

TENANTS ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) TERMS OF REFERENCE & CODE OF CONDUCT

Contents

1. Policy
2. Purpose
3. Membership of TAG
4. Aims
5. Meetings
6. Code of Conduct
7. Equality and Diversity
8. Review

1.0 Policy

Link Housing will adopt the highest ethical standards and abide by all applicable legislation.

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The TAG's primary purpose is to play a scrutiny and advisory role in partnership with senior management team to help improve and maintain an agreed standard of service delivery that offers value for money.
- 2.2 The TAG will work on an annual basis with the senior management team on setting the short and long term objectives and priorities of the organisation in particular in relation to the aspects of service delivery that matter most to tenants.
- 2.3 The TAG will ensure that all Link Housing tenants from all areas are given an opportunity to influence and set priorities.. The TAG will take joint responsibility with senior management team to monitor that changes result from the tenant's recommendations.

3.0 Members of Tenants Advisory Group

General

- 3.1 Membership is open to anyone over the age of 18.
- 3.2 TAG members will serve for a maximum of three years but can serve up to two terms.
- 3.3 Link Housing will seek to reflect a diverse and broad cross section of Link Housings tenants.
- 3.4 There will be a maximum of twenty members on any given tenants advisory group. If TAG members exceed that number, Link will look at dividing the TAG members in to groups to focus on different areas i.e. Policies & Procedures, Repairs & Maintenance etc. Link will not exclude any tenants that are interested in joining the TAG.

3.5 TAG meetings are held four times per annum. Regional meetings are held in 3 areas twice per annum.

Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

3.6 In April of each year, the members of TAG will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from the members of the Committee.

Cessation of Membership

3.7 Any TAG member who is absent from three consecutive properly notified meetings or training sessions, without sending apologies, will, unless otherwise agreed by the Panel, be deemed to have resigned.

3.8 Any Committee member who is in a legal dispute with Link Housing in relation to service delivery or breach of tenancy conditions shall be suspended from the Panel, at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer. [For the avoidance of doubt, this includes (but is not limited to) failure to comply with an agreement to pay rent or arrears, antisocial behavioural orders, breaches of the tenancy or lease conditions].

3.9 Is removed as a Committee member under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

Training and support

3.10 The TAG Representatives are supported by a dedicated member of staff who will organise venues and catering, promote events, chair meetings and take/distribute minutes as required. They are a resource for the group. The group may however choose to do any or all of these duties themselves.

3.11 TAG representatives will be supported in their role during the course of their appointment. They will also be offered opportunities to participate in appropriate training opportunities such as running community meetings, effective communication, lobbying, writing funding applications and representational decision making.

4.0 Aims

The Tenants Advisory Group will :

4.1 Engage with local tenants to gain an understanding of service performance and key issues from their perspective

4.2 Review feedback from tenants in the region, including the nature, outcomes and lessons learned from complaints

- 4.3 Encourage the widest participation amongst tenants in the involvement opportunities available
- 4.4 Work in partnership with staff, the Board, the Senior Management Team, on:
 - 4.4.1 Reviewing the tenant service standards
 - 4.4.2 Recommending improvements to the processes to enable delivery of service standards
 - 4.4.3 Monitoring performance against the tenant service standards at the regional level
 - 4.4.4 Monitoring progress in implementing service improvement plans
 - 4.4.5 Reviewing the service delivery to ensure that effective and efficient use of resources
 - 4.4.6 Developing strong links in local areas with the external agencies that affect the daily living environment of tenants.
- 4.5 Influence the tender specification and participate in the tender evaluation process for any procurement relating to service delivery
- 4.6 Contribute to the business plan and budget setting process
- 4.7 Visit schemes, properties, new developments, meeting staff to understand the opportunities and challenges for service improvement.
- 4.8 Attend focus groups to discuss wider service issues. These groups may be given a SMART Target.
- 4.9 Offer comments and feedback on policy and other reports, such as the annual report.
- 4.10 Receive regular, clear performance reports on the performance of the Association in relation to its service delivery plans and targets.
- 4.11 Receive training and support in all aspects of strengthening its scrutiny role in relation to service delivery.

