open house?

A study of tenants’ organisations in Scotland
About the Scottish Consumer Council

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) was set up by government in 1975. Our purpose is to promote the interests of consumers in Scotland, with particular regard to those people who experience disadvantage in society. While producers of goods and services are usually well-organised and articulate when protecting their own interests, individual consumers very often are not. The people whose interests we represent are consumers of all kinds: they may be patients, tenants, parents, solicitors’ clients, public transport users, or simply shoppers in a supermarket.

Consumers benefit from efficient and effective services in the public and private sectors. Service-providers benefit from discriminating consumers. A balanced partnership between the two is essential and the SCC seeks to develop this partnership by:

• carrying out research into consumer issues and concerns;
• informing key policy and decision-makers about consumer concerns and issues;
• influencing key policy and decision-making processes;
• informing and raising awareness among consumers.

The SCC is part of the National Consumer Council (NCC) and is sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry. The SCC’s Chairman and Council members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Future appointments will be in consultation with the First Minister. Martyn Evans, the SCC’s Director, leads the staff team.

Please check our web site at www.scotconsumer.org.uk for news about our publications.

Scottish Consumer Council
Royal Exchange House
100 Queen Street
Glasgow G1 3DN

Telephone 0141 226 5261
Facsimile 0141 221 0731
www.scotconsumer.org.uk

We can often make our publications available in braille or large print, on audio tape or computer disk. Please contact us for details.

The SCC assesses the consumer perspective in any situation by analysing the position of consumers against a set of consumer principles.

These are:

ACCESS
Can consumers actually get the goods or services they need or want?

CHOICE
Can consumers affect the way the goods and services are provided through their own choice?

INFORMATION
Do consumers have the information they need, presented in the way they want, to make informed choices?

REDRESS
If something goes wrong, can it be put right?

SAFETY
Are standards as high as they can reasonably be?

FAIRNESS
Are consumers subject to arbitrary discrimination for reasons unconnected with their characteristics as consumers?

REPRESENTATION
If consumers cannot affect what is provided through their own choices, are there other effective means for their views to be represented?

Written by Morag Brown

Published by the Scottish Consumer Council
March 2003

© Scottish Consumer Council
ISBN 0-9543408-4-1
Chairman’s preface

Across the spectrum of public services the Scottish Consumer Council seeks to support and improve the ability of service users to represent their interests and balance the power held by service providers.

To what extent can, the 703,000 tenant households in Scotland, living in the social rented sector, have any influence over the quality and range of housing services they receive? The answer, in part, lies in the key consumer test of representation and whether or not there are effective means for tenants’ views to be represented. Within Scotland there has been a long tradition of collective representation of tenants’ interests via the development of tenant participation and the establishment of tenants’ organisations. Recent legislative change introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provides opportunities and challenges for tenants’ groups and social landlords alike to reinvigorate tenant representation.

The Scottish Consumer Council has carried out a research survey of existing local tenants’ organisations to analyse current practice within tenants’ organisations. This report provides baseline information on the structures of tenants’ organisations; how they operate; the information sources and resources they access, and the mechanisms they use to gather the views of tenants. Moreover the report examines the effectiveness of tenants’ organisations as a means of representing tenants’ interests, and makes recommendations on how tenants’ organisations may be strengthened and what lessons can be drawn for representing their interests.

Alongside examples of the benefits collective tenant action brings to communities and the acknowledged value of independent tenant advisory groups, we also found a picture of under-resourced groups and significant scope for development. The role and value of local tenants’ federations requires to be promoted and used more widely. The resourcing and support available to groups needs to be reviewed, as we found that most local groups received financial assistance of less than £500 per year, have little direct access to research capacity and rely heavily on the commitment of a very few active tenants.
Underpinning this research lies the importance of ensuring that there is an evidence base for policy-making and service development. Policy makers (in this case, landlords) need to be aware of the views and experiences of all groups of tenants who may be affected by their proposals, otherwise they run the risk of providing services which are not responsive to consumers’ (in this case, tenants’) needs.

This report comes at a time when social landlords are developing tenant participation strategies and SCC calls on such landlords, Communities Scotland and the Scottish Executive to acknowledge and address the issues raised. For the tenant participation provisions introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to make a difference, SCC’s research conclusions call for changes in the policies aimed at building capacity and a radical rethink of funding and support for tenants’ organisations.

Graeme Millar
Chairman
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the tenants’ organisations who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire and to the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Tenants Information Service (TIS) for distributing the questionnaire.

This report was written by Morag Brown, Policy Manager, SCC, with data analysis and additional research undertaken by Andrew Pulford, Researcher, SCC.

The Scottish Consumer Council’s Housing, Education and Local Government Committee oversaw the work for this report. The members of the committee at that time were: Ann Clark (Chair), Jenny Hamilton, John Hanlon, Alex Wright, John Fairley, Jon Harris, Martyn Evans (ex officio), Heather Brash (ex officio) and Graeme Millar (ex officio).

We would also like to thank

- Suzie Scott, Senior Lecturer and Teaching Director at the Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow for peer reviewing the report
- Kate Blackadder for proofreading the report
- SCC staff, particularly Fiona Barnes, Policy Support Officer, for overseeing desk-top publishing and distribution.
Contents

Summary of Report 5

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background 14

Chapter 2 – Profile of Tenants’ Groups 21

Chapter 3 – Resourcing Tenants’ Groups 30

Chapter 4 – Types of Activity and Gathering Views 37

Chapter 5 – Spheres of Influence and Tenants’ Groups’ Impact 43

Chapter 6 – The New Legislative Framework 49

Chapter 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations 53

Appendices

1. Survey Questionnaire 66

2. Research Methodology 74
The aims of this study, undertaken by the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC), were to investigate the operation of tenants’ organisations in the social rented sector and to encourage the opportunities for effective tenant representation in shaping the provision of housing services. The study examines and provides baseline information on the structure, membership and effectiveness of tenants’ organisations in Scotland, prior to the introduction of the tenant participation provisions within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The study focuses on:
- the structures of tenants’ organisations and how they currently operate;
- the information sources and resources tenants’ organisations currently access;
- the mechanisms tenants’ organisations use to gather the views of tenants; and
- the effectiveness of tenants’ organisations as a means of representing tenants’ interests.

SCC distributed a postal self-completion survey to local tenants’ organisations between August and September 2002.

Overview of Findings
Overall, the study findings identified that the tenants’ movement in Scotland comprises a diverse range of groups in terms of size, activity, function and membership. The wide range of benefits tenants’ groups have brought to their locality and communities illustrate the impact of the collective action of groups and the capacity building work of landlords and independent tenants’ organisations working with tenants’ organisations. Nevertheless, there remains much which should be done to develop the capacity of local groups in ascertaining and representing the views of tenants living in their areas and to review the resourcing of groups, local federations and other independent organisations which seek to develop the representation of tenants’ interests.
Key Findings

Profiling Participating Tenants’ Groups

• 70% of participating groups represent local authority tenants only, or local authority tenants and home-owners; 11% represent housing association tenants only or housing association tenants and owners; remaining groups represent various combinations – tenants from local authorities, housing associations, private sector and home-owners.

• Over 95% of groups surveyed have a written constitution and committees elected at an AGM.

• Groups’ member households range from 10 to 4000 households, 19% of groups have membership consisting of under 50 households and 51% of groups have membership of less than 150 households.

• 50% of the groups selected the smallest geographical category, a few streets or block of flats, as best describing their operational area.

Our findings show a wide degree of variation and diversity in the profile of groups in terms of size, activity age, membership, membership policies and committee size. By comparison, findings indicate a uniformity of approach in the formal operating structures of groups in terms of written constitutions, committee meetings and selection processes.

Many groups found the questions on quantifying membership and active membership difficult to answer. Groups which require that membership is actioned by the tenant through completing a form and/or paying a fee are more likely to be able to provide estimate of membership numbers.

Good practice in tenant participation suggests that tenants’ groups should have clear and easy-to-understand constitutions, a definable operating area, identifiable memberships and should function according to agreed standards of governance and equal opportunities. There is a need to improve the knowledge that tenants’ groups have about identifying their membership, which primarily has a knock-on effect for their capacity to represent tenants’ interests.
Levels of Funding and Support for Tenants’ Groups

- 20% of groups do not get any financial assistance, and current funding for 60% of groups is under £500 per year.
- 9% of groups do not receive any type of financial assistance or non-financial support.
- 78% of groups receive financial assistance through grant. Lower proportions of groups received other types of support, assistance with administrative tasks (41%), independent information and advice (41%) and access to training (36%).
- 56% of all groups feel they do not have sufficient resources to represent tenants’ interests effectively.
- 66% of larger groups feel that they do not have sufficient resources available for identifying tenants’ views compared with 44% of smaller groups with the same opinion.

SCC believes that in order for tenants’ groups to effectively represent tenants’ views they have to be properly funded and resourced. The majority of groups receive under £500 a year for running costs. This falls far short of what is required for effective tenant representation.

Recommendations

All registered social landlords should:
- develop and support the establishment of new and existing tenants’ groups as a means of representing tenants’ interests as a key part of the development of tenant participation strategies.

All tenants’ groups should:
- identify a definable operating area to enable them and their landlords to have a clear understanding of the interests they are seeking to represent;
- review their procedures, or develop a procedure for activating membership of the group; and
- ensure written constitutions contain clear equal opportunities statements.
Groups identified a range of additional types of resources they needed to represent tenants’ interests more effectively. The majority of groups would like to access additional financial assistance (66%), development support, independent information and advice, and training (54%) and research support (50%). Groups want additional resources for building the capacity of committee members through funding attendance at conferences, training for members, membership of local federations and access to better equipment to improve communication with tenants.

Effective representation of the tenant interest at the landlord-wide and national level should be adequately resourced. There is scope for raising awareness among groups about the areas covered by the existing local federations. There is also scope for enhancing the role of federations as vehicles that local groups can use to influence housing policy.

Recommendations

All social landlords in drawing up tenant participation strategies should:
• radically rethink how tenants’ groups are resourced;
• offer support packages to match good practice guidelines and address the needs of respondent tenants’ groups identified by the study; and
• if not presently supporting local federations review this position in consultation with tenants and tenants’ groups.

Communities Scotland should:
• fund research on the role and impact of local federations on maximising the effectiveness of tenant representation and influencing delivery of housing services.

The Scottish Executive should:
• continue to support the further development of landlord-wide and nationwide organisations to enable them to build the capacity of tenants’ groups and local federations and to complement work carried out by local tenants’ groups.
Tenants’ Groups – Types of Activity

Using a set of categories adapted from the concept of the ‘ladder of participation’, groups identified activities that reflect what they do at a local level. Our findings show that large proportions of groups are involved in contacting councillors, housing association committee members and responding to local consultations. As we climb the ladder towards the more participative processes (such as negotiating with landlords on rents and involvement in decision-making processes) the number of groups participating decreases. A greater proportion of large groups (in terms of area of operation) are involved in the more participative activities.

