauge how the new format of written updates works.

Update on Communications session 11 November 2025

KM advised that SHR had taken on group members' feedback on SHR communications in the following ways:

- SHR amended the draft tenant factsheet on complaints and serious concerns to take on board comments. The factsheet was published on 16 December.
- SHR also amended its location on the SHR website – the fact sheet is now just two clicks from the front page. KM added that SHR are still looking into the possibility of making the serious concerns submission form available as a webform.
- Following their feedback, the SHR Jargon Buster will be published shortly.
- The group had suggested that SHR should use landlords to promote their role and work. SHR wrote to all landlords on 23 January about making information available for tenants and service users about landlord performance and SHR ork. This follows a Tenant Advisor exercise during 2025 on accessibility of information.

KM added that independent research on stakeholder communications had also been concluded and was published 30 January 2026 (Scottish Housing Regulator welcomes feedback on how it communicates | Scottish Housing Regulator) and advised that this, along with the group session in November, would feed into SHR's new communications strategy overall.

KM advised that SHR had taken on group members' feedback on "How we include Tenants and Service Users" strategy and would use this feedback to create updated documents. It was agreed that KM would make a draft available to the group for comment before the final draft was taken to the SHR Board for approval in March. (**Action Point TTS014**)

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee scrutiny of SHR

SHR provided a written update on Garry Coutts (SHR Chair) and Michael Cameron's (SHR CEO) appearance at the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on 9 December 2025 and a link to the appearance was provided. There were no additional queries on this; however, the group voiced their concerns over the current homelessness crisis in Scotland, noting this was not a new issue.

Tenants Together (Scotland) updates

SG had provided a written update on TTS current areas of work and this was discussed:

- TTS attendance at the CIH awards dinner in November. TTS office bearers had been members of the judging panel and SG commented on how positive it was to mingle with such enthusiastic younger members of the sector and see them rewarded for their hard work.
- TTS held a committee meeting in December where they updated attendees on their two main pieces of work for early 2026: rent consultation and re-let standards. It was noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Housing (Mairi McAllan) specifically requested TTS look at re-let standards; and that TTS will receive support from TPAS on both projects. Common themes have already been identified.
- A recruitment campaign for TTS membership will get underway shortly; with the hope that this will increase numbers and spread workload.
- SG and GS will be on a panel discussing tenant engagement at the CIH Housing Festival to be held in Glasgow in March.

SM advised that TTS were currently putting together a survey for social landlords in relation to re-let standards and rent consultation, confirming that the re-let standards section will focus on standard of the finish of properties (e.g. flooring, window coverings, decoration). He also noted their initial analysis found that the information available to tenants and prospective tenants on this was not readily available, but TTS want to get landlords' input on this.

HTT enquired about TTS social media use. SM noted that the focus since November had been on updating the TTS website. He said TTS members will receive some social media training, before TTS commits to its regular use. He noted that the communication style required for social media was different from traditional communication methods.

The group then discussed rent consultations. MDw enquired as to whether the group had early views on what consultation should look like, adding that dissatisfaction with consultation approaches was often a common theme across public bodies. SG said TTS would like to see tenants involved in the process to develop the options, not just told what these options are. She added that landlords could explain the options more positively - rather than explain what tenants won't get if they don't opt for a

specific increase, tell tenants what they can get at each option. SM said that there needs to be an open dialogue, adding if only one option is provided, is this true consultation? He also noted that landlords should consider if the benefits noted in their consultation impact on the majority of their tenant base (e.g. a landlord with a large number of new build properties will have a large volume of tenants who would not benefit from cyclical programmes such as replacement heating or bathrooms) and instead explain the long term benefits more widely. SM further said that there looked to be varying consultation methodologies – with some Local Authorities consulting on a three-year package.

KM noted that the Tenant Advisor programme will likely consider rent consultation in the coming year and so it would be useful if TTS could share the survey and any results when available. SG said that would be arranged.

KM provided a response to the questions that had been submitted by TTS members with the following topics and summary of responses:

- **SHR's regulation of re-let standards**
  All social landlords must ensure that all their properties whether tenanted or void meet the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) whilst occupied and before a new tenant moves in. Each RSL is responsible for their own re-let standards. SHR monitors compliance of SHQS via the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

- **Progress on SHR's Tenant Advisor recruitment and work planning for future Tenant Advisor projects**
  A written update was provided by SHR in advance of the meeting. Applications close 13 February 2026 with appointment beginning 1 April, induction in Q1 of 26/27 and potentially commencing with a rent consultation exercise. A targeted recruitment strategy had been successful in attracting a high volume of applications from across Scotland.

- **SHR's consideration of rent consultations**
  All social landlords are required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to consult tenants on proposed rent increases. There is no national guidance or prescribed method of carrying out rent consultations, but tenants should be given the opportunity to share their views in a meaningful way.