5.0 Meetings

- 5.1 Meetings will be held at least quarterly and will fit in with the cycle of Board meetings.
- 5.2 All papers for meetings will be sent to members at least 5 working days before a meeting and posted on the website at the same time.
- 5.3 All Regional Committee meetings will comply with Health & Safety and equality and diversity requirements.
- 5.4 Confidential matters will be considered by TAG members only, under the confidential matters item on the agenda.
- 5.5 All TAG members and members of the public can propose future agenda items direct to the Chair, at least three weeks prior to the next meeting, and will be included at the Chair's discretion.

- 5.6 The appropriate member/s of staff shall be in attendance at the Regional Committee meeting
- 5.7 TAG members may request attendance at meetings by any senior member of staff and/or contractor as long as sufficient notice is given.
- 5.8 Link Housing staff will assist the meetings by providing background information and guidance and by assisting with the arrangements.
- 5.9 The Chairperson, or in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will be responsible for running the meeting.
- 5.10 Link Housing Staff will ensure that appropriate levels of training and support are available to Panel members so that they can participate fully.
- 5.11 All meetings will be conducted in an open and democratic manner. Decisions shall be carried with the agreement of a majority of the TAG members present
- 5.12 At least 4 members of TAG must be at a meeting for it to be deemed quorate. If there is less, then the meeting will be inquorate and decisions will not be taken.

Minutes of meetings

- 5.13 TAG meetings will be facilitated by Link staff including the taking of minutes.
- 5.14 Minutes will be sent out to all members and attendees 10 working days after a meeting has taken place and posted on the website at the same time.
- 5.15 The agendas and minutes (apart from those of a confidential nature) of all TAG meetings will be sent to those attending meetings and published on the website.

Reasonable Expenses

- 5.16 The TAG Representatives are entitled to be reimbursed for “reasonable expenses” to allow them to fully participate. These are set out as follows:
- 5.17 Link will provide members with stationary including paper, notebooks, binders, etc as needed.
- 5.18 Travel to all TAG and tenant network meetings to be reimbursed
- 5.19 \$75 per year towards phone, internet and printing costs.
- 5.20 A car mileage allowance based on the standard Australian Tax Office rate which is currently 74 cents per km will be paid. Actual journey mileage including return can be claimed.
- 5.20 Any expense claims made must be accompanied with valid receipts or a vehicle log sheet. Every effort will be made to process expense requests quickly.

6.0 Code of Conduct

6.1 Members will abide by this Constitution and Code of Conduct.

Each and every member of the Committee will:

6.2 Commit to listening to others;

6.3 Respect others' opinions;

6.4 Contribute to and share in responsibility for the Regional Committee's decisions;

6.5 Commit not to bring individual cases for discussion, except by way of an example. All issues should be resolved through the normal procedures.

6.6 Promote the Link Housing Association in a positive way when attending appropriate events on behalf of Link;

6.7 Not misrepresent Link, or claim to represent Link without express permission

6.8 Declare any relevant interests;

6.9 Respect confidentiality of information;

Disputes

6.10 Disputes between members of the TAG should be avoided wherever possible. Members in dispute with one or more members should seek to resolve the issues without involving other TAG members.

6.11 If the dispute cannot be solved then the disputing parties should arrange a meeting to include all disputing parties and the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the TAG and a relevant Link Housing staff member.

6.12 The decision of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall be final and binding on the disputing parties and may include sanctions such as suspending the members of the Committee. If the dispute is between the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, then the decision of the Chief Operating Officer shall be final and binding.

7.0 Equality and Diversity

The Tenants advisory Group will adopt Link Housings Equality and Diversity strategies and policy.

8.0 Review

The constitution and working of the Tenants Advisory Committee will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Signed..... Date.....

Signed..... Date.....