The findings suggest that there is still some way to go to enable more groups to operate effectively and represent tenants’ interests on the higher rungs of the ladder of participation.

Our findings show that many groups make use of potential opportunities to represent tenants’ interests at a national level. Over half of the groups have contacted Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and similar proportions of groups contact MPs. Only one-fifth of groups have contacted Scottish Executive officials. Fewer groups have been involved in lobbying central government institutions; eg. 17% have submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament.

Recommendations

*All social landlords should:*

- assess current practice and mechanisms for ensuring groups representing tenants’ interests are involved at all levels of activity, including decision-making.

*All tenants’ groups should:*

- review the range of activities they undertake. Where a group does not have the capacity to be involved in higher level types of activity, it should try to ensure that tenants’ interests are being represented by other means, eg. through a local federation.
Identifying Tenants’ Views

Tenants’ groups appear to have firm views on what methods are effective for ascertaining tenants’ views. The most effective method identified by almost three-quarters of groups is personal contact with tenants. A quarter of groups view surveys as a very effective/effective method of gathering views.

Contact through whole membership meetings appears to be the main method by which committee members seek tenants’ views. The success of this method is clearly influenced by the turnout. Surveys are by far the least used method to gather information on the views of tenants, with only 23% of groups using this method. Other methods identified by groups are in the main, ways of informing tenants about what is going on and what groups are doing.

A tenants’ group which is actively representing tenants’ interests is likely to talk and listen to tenants, distribute relevant information (eg. newsletters, and leaflets) and hold open meetings. Groups cannot rely on public meetings alone but have to use a variety of methods to provide information, gather views and feedback to tenants on a continuous basis. Many of the tenants’ organisations surveyed could do more to ascertain the views of the people they seek to represent. This must be adequately supported through opportunities for training for committee members, and the provision of adequate resources to maximise their effectiveness.

Recommendations

*All tenants’ groups should:*  
- review how they gather tenants’ views and how they use the information to represent tenants’ interests at a local and national level. This should be funded by the Scottish Executive as part of the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

*Communities Scotland should:*  
- establish a tenant-led research budget to enable groups and federations to develop skills and use research tools to enhance the collation of tenants’ views and provide an evidence base for promoting tenants’ interests.
Spheres of Influence and Groups’ Impact

Unsurprisingly, nine out of ten groups view influencing local housing issues as very important/important. However a significant majority, two-thirds of groups, feel it is very important/important to influence national issues.

The majority of groups do think it is important to influence local and national housing issues; however, the extent to which they feel they can genuinely influence housing services is greater within their own operating area. The findings show that the size of groups impacts on the extent of their perceived levels of influence over service delivery.

Less than one in five groups feel that they have a lot of influence in affecting the delivery of housing services in the own operating area and the wider landlord area. Groups’ level of perceived influence is lower within a landlord-wide area than within groups’ own operating area. For example, 25% of groups feel they have not a lot/no influence on housing issues within their groups’ area, this increases to 38% of groups at the landlord-wide area.

Our study noted that 71% of groups who are members of a local federation view the federation as a vehicle for influencing local issues and 55% see it as a means to influence national issues. Groups who are members of local federations are more likely to feel they have a lot of/some influence on the delivery of housing services, at the landlord area. Therefore our study indicates that federations can play an important role in supporting local groups influence service delivery.

Although some groups feel that their ability and scope to influence housing services is limited in a landlord-wide setting there are many examples of the benefits that collective action of groups have brought to tenants and the communities they represent. Key themes identified from examples are:

- building and enhancing a sense of community
- better information and support for tenants
- organising social events
- developing a better and closer working relationship with the landlord
- improving repairs and maintenance of properties
Improving community safety
- negotiating on behalf of tenants during process of stock transfer
- involvement in regeneration – improvements to properties and surrounding area
- better representation of tenants’ interests.

Recommendation
*All tenants’ groups should:*
- make full use of local federations where they are operating as a means of promoting tenants’ interest at the landlord and national level.

Initial Response to the New Legislative Framework
There is a high level of awareness about the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Nine out of ten groups state that they are aware of such provisions.

Our findings show that there was a mixed response to the tenant participation provisions of the legislation. 61% think the new legislative framework will have a positive impact, 14% think the impact would be negative and the remainder 25% think it will have no impact at all.

Moreover, of those who are aware of the legislation, 69% are intend to seek registration, 25% are unsure and 6% do not intend to register. On disaggregating responses by group size, larger groups appear more positive to the impact on the group of the new legislation and surer of their intentions to register.

Only half of groups aware of the legislation have discussed the potential impact of the new legal framework within the committee; a much smaller proportion (29%) have discussed it more widely with their membership; 10% groups have not discussed it all. Therefore, current levels of awareness of the new legal framework are much higher than the levels of discussion about the impact on groups.
As this is a baseline study of tenants’ organisations it paves the way for a much wider study of tenant participation in Scotland that encompasses the impact of the Act on tenants’ organisations; and the role and impact of local tenants’ federations and nationwide capacity building and representative organisations.

Recommendation
All tenants’ groups and landlords should:
• publicise the implications of the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as a platform to develop enhanced participative structures.

Recommendation
Communities Scotland should
• fund a wider study of tenant participation and tenants’ organisations in Scotland.

The Scottish Consumer Council hopes that this study has provided baseline information on tenants’ organisations which will be used in future research to chart the impact on tenants’ groups of implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The analysis provided here, together with the recommendations, seek to increase the understanding of how tenants’ groups in Scotland operate and how the representation of tenants’ interests in the socially rented sector can be strengthened.
Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background

In Scotland, an estimated 30.2% of properties (703,000) are rented from the social rented sector. Participation, through established tenants’ groups, has long been a feature of public sector housing in Scotland. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 ushers in a new era for social landlords, tenants’ groups and individual tenants with the introduction of a statutory framework for tenant participation in Scotland.

A raft of tenant participation good practice guidance has been published over the last few years, however little empirical research has been undertaken in Scotland to examine the structure, membership and effectiveness of tenants’ organisations.

Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) carried out a baseline survey of existing tenants’ organisations in August and September 2002 to explore these areas. The study focuses on:

- the structures of tenants’ organisations and how they currently operate;
- the information sources and resources tenants’ organisations currently access;
- the mechanisms tenants’ organisations use to gather the views of tenants; and
- the effectiveness of tenants’ organisations as a means of representing tenants’ interests.

From the research evidence the study makes recommendations on how tenants’ organisations may be strengthened and what lessons can be drawn for representing consumers’ interests.

This report sets out the findings from the survey. The structure of the report is as follows. Chapter 1 sets out the rationale for the research; discusses definitions of types of representation; and provides an overview of the new legislative framework and the research methodology used. The findings from the study are discussed in Chapters 2-6.
• Chapter 2 outlines the profile of participating groups in terms of size, committee membership and operating procedures.
• Chapter 3 describes the range and types of resources and assistance groups access.
• Chapter 4 discusses how groups identify members’ views, levels of involvement with landlords and impact of local federations.
• Chapter 5 discusses groups’ perceptions of their spheres of influence and benefit that they bring to their area.
• Chapter 6 reports the levels of awareness among groups about the new legislative framework, intentions to register and impact on organisations.

The final chapter reports the main conclusions from the survey data and proposes recommendations for encouraging opportunities for effective tenant representation in Scotland.

Rationale for Research

One of the key consumer tests against which the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) assesses the position of consumers is representation. If consumers cannot affect what is provided through their own choices, are there other effective means for their views to be represented? Within the policy area of housing, one of the main ways tenants make their views known is, collectively, through tenants’ organisations. SCC identified a need to consider how tenants were represented by the existing organisations and how the opportunities to represent tenants could be maximised.

Furthermore, SCC believes that the need to carry out research examining the current operation of tenants’ organisations in their representative role has been given further impetus with the introduction of a new statutory framework for tenant participation under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This baseline study provides a description of the structure and operation of tenants’ organisations, prior to the introduction of the legislation.

Underpinning this research is the importance of ensuring that there is an evidence base for policy-making and service development. Policy makers (in this case, landlords) need to be aware of the views and experiences of all groups of tenants who may be affected by their proposals, otherwise they run the risk of providing services which are not responsive to consumers’ (in this case, tenants’) needs.
The terms of consultation, participation and representation are often used loosely when discussing issues around involvement. The best model, originally developed by Sherry Arnstein in the 1960s, remains that of a ladder of participation ranging from manipulation to citizen control. The National Consumer Council adopts and updates this approach describing a spectrum of involvement in its recent Involving Consumers project to define a framework to promote effective consumer involvement at all levels of policy and decision-making. The spectrum extends from information gathering, through consultation and participation to representation.

At the outset of this study it is important to consider the different interpretations of representation. The collective representation of tenants through a group structure can be looked at from two very different perspectives. Firstly it may be considered in the literal sense in terms of the representativeness of the committee members of a group. Are the characteristics of the committee members similar in terms of, for eg. age, ethnicity and gender to those they seek to represent? Given that people get involved in tenants’ groups, largely through self-selection, it is extremely unlikely that tenants’ organisations will mirror exactly the characteristics of the individual group. As Britton, 2001 has argued it is more important to ask groups to offer an achievable benefit and to be actively representative.

It is this second type of representation, active representation, that this research study focuses upon: how tenants’ organisations seek to gather tenants’ views and then use them to represent the tenant interest in the provision of housing services. The Tenants Information Service (TIS), an independent tenants’ advisory body, has stated that the credibility of views advanced by tenants’ representatives is enhanced if they can demonstrate wider tenant support for them.

5 The Scottish Consumer Council is a committee of the National Consumer Council.
Research Objectives

The overall aims of the study are:

• to investigate the current practice of the operation of tenants’ organisations in Scotland; and
• to encourage the opportunities for effective tenant representation in the shaping and provision of housing services by offering an analysis based on current practice.

The objectives of the research study are:

• to gather data on the internal operation of tenants’ organisations in Scotland;
• to identify how representatives of tenants’ organisations actively gather the views of tenants to enable them to represent their views effectively; and
• to identify the levels of involvement and interaction of tenants’ organisations with landlords.

A New Legislative Framework for Tenant Participation

The timing and the development of recent legislative change in this policy area are important to highlight within the context of the study. The Scottish Office set up a working group on tenant participation in 1998. The group included representatives from tenants’ organisations, landlord organisations and housing and advice agencies. The National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation was published in April 1999. Codes of practice for tenant participation in a number of areas including best value, stock transfers and rural areas were also produced.9 The national strategy document paved the way for future legislative change.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 received Royal Assent on 18 July 2001. The Act sets out a statutory framework for tenant participation, sections 53-56. The Act places a duty on landlords to consult with registered tenant groups and individual tenants.