  The Scottish Social Housing Charter notes at outcome 14 & 15 that rents should be set in consultation with tenants and other customers. The Charter is clear that landlords' decisions on rent setting should reflect the views of tenants however landlords are not legally bound by these views. This is because they have obligations to deliver on tenant and resident safety, on the quality of the homes they provide and on managing their financial wellbeing. In order to meet these obligations, rent increases may be unavoidable. Following the meeting, KM provided some additional information on rent consultation to TTS

- **Information that SHR consider landlords should make publicly available for tenants and service users**
  SHR carried out an exercise in 2024 which looked at the information available digitally for tenants and service users in line with the requirements set out in the Regulatory Framework. In 2025 SHR carried out a further project with Tenant Advisors which involved reviewing the websites of 33 landlords, with a mix of both Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authority (LA) websites. The purpose of this project was to determine, from a tenant

perspective, the information that was available on landlord websites and how accessible and easy it was for tenants and service users to find this. The Tenant Advisor project has now been completed and SHR wrote to all landlords to share the key findings and recommendations. A copy is available on SHR's website.

MDy advised that as part of her role on her landlord's tenant scrutiny panel, she had today received an email from her landlord asking for feedback on experience with ease of accessing this information on their website.

Chair update

The Chair's update focused on re-let standards with an in-depth conversation taking place on the matter. Group members observed vastly different standards across the sector. SM advised that Albyn had a 3 Cs approach (carpets, curtains, cooker) where they look to provide floor and window coverings and a cooker as standard. He noted they worked with an external charitable organisation in Highland who provided a service where new tenants could choose carpets and white goods.

The group felt that if a tenant cannot afford the basic requirements for moving into a new home, they should be provided with support. They also acknowledged the link between re-let standards; tenancy sustainment and refusals of tenancy offers.

JD described his landlord's methods where a void scrutiny panel inspects voids prior to let; JD is a member of the panel and commented on the high standards he had seen. One group member described their own personal experience and the difficulties that they faced when moving into a property with two young children, one with additional needs. It had no window or floor coverings, was in a very poor state of repair, with the landlord simply providing some paint. The group member relied on the goodwill of their family to help them out; but noted family support is not universal, and that other means of support, for example from charities, can vary greatly across Scotland. Another group member detailed their experience in supporting young people to set up their own tenancies and the wide variations in re-let standards, meaning the efforts involved in making the property habitable were different every time.

The group discussed that all social landlords must ensure that their properties meet the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS); and that SHR monitors compliance of the SHQS via the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). HTT summarised that SHR could not be prescriptive on relet standards because it is not set in law; adding that the Housing Act and/or the Charter would have to change to incorporate specific standards on this.

KM noted that each landlord is responsible for their own re-let standards. She added that although SHR cannot regulate, there are landlord groups and forums that have model policies and procedures and that it may be worth TTS consulting with them on the findings of the work they are undertaking. TTS agreed that this was a good idea and to share their findings with SHR to explore ways to promote best practice.

A written SHR Board update had been provided in advance, and there were no further questions on this.

Tenant Advisors & National Panel

SHR provided a written update on the work of the Tenant Advisors & National Panel in advance of the meeting. Some of this had already been covered elsewhere in the meeting. KM confirmed that a Tenant Advisor exercise on homelessness was about to begin, and this would be the last exercise

with the current Tenant Advisor cohort. The group agreed it would be useful to hear about the outcome of this exercise, and KM agreed to ask colleagues to come along to a future meeting to discuss. (**Action Point TTS015**).

KM also noted that a National Panel survey had just been concluded, and qualitative stands of work are ongoing. From this a report will be finalised in March and published thereafter. Following that, a retender exercise will commence for the appointment of the contractor who supports the National Panel work.

SHR Updates

The meeting turned to SHR news updates and engagement plan updates/deregistration since the last meeting in November. Members had been provided with a full summary of this in advance, and KM offered to take questions. There were none.

Outstanding action

Members agreed that the written updates received in advance of the meeting had been a success. They did not however want to be prescriptive of meeting length and felt that a meeting time of 2.5 hours seemed correct regardless of the number of written updates provided in advance. At times meetings would be shorter, but members felt it important to allow that flexibility. It was agreed that the outstanding action TTS013 (SHR and SG to consider Liaison Group meeting content and length) could be closed.

Any Other Business

HTT reminded the group of the remaining 2026 meeting dates and that the 18 August meeting would be in person. KM advised that she and CCR would look into arrangements for this.

MDw offered apologies for the next meeting.

No further business was raised.

Close

HTT thanked all attendees and noted the next meeting would take place online on 28 April 2026.