---

9 Tenant Participation Working Group Codes of Practice, (2000-01). There are five codes covering tenant participation at a local level, best value, regeneration, stock transfers and rural areas.
The Act also places a new duty on local authority landlords and other registered social landlords to prepare a tenant participation strategy. Each landlord’s strategy must include provision for:

- obtaining and taking account of tenants’ views on future proposals for housing services;
- informing tenants of which issues will be subject to consultation; and
- outlining what information about the issues subject to consultation will be provided to tenants.

The strategies must also consider an assessment of the resources required for implementation, including support to tenants’ organisations and the resources being made available by the landlords. Landlords must finalise their strategies by 31 March 2003.

Other provisions in the Act require local authority and registered social landlords to maintain a register of tenants’ organisations. Tenants’ organisations unhappy with a decision not to be entered in, or be removed from, the register will have a right of appeal to Scottish Ministers. Every local authority landlord and registered social landlord will have a duty to consult registered tenants’ organisations and individual tenants on policies relating to housing matters and the likely effects of such proposals.

The Act also provides for tenant management co-operatives to enter into agreements with a landlord for the co-operative to manage some or all of the landlords’ functions. The co-operative will be able to exercise the functions and be representative of the tenants of the houses they wish to manage.

The Scottish Executive has produced guidance on the statutory framework for tenant participation. The Executive has also allocated £4 million of resources to landlords over the next two years to enable them develop the mechanisms and processes to implement the tenant participation provisions of the Act, including tenant participation strategies. The Executive has not prescribed how landlords should use these resources; however landlords will be required to report on a number of outputs. These outputs include: that consultation has taken place with
tenants’ and registered tenants’ organisations, and publication of a tenant participation strategy by 31 March 2003. The Executive has also allocated funding (over £330,000) to organisations to provide training for tenants in relation to new provisions of the Act. Communities Scotland, the Executive’s housing agency, has also appointed a small team of tenant participation development officers to assist landlords in this process and to disseminate good practice.

The SCC’s research aims to provide a detailed illustration of tenants’ organisations immediately prior to the implementation of the new provisions.

Research Methodology

The survey method used was a self-completion postal questionnaire. A series of meetings was undertaken with representatives from Tenants Information Service (TIS), Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Scottish Executive Development Department Housing Division and the Scottish Tenants Organisation (STO) to inform the development of the questionnaire content and format. The final questionnaire contained six key sections:

- About the organisation (membership, structure and committee selection)
- Working with landlords and other organisations
- Current awareness of the new legislation
- Identifying tenants’ views
- Resources and information sources
- Success stories.

A copy of the survey questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1.

Questionnaire Distribution

One of the main challenges faced by the SCC in the planning stages of this research project was how best to distribute the survey. There is no single comprehensive database or access point for active tenants’ groups in Scotland.11 SCC contacted the organisations which provide independent advice and support to tenants’ groups, Tenants Participation Advisory (TPAS) and Tenants Information Service (TIS), to seek advice on the distribution of the survey.

---

11 To a large extent this will change as under the new legislation, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, local authorities will be required to maintain a public register of registered tenants’ organisations, available for inspection with contact information. However the registers may not cover all groups as some may choose not to register.
TPAS and TIS agreed to distribute the questionnaire to their member groups via one of their regular mailings. These lists are not definitive as some groups may not be active and there are other groups who may not be included in the lists. There was also a degree of duplication across the lists. SCC contacted local federations to fill in some gaps and sent out some questionnaires directly based on the information received from federations.

The questionnaire, along with a covering letter from the Director of the SCC outlining the aims of the study, was distributed over a period of weeks in August 2002. Groups were asked if possible to discuss and complete the questionnaire as a group and, if this was not possible, for the secretary to complete the survey on behalf of the group. Responses were requested by 27 September 2002. A reminder letter was sent out via the same distribution method in mid-September. To enable the inclusion of further responses in the final analysis, the closing date was extended to the 4 October 2002.

We do not know how many active tenants’ groups there are in Scotland. Allowing for duplication across the TPAS and TIS lists and groups either being no longer active or out with the scope of the study (e.g. area committees, federations etc), our best estimate is that the questionnaire was received by around 400 relevant groups. We received 109 questionnaires (27%), 94 (24%) of which we were able to use in the final data analysis. There was a wide geographical spread of survey responses with groups returning questionnaires from 23 out of the 32 local authority areas. A more detailed description of the research methodology issues is discussed in Appendix 2.

**Interim Findings**

The interim findings of the study were presented at the Tenants’ Participation Advisory Service’s (TPAS) annual conference in Nairn on 27 October 2002. A number of issues were raised during the discussion and these are highlighted in the report.

The SCC hopes this study will provide baseline information on tenants’ organisations which can be used in future research to chart the impact on tenants’ groups, post implementation of the 2001 Act.
Chapter 2 – Profile of Tenants’ Groups

Introduction

This chapter profiles the types of tenants’ organisations who responded to the survey. The profiles of the groups are built up from data gathered on who the groups represented, size of the groups in terms of membership and geographical area, and the formal structures and operation of groups’ committees.

Who do you represent?

We asked tenants’ organisations to select whom they sought to represent. As Table 1 shows, more than two-thirds of groups (70%) represent local authority tenants only, or local authority tenants and home-owners. Over a third of groups (34%) represent local authority tenants. The next largest single group (11%) consists of organisations who represent housing association tenants only or housing association tenants and home-owners.¹³ 6% of groups represent tenants from the local authority, housing associations and home-owners. A further 6% represent local authority tenants, private sector tenants and home-owners. A remaining 6% are drawn from a number of other combinations of the groups listed.

Table 1: Types of tenants represented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of tenants represented</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*LA tenants and LA tenants and owners</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- LA tenants only</td>
<td>(32)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**HA tenants and HA tenants and owners</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- HA tenants only</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA tenants, HA tenants and owners</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA tenants, private tenants and owners</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combinations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹³ We have to consider that housing association groups may have been under-represented in the survey, i.e. not having recent contact with either TPAS or TIS, nevertheless these findings reflect those of the study, Scott, S et al. Good Practice in Housing Management: A Review of Progress, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2002, which found housing associations were less likely to have tenants’ organisations operating in their areas than local authorities.

*LA - Local Authority,  **HA - Housing Authority
Size of Group

We included in the survey a number of questions to ascertain the size of groups in terms of both the numbers of members, active members and the geographical area covered by the group.

Membership

We asked groups to provide information on the number of households and individuals members they had in membership. The response suggests that groups appear to find this one of the most difficult questions to respond to. Only three-quarters of the responding groups are able provide data on the number of households, and under half can provide information on the number of individual members. The response from those groups who were able to answer the questions indicates that groups’ membership is fairly diverse in terms of scale. The number of member households ranges from 10 to 4000 households. Table 2 illustrates that around one-fifth of groups have membership consisting of under 50 households. Overall, just over half of groups have membership of less than 150 households. At the opposite end of the range, 15% of groups have large memberships of over 650 households.

Table 2: Number of households in membership (banded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member households</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-150</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-250</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251-350</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351-450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451-550</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551-650</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We were interested in how households or individuals became members and whether members had to activate their membership in some way. The same diversity of approach is evident in this area. A total of 29% of the groups required members to action their membership, through payment of a joining fee (25.3%) or completing an application form (3.3%). Membership to the majority of groups was automatic. The full results are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Activating membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joining method</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automatically members</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On completion of application form</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment of a joining fee</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal membership structure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Groups which required that membership be actioned by the tenant, through completing a form or paying a fee, were more likely to be able to provide estimates of individual, household and active membership rates: 88% of such groups providing estimates of household membership, 70% active members estimates, and 50% of groups giving estimates of individual membership.

We also wanted to examine the scale of active membership in organisations, eg. through attending meetings and/or holding a committee position. Again some groups found it difficult to quantify active membership (over a quarter of groups were unable to, or did not respond). The responses of those who could give estimates range from four to one hundred active members. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of active membership across the groups. Around one-fifth of responding groups have fewer than ten active members. Around a quarter of tenants’ groups have over 40 active members.
Geographical Area

We were keen to gain a geographic perspective on the size of groups. We asked respondents to select from a predefined list which description best described the area covered by the organisation. Half of the groups selected the smallest geographical category, a few streets or block of flats, as best describing the area they covered; a further quarter described themselves as representing ‘an estate’. A much smaller proportion of groups represent larger areas as shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Active membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active membership</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Geographical area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical area</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A few streets or block(s) of flats</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An estate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A village/town</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A housing association area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A local authority area</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of Groups

The next section provides information on the age and formal structures of the organisations including committee membership and selection. Our findings show a great deal of consistency of approach across many of the groups, in terms of how they formally operate.

Age of organisation

As Figure 1 illustrates, over one-third of groups were established in the last five years and around three-fifths of groups were established over the last ten years. A quarter of groups were established between 1983–1992 and the remaining groups (12%) before 1983. The oldest responding tenants’ group was established in 1953.

Constitutions and Committees

There is almost universal consistency in practice relating to basic constitutional and committee arrangements. Almost all groups have a written constitution setting out governance arrangements (96%). All groups have a formal committee and all but one group hold an Annual General Meeting.

Constitutions

The survey asked groups that indicated they had a written constitution to send a copy of the constitution along with their response. Of the 92 groups who reported having a written constitution, 39 sent a copy with their completed questionnaire. One aspect we were particularly interested in was whether groups had an equal opportunities statement in their constitution. Around two-thirds of groups were found to have references to equal opportunities issues within the constitution documents. One group included equal opportunities as a specific section heading in its constitution stating that:

the Association shall uphold equal opportunities and work for good relations among all members of the community, specifically prohibiting any conduct which discriminates or harasses on the grounds of race, nationality, colour, gender, disability, age, sexuality, religion or political beliefs.
For the most part the statement was either included in the group’s aims and objectives or under the terms of membership. Such statements were usually clearly worded and prominent in the constitution. Examples of these statements include:

the association shall not discriminate on the basis of politics, religion, race, sexuality or gender and shall be non-party political

membership shall be open to all tenants and/or residents, irrespective of tenure, living within the area shown on the attached plan, regardless of nationality, political party, race or religious opinions

to promote the harmonious functioning of a multi-racial community and to work towards the elimination of racism and discrimination within it

A small number of groups that did not have explicit equal opportunities statements in their constitution indicated that the group would be politically or religiously neutral in character, eg.:

the association will not be affiliated to any political or religious groups or parties pertaining to these groups

As discussed in Chapter one, our definition of active representation for the purposes of the study, is not premised on the characteristics of tenants’ groups mirroring the make-up of the area they seek to represent. Nevertheless that does not mean that groups should not aim to seek members from as wide a spectrum as possible and conduct their meetings and activities within an equal opportunities framework. Hence the importance of ensuring that the written constitutions have a clear equal opportunities statement to direct groups’ working arrangements. There is room for development, as from the sample of written constitutions one-third of groups did not contain a clear equal opportunities statement.
Committees
There were variations as to whether tenants’ groups’ committees had a maximum number of places, size of committees and the frequency with which committees met. Three-fifths of groups state that there is a limit on the number of places on the committee. The maximum number of places on committees ranges from three to twenty. Table 6 provides details of the maximum number of places on committees where there is such a limit. A quarter of such groups have under five committee places. Two-thirds of groups have between six and fifteen committee places.

Table 6: Committee places (where limited)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of places</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of Meetings
We asked groups, aside from the AGM, how frequently committees met and how often meetings were held that were open to the whole membership of the group. Although we did not ask specifically if committee meetings were open to all members, over one-fifth of groups made this point. Table 7 shows that 17% of groups only hold open meetings once a year.

Table 7: Public meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of public meetings</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 4 times a year</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more times a year</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All meetings are open to public</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2 shows the distribution of the frequency of committee meetings. Over three-quarters of groups meet on a monthly basis. During the discussion of the interim findings at TPAS’s annual tenants’ conference, delegates made the point that new groups often had to meet more frequently when they were in the process of establishing themselves.

Committee Selection

The vast majority of groups (94%) hold elections at an annual general meeting to elect committee members, while a much smaller proportion (a further three groups) hold elections at other times. One-fifth of groups state that they would also co-opt committee members between elections. We asked groups how they publicised their last committee elections or, if part of the AGM, how the meeting was publicised. Figure 3 shows the different methods used by groups. (Groups could give multiple responses to this question.) The most common method, used by two-thirds of groups, is posters, followed by distributing leaflets (45%). A much smaller number of groups, just under a quarter, use direct mailshots to members.

Tenants’ Organisations – Diversity of Approaches

Tenants’ organisations are by no means a homogenous group. As our findings show there is variation and diversity in size, membership and age of the organisations as well as the types of groups they seek to represent. As part of the analysis of the data, groups were divided in two ways:

- size of groups (in terms of geographical area covered); and
- groups representing tenants only and groups that represent tenants and home-owners.

An analysis was undertaken to highlight any differences within these subset categories of tenants’ groups. The analysis shows there are some key differences, in particular with regard to levels of activity and involvement with landlords; operating at a national level; and groups’ perceptions of influencing housing services. These differences are highlighted and discussed in the relevant chapters of the report.
Conclusion

This chapter has described the profile and operating methods of the tenants’ groups participating in our study. Good practice suggests that tenants’ groups should have clear and easy-to-understand constitutions; a definable operating area; identifiable memberships, and function according to agreed standards of governance and equal opportunities.\(^{14}\) Such measures help to ensure clarity for active tenant members and tenants on accountability; they can also allay landlords’ concerns about groups being unrepresentative.

Our findings show a wide degree of variation and diversity in the profile of groups in terms of size, age, members, membership policies and committee size. By comparison, findings also indicate a uniformity of approach in the formal operating structures of groups. Almost all groups surveyed have a written constitution and a committee elected at an AGM, so the formal structures are in place. A brief analysis of the content of groups’ written constitutions from an equal opportunities perspective shows room for development, as from the sample of written constitutions one-third of groups did not contain a clear equal opportunities statement. Many groups found the questions on quantifying membership and active membership the most difficult questions to respond to, therefore there is also scope to improve the knowledge that tenants’ groups have about identifying their membership, which primarily has an knock-on effect for their capacity to represent tenants’ interests.

This chapter considers the different types of resources, information sources, and assistance that tenants’ groups currently access. We examine groups’ perceptions of the adequacy of current resource levels and look at the areas groups would like to improve or develop if resources were increased. The role, membership and benefits of local tenants’ federations are also discussed.

Types and Sources of Assistance

The Chartered Institute of Housing’s Housing Management Standards Manual\(^\text{15}\) sets out a range of assistance landlords can provide to tenants’ groups:

- financial support to tenants to help them form and keep them going;
- expenses for attending meetings, and allowances for childcare;
- access to material resources, such as a meeting space, communications and print;
- clerical and administrative resources;
- access to training across all fields of housing; and
- access to independent advice, i.e. not from the landlord.

A recent review of good practice indicates that within the current literature there appears to be no advice on how much money should be spent on supporting tenants.\(^\text{16}\) The resourcing and capacity building of tenants’ organisations is a key issue, notably, as part of requirements under the new legislative framework, local authority and registered social landlords’ tenant participation strategies must contain an assessment of the resources required, and the resources proposed to implement tenant participation strategies.\(^\text{17}\)

Communities Scotland, the government agency responsible for regulating Scottish social landlords, will inspect registered social landlords against a set of performance standards which cover housing services. One standard focuses specifically on tenant participation.

We have published and are implementing a sound strategy for encouraging and supporting tenants, residents and service users to participate actively in all areas of our work. We support tenants who take an active interest in managing their homes.\(^\text{18}\)
We asked tenants’ groups to select from a predefined list what types of support and assistance they received, if any, and if they received financial assistance, the amount granted in 2001/2. Although by far the main type of assistance is financial with 73 groups (78%) receiving grants, one-fifth of groups do not receive any financial assistance. The other types of support, such as help with administrative tasks (41%), independent information and advice (41%), access to training (36%) and development support (24%) are received by a much lower proportion of groups as shown in Table 8.

Further analysis of the data shows that 9% of groups do not receive any type of support and, at the opposite end of the support spectrum, only 11% of groups receive all the range of support mechanisms listed in the table below. Moreover, 30% of all groups report only receiving one type of assistance; of these groups, the majority get financial assistance only (64%), with the remainder either receiving independent information and advice (21%) or help with administrative tasks (14%).

Table 8: Types of support and assistance (multiple response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of assistance</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development support</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent information and advice</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base (94)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus of this study is on tenants’ organisations rather than support offered by local authorities; however, as part of a review of housing management practice in Scotland in 1999, a postal survey of local authorities and registered social landlords on tenant participation was undertaken. In the 1999 survey of registered social landlords and local
authority landlords, the findings stated that all local authorities provided some form of material support (financial or other forms of support) for tenants’ organisations but only 41% of housing associations did so.

The 1999 survey compared these findings with a baseline study of local authorities in 1993, which found that then only three-quarters of councils provided some kind of material or financial support. The 1999 study found that there had not been a change in the types of support (rooms and grants being most common types of support given). Information on the amount of grant was not reported in the study’s findings.

As Figure 4 shows one-fifth of tenants’ groups do not get any financial assistance and current funding for three-fifths of groups is under £500 per year.

Groups were also asked whether they received assistance from other sources to enable them to represent tenants’ views. Table 9 shows the other sources of assistance, the largest category, reported by 44% of groups’ was support from independent tenant advisory bodies (eg. TPAS and TIS). Only one in ten groups state they receive assistance from national tenants’ organisations (eg. Scottish Tenants’ Organisation).

Table 9: Other sources of assistance (multiple response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of assistance</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landlord</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant advisory bodies</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National tenant organisations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base 93</strong></td>
<td><strong>Base 93</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Scott, S et al. Good Practice in Housing Management: A Review of Progress, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit 2000, paras. 3.15-3.16.
Views on Levels of Funding

Groups were asked to consider whether they received sufficient resources to enable them to effectively represent tenants’ views. This question divided respondents: slightly more than half of groups (56%) feel that they do not have adequate resources, while slightly less than half (44%) are satisfied with the current level.

When we divide our population of groups into small and large groups, based on the size of the operational area, there are differences in attitudes towards funding levels (see Table 10). A much bigger majority, two-thirds of the larger groups, feel that they do not have sufficient resources available for identifying tenants’ views compared to under half (44%) of smaller groups.

Table 10: Adequacy of resources (comparing small and large groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of groups</th>
<th>Enough resources?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (Groups)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All groups</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We asked those tenants’ groups who are unsatisfied with the level of resources what additional types of support and assistance are needed, and what ways of working or other activities would such groups like to carry out. As Table 11 shows the majority of groups would like to access additional financial assistance (66%) and over half of groups (54%) request further development support, independent advice and training. Half the groups also identified the need for research support.
In outlining how such additional resources would be used, some groups highlight building the capacity of committee members through funding attendance at conferences, training for members, and joining the local federation. One group commented:

*Our basic aims are to improve the conditions and the environment in which all tenants live but we need resources by which we can interest more of our tenants by publicising and advertising our work and policies, especially to attract young people for education and training. Financial assistance would enable us to shake off the restrictive shackles that lack of funding imposes.*

Some groups highlight the need for better equipment, eg. one group stated a computer would lead to the improvement of communication with tenants via the production of a better quality newsletter. Similarly another group said:

*We would like to become more community-oriented. More resources would allow better communication with the general membership and improve information distribution and [information] gathering.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of additional resources</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development support</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent information and advice</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research support</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base 48</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other areas of involvement are in community planning and regeneration, community safety and environmental issues. One group stated that additional resources would assist them to:

*Articulate and implement policies effectively and work with community planning partners to achieve our agreed aims.*

A number of groups also commented that additional resources could be used to support community projects, particularly aimed at specific groups in the community such as young people and the elderly.

**Local Tenants’ Federations**

Local tenants’ federations are membership organisations that seek to support local tenants’ groups and negotiate with landlords. A large number of local federations are also members of the Scottish Tenants’ Organisation. Local tenants’ federations are one access point for supporting local groups. We asked groups whether there was a tenants’ federation operating in their area. In areas where there was a federation we asked groups if they were members and if so what benefits they derived from membership.

56 groups (63%) state that there is a tenants’ federation in their area. A sizeable number of respondent groups (16%) did not know whether there was a federation or not.

46 groups (52%) were members of a local federation. Analysis of the data by size of group found that larger tenants’ groups (69%) were much more likely to be members of a local federation.

The 46 groups who were federation members identified the following benefits from such membership:

- 44 out of 46 – information
- 38 out of 46 – advice and support
- 32 out of 46 – use as vehicle to influence area wide housing policies
- 25 out of 46 – use as vehicle to influence national housing policies.
Tenants’ groups in membership of local federations appear to be accessing a range of benefits with information and advice services featuring more prominently. There is scope for raising the awareness among groups about the areas covered by the existing federations. There is also scope for enhancing the role of local federations as vehicles that local groups can use to influence housing policy at a landlord-wide and national level.

Conclusion
This chapter illustrates the levels and types of support currently being received by tenants’ groups. One-fifth of tenants’ groups do not get any financial assistance and for current funding for three-fifths of groups is under £500 per year. Nine percent of groups do not receive any type of support such as assistance with administrative support or development support.

Over half of the groups feel that they lack the necessary resources to effectively represent tenants in their area. Larger tenants’ groups are more likely than small groups to feel that current levels of resources are insufficient to represent the views of tenants effectively.

The findings demonstrate that tenants’ groups use local federations, primarily for information and advice and to a lesser extent as a vehicle to influence policy at a landlord-wide and national level. There appears to be scope for enhancing the profile and promoting the role of local federations for representing tenants’ interests at such levels.

Local authorities and registered social landlords, in drawing up their tenant participation strategies, should address the issues highlighted by these findings by building in support to match the good practice guidelines and meeting the needs and types of support identified by tenants’ groups.
This chapter explores a theme that lies at the heart of this study – that of active representation – by looking at the extent to which tenants’ groups are actively representing the views of tenants. We examine this in two ways: firstly, by identifying the different types of activities groups are involved in at a local and national level and, secondly, by considering the methods used to seek tenants’ views and how effective those methods are perceived by groups.

Involvement – Local Level

Using a set of categories adapted from the concept of the ‘ladder of participation’, discussed in Chapter 1, we asked groups to identify activities, which reflect what they do at a local level.

In Figure 5 the responses show that large percentages of groups are involved in contacting councillors, housing association committee members and responding to local consultations. As we climb the ladder towards the more participative processes (such as negotiating with the landlord on rents and involvement in the landlord’s decision-making processes), the number of groups involved decreases. For example, four-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involved in landlord’s decision-making processes</td>
<td>43 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate best value/perf. reviews</td>
<td>43 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – rents</td>
<td>35 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – allocations</td>
<td>36 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – community safety</td>
<td>58 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – repairs</td>
<td>62 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go on area walkabouts with landlord staff</td>
<td>46 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign on wider local issues</td>
<td>53 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to local consultations</td>
<td>73 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact councillors/HA committee members</td>
<td>80 85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 94
fifths of groups contact councillors and housing association committee members and over three-quarters of groups respond to consultations on local housing policy issues, whereas under half of groups consider themselves to be involved in the landlord’s decision-making processes.

A larger proportion of groups negotiate with their landlord on repairs (66%) than issues concerning allocation policies (38%) and rent levels (37%).

The results have been disaggregated by the operational size of groups. Figure 6 illustrates that the pattern of the data remains the same: more groups involved in activities at the foot of the ladder and as we climb the ladder towards the more participative processes, the number of groups involved decreases. What is markedly different is, on comparing groups, a greater proportion of large groups are involved across all activities. For example, almost all large groups (94%) are involved in contacting councillors and housing association committee members compared to 76% of smaller groups. Two-fifths of smaller tenants’ groups are involved in campaigning on wider local issues compared to almost three-quarters of large groups.

**Figure 6: Ladder of involvement – comparing small and large groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ladder of involvement</th>
<th>Small groups Number</th>
<th>Large groups Number</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involved in landlord’s decision-making processes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate best value/perf. reviews</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – rents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – allocations</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – community safety</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with landlord – repairs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go on area walkabouts with landlord staff</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign on wider local issues</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to local consultations</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact councillors/HA committee members</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Base 46)
The organisation of social activities, which is another legitimate if somewhat different role, undertaken by tenants’ groups in developing and maintaining community cohesion, was included in the range of activities surveyed. This type of activity was the only category in which the proportion of small groups (48%) was greater than that of large groups (39%).

Involvement – National Level

As tenants’ groups are now operating in a devolved Scotland we also wanted to find out the extent to which groups are making use of potential opportunities to represent tenants’ interests at a level beyond that of the landlord. Only three out of ten groups report that they have not carried out at least one of the activities surveyed and listed in Table 12. Over half of the groups have contacted Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), and despite housing being a policy area within the competence of the Scottish Parliament (with the exception of housing benefit), a similar proportion of groups continue to contact MPs. Only one-fifth of groups have contacted Scottish Executive officials. A smaller proportion of groups have been involved in lobbying central government institutions, eg. 16 groups (17%) have submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament. Chapter 5 discusses in more detail groups’ perceptions of the importance of influencing national housing issues.

Table 12: Activities – national level (multiple response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of activity</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lobbied Houses of Parliament</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbied Scottish Parliament</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petitioned Scottish Parliament</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact MPs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact MSPs</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact SE Civil Servants</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Base 94)
An analysis was undertaken comparing the functions of groups representing tenants only with groups that represent tenants and homeowners. There are some key differences: in particular, larger proportions of groups that represent tenants and home-owners are more likely to be involved in activities at a national level. As Table 13 shows tenants’ groups that represent tenants and home-owners are more likely to lobby central government institutions and contact parliamentarians. Furthermore one-quarter of these groups have petitioned the Scottish Parliament.

Table 13: Activities – national level by type of group (multiple response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of activity</th>
<th>Groups represent –</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenants only</td>
<td>Tenants &amp; Owners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbied Houses of Parliament</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbied Scottish Parliament</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petitioned Scottish Parliament</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact MPs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact MSPs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact SE Civil Servants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Base 42) (Base 52)

**Identifying Tenants’ Views**

We asked groups to select the methods they use to seek tenants’ views and to consider which are the most effective ways of collecting views. Table 14 combines the responses to both questions. Groups were able to select as many responses as were applicable.
Contact through whole membership meetings appears to be the main method by which committee members seek tenants’ views. This method is influenced by the turnout. Surveys are by far the least used method for gathering information on the views of tenants, with only 23% of groups using this method. Only a quarter of groups view surveys as a very effective/effective method of gathering views. However, of the tenants’ groups who did use surveys the majority (76%) found them to be a very effective/effective method of gathering tenants’ views.

Overall, the most effective method identified by almost three-quarters of groups is personal contact with tenants. Other methods identified by groups are, in the main, ways of informing tenants about what is going on and what groups are doing. Examples given include distribution of newsletters and leaflets and tenant noticeboards.

Table 14: Methods of identifying tenants’ views (multiple response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Methods Used</th>
<th>*V Effective/Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee meetings</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole membership meetings</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal contact</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note very effective/effective denotes a response rating of 4 or 5 out of 5.
Conclusion

There is no secret to active representation. It is putting into effect the basics of tenant participation – talking and listening to people, sending out newsletters, holding accessible open meetings and carrying out surveys. This is not to say that it easy, it requires commitment on the part of active tenants to seek out the views of tenants and to represent the tenants’ interests.

Moreover good practice suggests that for tenants’ groups to be effective and properly accountable, the range of methods used to identify tenants’ views and gather an evidence base are extremely important. This chapter has outlined the range of activities and methods used by groups to gather and represent the views of tenants. Groups cannot rely on public meetings and personal contact alone but have to use a variety of methods to provide information, gather views and feedback to tenants on a continuous basis. Many of the tenants’ organisations surveyed could do more to ascertain the views of the people they seek to represent. This must be adequately supported through access to training for committee members, and the provision of adequate resources to maximise their effectiveness.

Landlords also have to support tenants’ groups to enable them to achieve appropriate levels of accountability and ensure that there are mechanisms in place to allow groups to be involved in decision-making processes.
This chapter considers tenants’ groups’ perceptions of their spheres of influence. We examine the extent to which groups feel it is important to influence housing issues at a local and national level and also the perceptions of the opportunities available to genuinely influence the delivery of housing services.

Influencing Local and National Housing Issues

We asked groups to rate the importance of influencing local housing issues and national housing issues on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). It is perhaps not surprising that nine out of ten groups view influencing local housing issues as very important or important. However, there was also a significant majority of groups, two-thirds, who feel it is very important/important to influence national issues (see Figure 7).

The data also shows that overall one-fifth of groups do not think that influencing national housing issues is important. Analysing the data by group size highlights that large tenant groups (79%) are more likely than small groups to view influencing housing issues at a national level to be very important/important.

Spheres of Influence

We also wanted to measure in some way groups’ perceptions about the extent of their own spheres of influence. We asked groups to consider the extent to which they had had the opportunity to genuinely influence the delivery of housing services, firstly, in their own operating area and then within the landlord area.

Less than one-fifth of groups feel that they have a lot of influence in affecting the delivering of housing services in their own operating area and the landlord area. Table 15 shows the differentiation across the areas. The level of perceived influence of groups is lower on a landlord-wide basis than on a group-area basis. For example, 25% of groups feel they have not a lot/no influence on housing services within the groups’ own area, this increases to 38% of groups within the landlord-wide area.
As the data in Table 16 shows, on disaggregating the groups into small and large groups, more large groups are likely to have a positive perception towards influencing the delivery of housing services at an area-wide (88%) and landlord-wide (61%) level. Over half of the small groups feel that they have little or no influence on the delivery of housing services on a landlord-area basis.

Table 15: Perceptions of influencing area-wide and landlord-wide issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived level of influence</th>
<th>Opportunity to influence services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of influence</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some influence</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a lot of influence</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No influence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Perceptions of influencing area-wide and landlord-wide issues by group size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived level of influence</th>
<th>Opportunity to influence services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Grps (Nos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of influence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some influence</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a lot of influence</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No influence</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During discussion about groups’ spheres of influence at the TPAS annual conference, delegates suggested local federations should be used more by local tenants’ groups to feed issues into informing debate on housing issues at a landlord and national level. Our study noted that 71% of groups who are members of a local federation view the federation as a vehicle for influencing local issues and 55% see it as a means to influence national issues.

Three-quarters of groups who are federation members feel they have a lot of/some influence on the delivery of housing services, at the landlord area, a higher proportion than the overall dataset. Therefore our study indicates that local federations can play an important role in supporting local groups influence over service delivery.

**Impact of Tenants’ Groups**

Tenants’ groups were asked to provide examples of the benefits their organisation had brought to the area. Nine out of ten groups gave examples of benefits that they had brought to their areas as a result of their activities. There were a number of key themes running through the responses. Some examples of the benefits, grouped under the key themes are listed in Figure 8.
• Building and enhancing a sense of community
It gives the tenants a feeling of community spirit. Someone is listening
to them and doing their best to keep the environment safe and
trouble-free. It also gives the tenants a link with the local council as
the association has a stronger voice than the individual.

• Better information and support for tenants
We have made tenants aware via newsletter what is happening in area.
We have helped lots of tenants have repairs completed. We give
advice where we can, if we cannot we channel them to where they
will receive it. Home visits to elderly or disabled. Got leisure facilities
built. Write letters. Make phone calls. Fill in forms. We help in any
way we can. We have connection with Care and Repair project.

• Organising social events
Brought people together socially and made all more aware of each
other’s needs. Improvement in community relationships. An
introduction of social activities.

Association has provided some social activity in an area of high
unemployment and a high percentage of pensioners.

• Developing a better and closer working relationship with the landlord
Firstly, the fact that we are now organised means we now bring issues
requiring resolution to the housing authority directly, whereas before
there was no concerted approach. Despite the historical barriers,
which existed between landlord and tenant, we are gradually
breaking these down which will bring benefits to both in the long run.
We have already highlighted situations where there is needless waste
of resources, due to bad working methods and poor communications,
with the housing officials.

A direct link to council officials, councillors, committees, and tenant/
council work groups which has been in operation for more than four
years based on partnership. Also we have two reps on most of the
tenant/council work groups
• Improving repairs and maintenance of properties
  Handled individual problems: repairs/maintenance, kitchen replacement, influencing alterations, rent-setting. Brought forward priority repairs.

• Improving community safety
  Making the village green a safer place through our campaign for extra lighting.
  Safer footpaths. Improved street lighting. Upgrades to local buildings. Awareness of drug issues. Roads more safe because of traffic islands.

• Negotiating on behalf of tenants during process of stock transfer
  Negotiated prospectus at transfer from Scottish Homes to housing association. Were first to use “Tenants’ Choice” to transfer. Prospectus including rent freeze for five years, kitchen, heating, bathroom roof replacements. Also initiated police security report – leading to lighting, fencing and general safety improvements.

• Involvement in regeneration–improvements to properties & surrounding area
  Total regeneration of area. Tenants worked with council on a demolition programme and then a rebuild. Housing transferred to housing association. Community centre and play area.
  For 10-12 years the local council was promising to renew fences in back gardens and said we will do it next year (this did not happen). When our association was formed we not only got our fences but also parking for each house and all telephone and electricity cables put underground.

• Better representation of tenants’ interests
  An increased awareness of local issues. An ability to make effective representation to the local authority. To have a more meaningful consultation with regard to what is taking place in this area.
Conclusion

This chapter analysed tenants’ groups’ perceptions of, firstly, the importance of influencing local and national housing issues and then, secondly, the impact groups have on influencing the delivery of housing services within their own areas of operation and at a landlord-wide level. The majority of groups do think it is important to influence local and national housing issues; however, the extent to which they feel they can genuinely influence housing services is greater within their own operating area. The size of groups impacts on the extent of their perceived levels of influence over service delivery.

The impact of local federations was demonstrated in supporting groups in the extent to which they feel they influence the provision of housing services. Groups identified examples of the impact and benefits their collective action brings to the areas they seek to represent including:

- building and enhancing a sense of community
- better information and support for tenants
- organising social events
- developing a better and closer working relationship with the landlord
- improving repairs and maintenance of properties
- improving community safety
- negotiating on behalf of tenants during process of stock transfer
- involvement in regeneration-improvements to properties and surrounding area
- better representation of tenants’ interests.
The introduction of the new tenant participation provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places new duties on local authorities with regard to tenant participation, and has potentially far-reaching impact on tenants’ groups. The main tenant participation provisions of the Act were outlined in the opening chapter of the report.

It is important to reiterate the timing of the distribution of this study. Questionnaires were distributed around six weeks before the introduction of the tenant participation provisions of the Act. This chapter provides very much a snapshot of the levels of awareness of the Act at that time, the extent to which the impact of the provisions have been discussed at a group and membership level, and initial views on whether groups intend to seek registration under the Act.

Awareness of the New Legislative Provisions

There is a high level of awareness about the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Nine out of ten groups stated that they are aware of the provisions of the Act. On disaggregating the data by size of group according to operational area, the majority of groups that are unaware of the legislation are self-defined smaller groups, ie. groups covering a few streets or block of flats.

Of the tenants’ groups who stated that they are aware of the legislation, 89% received information about the new legislation directly from landlords. A slightly lower proportion of these groups (84%) report that landlords have consulted with them about the new provisions.

Discussion of New Legislative Provisions

A basic function of active representation is to keep constituents informed about important issues. We asked groups the extent to which they have discussed the implications of the new legislation. Table 17 illustrates that only half of these groups have discussed the potential impact of the new legal framework within the committee; a much smaller proportion (29%) have discussed it more widely with their membership. Over 10% of groups have not discussed it all.
Analysing the data by group size shows a broadly similar pattern with groups more likely to have discussed the new legal framework at a committee level. Under one-third of both small and large groups have discussed the impact of the legislation both at committee and wider membership levels. As Table 18 shows, small groups are more likely (19%) than large groups (7%) not to have discussed the legislative changes at any level.

Table 17: Levels of discussion of new legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion of new legislation at –</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committee only</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee and wider membership</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware of legislation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Levels of discussion of new legislation by group size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion of new legislation at –</th>
<th>Small Groups</th>
<th>Large Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee and wider membership</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No discussion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of the New Legislation

Although the new Act was at a very early stage, we asked groups their views on the likely impact of the legislation. Our findings show that there was a mixed response to the tenant participation provisions of the legislation. 61% think it will have a positive impact, 14% think the impact will be negative and the remainder, 25%, think it will have no impact at all. We followed up this question by asking groups whether or not they intend to register with landlords under the terms of the legislation. Again of those who are aware of the legislation, 69% intend to seek registration, 25% are unsure and 6% do not intend to register.

There were some interesting variations in the data when disaggregated by group size. The findings in Table 19 show that a greater proportion of large groups (69%) compared to small groups (50%) perceived the introduction of the new legislation as having a positive impact on the group.

Table 19: Perceptions of impact of new legislation by group size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of legislation on group</th>
<th>Small Groups</th>
<th>Large Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These variations in the findings according to group size are also apparent in groups’ intentions to seek registration under the new legislative framework. As Table 20 illustrates, over one-third of small groups have not made a decision as to whether to seek registration compared with 15% of large groups. Furthermore, 83% of large groups report that they will be applying for registration compared with only 50% of small groups.
Conclusion

These findings show that current levels of awareness of the new legal framework are much higher than the levels of discussion within groups about the potential impact. There is also a broadly positive response to groups’ intentions to seek registration under the terms of the 2001 Act. Overall, larger groups appear more positive about the impact on the group of the new legislation and surer of their intentions to register.

Although it is a minority of groups who are unaware of the new legislation, it is a concern that some groups did not know about the provisions a few weeks before the commencement of the sections of the 2001 Act. However, these results should not be overstated given that the study is very much a picture of a point in time. It is hoped that groups may now have had such an opportunity to discuss issues arising from the legislation since its introduction from 30 September 2002.

Table 20: Intentions to seek registration by group size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention to seek registration</th>
<th>Small Groups</th>
<th>Large Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall aims of this baseline study are to investigate the operation of tenants’ organisations in Scotland and to encourage the opportunities for effective tenant representation in the shaping and provision of housing services, by offering an analysis based on current practice. The study examines the structure, membership and effectiveness of tenants’ organisations in Scotland, prior to the introduction of the tenant participation provisions within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The study focuses on:

• the structures of tenants’ organisations and how they currently operate;
• the information sources and resources tenants’ organisations currently access;
• the mechanisms tenants’ organisations use to gather the views of tenants; and
• the effectiveness of tenants’ organisations as a means of representing tenants’ interests.

This chapter draws together the main conclusions from analysis of the survey data gathered and proposes recommendations for encouraging opportunities for taking forward effective tenant representation in Scotland.

Overall, the study has identified that the tenants’ movement in Scotland comprises a diverse range of groups in terms of size, function and membership. The wide range of benefits tenants’ groups have brought to their locality and communities, discussed in Chapter 5, illustrates the impact of the collective action of groups and should be acknowledged. The capacity building work of landlords and independent tenants’ organisations working with tenants’ organisations have also to be praised, demonstrated by the near universal establishment of respondent groups’ formal operating structures through elected committees, underpinned by written constitutions. Nevertheless, there still remains much which could be done to further develop the capacity of local groups in ascertaining and representing the views of tenants living in their areas, to review the resourcing of groups, local federations and other independent organisations which seek to develop the representation of tenants’ interests. This report comes at a time when social landlords are
developing tenant participation strategies and SCC calls on such landlords, Communities Scotland and the Scottish Executive to acknowledge and address the issues raised in this report by tenants’ groups.

Profiling Tenants’ Group
The profile and operating methods of participation groups are outlined. Our findings show a wide degree of variation and diversity in the profile of groups in terms of size, age, membership, membership policies and committee size. By comparison, findings also indicate a uniformity of approach in the formal operating structures of groups in terms of written constitutions, committee meetings and selection processes.

Over two-thirds of the groups who participated in the survey represent local authority tenants only, or local authority tenants and home-owners. Only 11% of groups represent housing association tenants only or housing association tenants and owners. The lower proportion of groups operating in registered social landlord (RSL) areas may be as a result of differences in historical approach from local authorities, eg. within most RSLs tenants are represented on management committees. Nevertheless SCC is of the view that having tenant representation on a management committee does not negate the need for further forms of tenant participation, eg. through the establishment of local groups in housing associations’ operating areas. There is scope for examining the development of tenants’ organisations to represent tenants’ interests across the registered social landlord sector.

Recommendation
All registered social landlords should:
• develop and support the establishment of new and existing tenants’ groups as a means of representing tenants’ interests as a key part of the development of their tenant participation strategies.
Good practice in tenant participation in Chapter 1 suggests tenants’ groups should have clear and easy-to-understand constitutions, a definable operating area, identifiable memberships and should function according to agreed standards of governance and equal opportunities. Such measures help to ensure clarity for active tenant members and tenants on accountability; they can also allay landlords’ concerns about groups being unrepresentative.

Our findings show that almost all groups surveyed have a written constitution and committees elected at an AGM, so from the data we can conclude the formal structures are in place. However, in terms of improving the content of written constitutions there is room for development, as from the sample of written constitutions analysed one-third of groups’ constitutions do not contain a clear equal opportunities statement. Furthermore, many groups found the questions on quantifying membership and active membership the most difficult questions to respond to. Only three-quarters of the responding groups are able to provide data on the number of households and under half can provide information on the number of individual members. Responding groups illustrate that groups’ membership is fairly diverse in terms of scale. The number of member households ranges from 10 to 4000 households, around one-fifth of groups have membership consisting of under 50 households. Overall, just over half of groups have membership of less than 150 households.

In terms of geographical size, half of the groups selected the smallest geographical category, a few streets or block of flats, as best describing the area they covered. Our findings also show that groups which require that membership is actioned by the tenant through completing a form and/or paying a fee are more likely to be able to provide estimates of membership numbers.
There is a need to improve the knowledge that tenants’ groups have about identifying their membership, which primarily has a direct knock-on effect on their capacity to represent tenants’ interests.

**Recommendations**

*All tenants’ groups should:*
- identify a definable operating area to enable them and their landlords to have a clear understanding of the interests they are seeking to represent;
- review their procedures, or develop a procedure for activating membership of the group; and
- ensure written constitutions contain clear equal opportunities statements.

**Funding and Resources**

One-fifth of tenants’ groups do not get any financial assistance and levels of current funding for three-fifths of groups is under £500 per year. Nine per cent of groups do not receive any type of financial assistance or non-financial support.

The main type of support received by the majority of groups (78%) is financial assistance through grant. A much lower proportion of groups received other types of support, such as help with administrative tasks (41%), independent information and advice (41%) and access to training (36%). Groups also identified other sources of support, two-fifths receiving support from independent tenant advisory bodies. Local federations provided support to 28% of groups and one in ten groups also received support from national tenants’ organisations.
More than half of tenants groups (56%) feel they do not have sufficient resources to represent tenants’ interest effectively, while 44% are satisfied with the current level. On disaggregating the groups into small and large groups, based on the geographical size, there were differences in attitudes to funding levels. A much bigger majority, two-thirds of the larger groups, feel that they do not have sufficient resources available for identifying tenants’ views compared with under half (44%) of smaller groups with the same opinion.

Groups identified a range of additional types of resources they need to represent tenants’ interests more effectively. The majority of groups would like to access additional financial assistance (66%) and over half of groups (54%) requested further development support, independent information and advice and training. Just under half of groups (50%) also identified research support. In outlining how such additional resources would be used, some groups highlight building the capacity of committee members through funding attendance at conferences, training for members, joining the local federation. Some groups also highlight the need for better equipment to improve communication with tenants through production of better quality newsletters.

SCC believes that in order for tenants’ groups to effectively represent tenants’ views they have to be properly funded and resourced. The majority of groups receive under £500 a year for running costs. This falls far short of what is required for effective tenant representation.

**Recommendations**

*All social landlords in drawing up their tenant participation strategies to:*

- radically rethink how tenants’ groups are resourced.
- offer support packages to match good practice guidelines and address the needs of respondent tenants’ groups identified by the study, including the call for development support, access to independent information and advice and training in addition to direct financial support.
The study considered membership of local federations. Forty-six groups (52%) are members of a local federation. Analysis of the data by size of group shows that larger tenants’ groups (69%) are much more likely to be members of a local federation. Tenants’ groups in membership of local federations appear to be accessing a range of benefits with information and advice services featuring more prominently.

Effective representation of the tenant interest at the landlord-wide and national level should be adequately resourced. There is scope for raising the awareness among groups about the areas covered by the existing local federations. There is also scope for enhancing the role of federations as vehicles that local groups can use to influence housing policy.

Although this study examines the extent to which local groups call upon independent capacity building groups such as TPAS and TIS and the representative group Scottish Tenants Organisation (STO), the study does not extend to a detailed analysis of the roles these organisations play in maximising tenant representation. However, our findings demonstrate the impact of local federations in terms of influencing services and, furthermore, over 40% of groups identified the need for additional assistance from capacity building groups.

Under existing arrangements capacity building organisations, providing services to tenants’ organisations such as TPAS, TIS and TIGHRA are voluntary organisations which derive their funding from a mix of sources, including membership subscriptions, income generation from commissioned research and development projects and from the Scottish Executive. The STO is also a membership organisation which has received funding from the Scottish Executive and is midway through implementing a development plan 2002/3. Currently the majority of STO members are drawn from local federations.
Types of Activity

At the local level
Using a set of categories adapted from the concept of the ‘ladder of participation’, discussed in Chapter 1, groups identified activities reflecting what they do at a local level. Our findings show that large proportions of groups are involved in contacting councillors, housing association committee members and responding to local consultations. As we climb the ladder towards the more participative processes (such as negotiating with the landlord on rents and involvement in decision-making processes), the number of groups involved decreases. For example, four-fifths of groups contact councillors and housing association committee members and over three-quarters of groups respond to consultations on local housing policy issues, whereas under half of groups consider themselves to be involved in the landlord’s decision-making process.

Recommendations

*All social landlords should:*
- If not presently supporting local federations review this position in consultation with tenants and tenants’ groups.

*Communities Scotland should:*
- fund research on the role and impact of local housing federations on maximising the effectiveness of tenant representation and influencing service delivery.

*The Scottish Executive should:*
- continue to support the further development of landlord-wide and nationwide organisations to enable them to build the capacity of tenants’ groups and local federations and to complement work carried out by local tenants’ groups.
Analysis of the data by operational size of groups indicates the same pattern with most involved in activities at the foot of the ladder. Again as we climb the ladder towards the more participative processes, the number of groups involved decreases. Greater proportions of large groups (in terms of area of operation) are involved across all activities. For example, almost all large groups (94%) are involved with contacting councillors and housing association committee members compared to 76% of smaller groups. Two-fifths of smaller tenants’ groups are involved in campaigning on wider local issues compared to almost three-quarters of large groups.

The findings suggest that there is still some way to go to enable more groups to operate effectively and represent tenants’ interests on the higher rungs of the ladder of participation.

**Recommendations**

_**All social landlords should:**_
- assess current practice and mechanisms for ensuring groups representing tenants’ interests are involved at all levels of activity, including decision-making.

_**All tenants’ groups should:**_
- review the range of activities they undertake. Where a group does not have the capacity to be involved in higher level types of activity, it should try to ensure that tenants’ interests are being represented by another means, eg. through a local federation.

**At the national level**

Our findings show that many groups make use of potential opportunities to represent tenants’ interests at a national level. Over half of the groups have contacted Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and similar proportions of groups contact MPs. Only one-fifth of groups have contacted Scottish Executive officials. A smaller proportion of groups are involved in lobbying central government institutions, eg. 17% of groups have submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament.
An analysis was undertaken comparing the functions of groups that stated they represent tenants only, with groups that represent tenants and homeowners. There are some key differences: in particular, larger proportions of groups that represent tenants and home-owners are more likely to be involved in activities at a national level such as lobbying central government institutions and contacting parliamentarians; one-quarter of these groups have petitioned the Scottish Parliament.

**Identifying Tenants’ Views**

Tenants’ groups appear to have firm views on what methods are effective on ascertaining tenants’ views. The most effective method identified by almost three-quarters of groups is personal contact with tenants. One-quarter of groups view surveys as a very effective/effective method of gathering views. Other methods identified by groups are, in the main, ways of informing tenants about what is going on and what groups are doing.

Contact through whole membership meetings appears to be the main method by which committee members seek tenants’ views. The success of this method is clearly influenced by turnout. Surveys are by far the least used method to gather information on the views of tenants with only 23% of groups using this method.

A tenant’s group, which is actively representing tenants’ interests, is likely to talk and listen to tenants, distribute relevant information (eg. newsletters and leaflets) and hold open meetings. Groups cannot rely on public meetings alone but have to use a variety of methods to provide information, gather views and feedback to tenants on a continuous basis. Many of the tenants’ organisations surveyed could do more to ascertain the views of the people they seek to represent. This must be adequately supported through opportunities for training for committee members, and the provision of adequate resources to maximise their effectiveness.
Spheres of Influence and Tenants’ Groups’ Impact

Unsurprisingly, nine out of ten groups view influencing local housing issues as very important/important. However, a significant majority, two-thirds of groups, feel it is very important/important to influence national issues.

The majority of groups do think it is important to influence local and national housing issues; however, the extent to which they feel they can genuinely influence housing services is greater within their own operating area. The findings show that the size of groups impacts on the extent of their perceived levels of influence over service delivery.

Less than one-fifth of groups feel that they have a lot of influence in affecting the delivery of housing services in their own operating area and the wider landlord area. Groups perceived level of influence is lower within a landlord-wide basis than within groups’ own area. For example, 25% of groups feel they have not a lot/no influence on housing in their groups’ area, this increases to 38% of groups at the landlord-wide area.

Recommendations

*All tenants’ groups should:*

- review how they gather tenants’ views and how they use the information to represent tenants’ interests at local and national levels. As part of the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Scottish Executive should fund groups to review how they gather tenants’ views. This could be facilitated by independent tenants’ advice organisations.

*Communities Scotland should:*

- establish a tenant-led research budget to enable groups and federations to develop skills, use research tools to enhance the collation of tenants’ views and provide an evidence base for promoting tenants’ interests.
Impact of local federations

Our study noted that 71% of groups who are members of a local federation see the federation as a vehicle for influencing local issues and 55% see it as a means to influence national issues. Three-quarters of this sub-group feel they have a lot/some influence on the delivery of housing services at the landlord area, a higher proportion than the overall dataset. Therefore our study indicates that federations play an important role in supporting local groups’ influence on service delivery.

Recommendation

All tenants’ groups to:
• make full use of federations where they are operating as a means of promoting tenants’ interest at the landlord and national level.

Some groups feel that their ability and scope to influence housing services is limited in a landlord-wide setting, nevertheless, the benefits of the collective action, on the part of tenants’ groups, are clearly illustrated by examples given. Key themes identified were:

• building and enhancing a sense of community
• better information and support for tenants
• organising social events
• developing a better and closer working relationship with the landlord
• improving repairs and maintenance of properties
• improving community safety
• negotiating on behalf of tenants during process of stock transfer
• involvement in regeneration—improvements to properties and surrounding area
• better representation of tenants’ interests.
Initial Response to the New Legislative Framework

There is a high level of awareness about the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Nine out of ten groups state that they are aware of such provisions.

Of the tenants’ groups who state that they are aware of the legislation, 89% received information about the new legislation directly from landlords. A slightly lower proportion of these groups (84%) report that landlords have consulted with them about the new provisions.

Our findings show that there was a mixed response to the tenant participation provisions of the legislation. 61% think it will have a positive impact, 14% think the impact will be negative and the remainder 25% think it will have no impact at all. We followed up this question by asking groups whether or not they intend to register with landlords under the terms of the legislation. Again, of those who are aware of the legislation, 69% intend to seek registration, 25% are unsure and 6% do not intend to register. There were some interesting variations in the survey responses when disaggregated by group size. Overall larger groups appear more positive to the impact on the group of the new legislation and surer of their intentions to register.

Discussion of New Legislative Provisions

Only half of groups have discussed the potential impact of the new legal framework within the committee, and a much smaller proportion (29%) have discussed it more widely with their membership; over ten percent of groups have not discussed it at all.

Therefore, current levels of awareness of the new legal framework are much higher than the levels of discussion about the impact on groups. However these results should not be overstated given the timing of the study, prior to the introduction of the new provisions, and the findings are very much a picture of a point in time. It is hoped that groups may now have had such an opportunity to discuss issues.
As this is a baseline study of tenants’ organisations it paves the way for a much wider study of tenant participation in Scotland that encompasses the impact of the Act on tenants’ organisations, and the role and impact of local tenants’ federations and nationwide capacity building and representative organisations.

**Recommendation**

All tenants’ groups and landlords should:
- continue to publicise the implications of the tenant participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as a platform to develop enhanced participative structures.

**Recommendation**

Communities Scotland should:
- fund a wider study of tenant participation and tenants’ organisations in Scotland.

The Scottish Consumer Council hopes that this study has provided baseline information on tenants’ organisations which will be used in future research to chart the impact on tenants’ groups of the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The analysis provided here together with the recommendations seek to increase the understanding of how tenants’ groups in Scotland operate and how the representation of tenants’ interests in the socially rented sector can be strengthened.
Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire

Scottish Consumer Council
Making all consumers matter

To: All Tenants’ Organisations in Scotland
August 2002

Dear Secretary

Study of Tenants’ Organisations

Later this year sees the introduction of a new legal framework for tenant participation and tenants’ groups in Scotland. As part of its annual research programme the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) is carrying out a study of tenants’ organisations in Scotland.

The SCC is interested in how tenants’ organisations identify the views of tenants in their area and what types of resources and support are available to them to help them to do this effectively. The SCC hopes that through better understanding of the operation of tenants’ groups, representation can be strengthened.

We would be very grateful if your group could spare some time to discuss and complete this questionnaire. Alternatively if this is not possible could you complete it on behalf of your group. All questionnaires will be treated in the strictest confidence. Contact details will only be used by the SCC if you would like to receive feedback information about the findings of the study. If you have any queries about the questionnaire please contact Morag Brown (0141 227 6450) or Andrew Pulford (0141 227 6455).

Please return the questionnaire with any supporting documents in the freepost envelope provided, or send to:

Scottish Consumer Council
Dept MB
Freepost GW 5277
Glasgow G1 3BR

Responses will be required by Friday 27th September 2002. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Martyn Evans
DIRECTOR
Section 1: About your organisation

Membership
1. Who does your organisation represent? (please ✓ all appropriate boxes)
   - Local Authority tenants
   - Housing Association tenants
   - Private rented tenants
   - Housing co-operative tenants
   - Mutual tenants
   - Others (please specify)

2. How many household and individual members do you have?
   - Households
   - Individuals

3. How do households/individuals become members? (please ✓)
   - Automatically members
   - On completion of an application form
   - Payment of a joining fee
   - No formal membership structure
   - Other (please specify)

4. Broadly how many households/individuals take an active part in the organisation? (e.g. attending meetings, holding committee position)

5. Which of the following best describes the area your organisation covers? (please ✓)
   - A few streets or block(s) of flats
   - An estate
   - A village/town
   - A housing association area (please specify)
   - A local authority area (please specify)
   - Other (please specify)

6. Roughly how many households in your area are members of your organisation? (please ✓)
   - Up to a quarter
   - Over a quarter and up to half
   - Over a half and up to three quarters
   - More than three quarters
   - Other (please specify)
Structure of your organisation

7. When was your organisation set up? .................................................................

8. Does your organisation have a written constitution? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □

If YES, please enclose a copy of your constitution when returning this questionnaire which we may use to help us analyse your response.

9. Does your organisation have a committee? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □  (if NO then please go to question 10)

(a) Are there a maximum number of places on your committee, and if so how many?
   Yes □ there are ................. number of places
   No □ there is no maximum number of places

10. Does your committee hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM)? (please ✓)
    Yes □
    No □

If YES please enter date of last meeting .............................................................

11. Apart from the AGM how often does your committee meet?
    (please ✓)
    Every 6 months □
    Every 3 months □
    Monthly □
    Fortnightly □
    Weekly □
    Other (please specify) .................................................................

12. How often do you hold meetings open to the whole membership?
    (please ✓)
    Once a year □
    Between twice and four times a year □
    Five or more times a year □
    Other (please specify) .................................................................

Selection of Committee Members

13. How are committee members selected? (please ✓)
    Through annual elections at the AGM □
    Through elections at other times □
    Through co-options between elections □
    Other (please specify) ................................................................. 3
14. How did you publicise your last committee elections, or if part of AGM, how did you publicise this?
- Leaflets
- Mailshot to members
- Newsletters
- Posters

Other (please specify)

Section 2: Working with landlords and other organisations

15. Please tick the statements which reflect what your organisation does at a local level.
- We contact councillors/housing association committees, members regularly
- We organise social events in the local area
- We respond to consultations on local housing policy issues
- We campaign on wider local area issues (e.g. regeneration, transport)
- We go on area walkabouts with landlord housing staff
- We negotiate with the landlord on estate management issues: repairs, rents, allocations, community safety issues
- We take part in best value service reviews/performance standards reviews
- We are involved in the landlord’s decision-making process

Other (please specify)

16. Please tick the statements which reflect what your organisation does at a national level.
- We have lobbied the Houses of Parliament
- We have lobbied the Scottish Parliament
- We petition the Scottish Parliament
- We contact MPs
- We contact MSPs
- We contact Scottish Executive Civil Servants

Other (please specify)

17. On a scale on 1 to 5 how would you rate the importance of influencing:

(please circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Housing Issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Housing Issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. To what extent do you feel you have an opportunity to genuinely influence the delivery of
housing services in the area covered by your organisation? (please ✓)
   A lot of influence □
   Some influence □
   Not a lot of influence □
   No influence □

19. In what extent do you feel you have an opportunity to genuinely influence the delivery of
housing services in your landlord area? (please ✓)
   A lot of influence □
   Some influence □
   Not a lot of influence □
   No influence □

20. Is there a tenants' federation in your area? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □
   Don't know □
   (if NO - please go to Section 3)

(a) Is your organisation a member of the federation? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □

(b) Does your organisation receive any of the benefits from federation membership? (Please circle)
   Information YES/ NO
   Advice and support YES/ NO
   Use as vehicle to influence area wide housing policies YES/ NO
   Use as vehicle to influence national housing policies YES/ NO
   Other benefits (please specify) .................................................................

Section 3: Current awareness of new legislation

21. Is your organisation aware of the sections on tenant participation in the Housing (Scotland)
    Act 2001? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □
   (if NO - please go to Section 4)

22. Have you received information from your landlord about the tenant participation sections of
    the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □

23. Have you been consulted by your landlord about the tenant participation sections of the Housing
    (Scotland) Act 2001? (please ✓)
   Yes □
   No □
24. Have you discussed the implications of tenant participation sections of the new legislation on your organisation? (Please ✓)
   At committee level  
   With the wider membership  
   No discussion

25. What kind of impact do you think it will have on your organisation?
   Positive  
   Negative  
   None

26. Does your organisation intend to seek registration with the landlord?
   Yes  
   No  
   Don’t Know

Section 4: Identifying Tenants’ Views

27. How does your organisation seek tenants’ views? (please ✓ all appropriate boxes)
   Through Committee meetings
   Through whole membership meetings
   Personal contact
   Surveys
   Other means (please specify)

28. Of these methods, what are the most effective as ways of identifying tenants’ views.
   (please circle methods whether your organisation uses them or not)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through committee meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through whole membership meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other means (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 5: Resources and Information Sources

29. What types of assistance does your organisation currently receive? (please ✓ all appropriate boxes)
   Financial assistance
   Administrative support
   Development support
   Independent information and advice
   Training
   Other (please specify)
(a) If you receive financial assistance, how much financial assistance did your organisation receive in 2001/2?

£ ........................................

30. Do you receive assistance from anybody else to represent tenants’ views?  
(please ✔ all appropriate boxes)

- Landlord
- Federation
- Independent Tenant Advisory Bodies (e.g. TIS, TPAS)
- National Tenants’ Organisations (STO)
- Other (please specify) ........................................

31. Do you feel your organisation has enough resources available for identifying tenants’ views?  
Yes ☐ (if YES then please go to question 32)
No ☐

(a) What additional sort of assistance would your organisation need?  
(please ✔ all appropriate boxes)

- Financial assistance
- Administrative support
- Development support
- Independent information and advice
- Access to research support
- Training
- Other (please specify) ........................................

32. If you had additional resources what ways of working or other activities would your organisation like to be involved in?

..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................

Section 6: Success Stories

33. What benefits do you think your organisation has brought to the tenants in your area?
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................

..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................
....................................................................................
34. Can you give examples of some specific issues, in which your organisations’ activities and involvement have made a difference?

Section 7: Additional Information

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please use the space below to tell us about any further aspects of your organisation not covered in the questionnaire.

Please the return the questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided, or to:

Scottish Consumer Council
Dept M9
Freepost GW 5277
Glasgow
G1 3BR

Section 8: Name of organisation

Name of organisation: ..............................................................

Contact address: ................................................................

Postcode: .............................................................................

Main Landlord: .....................................................................

Please note all questionnaires will be used for research purposes only and treated in the strictest confidence. Contact address details have been requested to enable an analysis of the geographical distribution of the responses and will only be used if you would like to receive feedback information about the findings of the study.

Please tick the box if you would like to receive information about the study findings. ☐
Pilot Phase of Project
In the development phase of the research study a pilot survey was conducted during December 2001. Surveys were distributed to 14 members of the Edinburgh Tenants Federation for completion. Respondents were also asked to comment on the content and structure of the questionnaire. The pilot achieved a very low response rate and it was felt that in light of this, and as a result of staff changes, that the survey should be redesigned with input from Tenants Information Service (TIS), Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Scottish Executive.

Questionnaire Development
The survey method used was a self-completion postal questionnaire. A series of meetings was undertaken over the summer months of 2002 with representatives from TIS, TPAS, Scottish Executive Development Department Housing Division and the Scottish Tenants Organisation (STO) to inform the development of the questionnaire content and format.

Questionnaire Distribution
One of the main challenges faced by the SCC in the planning stages of this research project was how best to distribute the survey. There is no single comprehensive database or access point for active tenants’ groups in Scotland. Another obstacle is that organisations who do have databases of tenants’ organisations are usually unable to disclose the contact details for data protection reasons.

SCC wanted to include as many organisations as possible in the survey and considered several methods of dissemination including using the database of tenants’ groups recently compiled by Positive Action in Housing, and distributing the questionnaire via tenant participation officers in the 32 local authorities in Scotland. SCC contacted the organisations which provide independent advice and support to tenants’ groups, TPAS and TIS to seek advice on the distribution of the survey.
After discussions with TIS and TPAS, both organisations agreed to distribute the questionnaire to their member groups via one of their regular mailings. This was viewed to be the method which would reach the greatest number of tenants’ associations; however, we identified three issues: some groups may no longer be active; the crossover of membership between the two groups, and the exclusion of groups which were not members of either TIS or TPAS. There was little we could do regarding the crossover of membership due to time and resource restrictions. To combat the problem of groups being excluded on the basis of not being members of TIS or TPAS we contacted tenants’ federations throughout Scotland asking either that they provide us with member contact details or distribute our survey to their member groups.

SCC sent out some questionnaires directly based on the information received from federations. The following groups were sent surveys for dissemination to groups:

- Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)
- Tenants Information Service (TIS)
- Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (FFOTRA)
- Tenant Involvement in the Islands, Grampian, Highland and Rural Areas (TIGHRA)
- Aberdeen City Council

The questionnaire, along with a covering letter from the Director of the Scottish Consumer Council outlining the aims of the study, was distributed over a period of weeks in August 2002. Groups were asked if possible to discuss and complete the questionnaire as a group and if this was not possible for the secretary to complete the survey on behalf of the group. Responses were requested by 27 September 2002. A reminder letter was sent out via the same distribution method in mid-September. To enable the inclusion of further responses in the final analysis, the closing date was extended to the 4 October 2002.
Data Analysis

Data entry and data analysis were undertaken using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) software package.

Note on Tabular Information

Within the tables figures are expressed in percentage terms. Where they do not sum to 100%, this will be due to either rounding, multiple response answers or a number of not stated answers.