

about us

About us.
How we are run.
How to get involved.

Introduction

East Lothian Housing Association (ELHA) was founded in 1988 with the aim of providing good quality affordable housing within East Lothian. All of our properties are in East Lothian.

We are a charity and do not operate to make a profit. While our early work was in building new homes for rent, we now own and manage a wide variety of housing:

- Ex Scottish Homes houses acquired in 1996 (LSVT)
- Over 500 properties built by ELHA (Own Build)
- Sheltered and Amenity properties for older people
- Shared Ownership and Low Cost Home Ownership properties
- Workshop Homes

Our mission statement is 'to promote a balanced community by providing locally managed quality homes and services which meet the needs and aspirations of local people'.

How to become a member

We are always keen to encourage our tenants and anyone with an interest in housing to become a member of the Association.

For a £1.00 fee you can become a member of ELHA for life. All you have to do is fill in a membership form which you will receive at your settling in visit soon after you become a tenant. Membership gives you the right to:

- Vote for who is on our Management Committee
- Stand for election yourself
- Attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Receive our Annual Report



Who runs the Association

We are controlled by a Management Committee made up of voluntary, unpaid members who are elected at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Management Committee oversee the running of the organisation and are responsible for making decisions on issues such as housing policy and expenditure. Membership of the Management Committee is not restricted to tenants of the Association but is open to anyone with an interest in housing in East Lothian.

Our Management Committee is made up of up to 15 people elected by our members. Management Committee members are not paid and give their time and commitment freely to the Association.

The Management Committee controls ELHA's business by:

- Approving the policies to be followed by staff
- Ensuring staff carry out all legal and financial responsibilities of the Association
- Give authority to staff to carry out the decisions of the Management Committee and attend to the day to day business.

As ELHA is a fairly large organisation to run, the Management Committee also has the following two Sub-Committees:

- Housing & Property Services - meet every three months to deal with issues such as allocations, rent arrears, housing policies, repairs, maintenance and new housing development
- Finance & Audit - meet every three months and deals with accounts and budgets



What is expected of Management Committee Members?

Management Committee members do not have to be professional people, but they must have a keen interest in housing and have a commitment to ELHA.

Each Management Committee member will serve on the Management Committee for three years, when they have to stand for re-election at the AGM. One third of the Management Committee stands down each year to allow new members to join. If no new members wish to join, the existing Management Committee members may be re-elected.

It is vital that Management Committee members understand how we work and what the key housing issues are. We provide training and support to

make sure that Management Committee members have the skills needed to run ELHA, and we pay them out of pocket expenses for attending meetings and seminars.

Who controls the Management Committee?

The Management Committee is responsible to our members. This means that if members are unhappy about how ELHA is being run they can elect a new Management Committee at the AGM.

Management Committee members must work within the rules of the Association and the law. They are also accountable to The Scottish Housing Regulator, a government housing agency that monitors the work of all Housing Associations in Scotland.



Information available to you

We are committed to being open in everything that we do. We will make non-confidential information, including copies of our policies, widely available and will continue to regularly issue information about our work to tenants, members and other interested parties.

How to get involved

You have a legal right to be involved and consulted about how we operate and the decisions we make: don't let it go to waste!

Tenant Participation is about tenants taking part in the decision making process, influencing decisions about housing policies, housing conditions and housing related services. Participation or "taking part" can mean different things to different people. It can range from getting information that is well presented and easily understood to becoming a

member of the Management Committee, involved in the running of the Association.

We support and actively encourage tenants taking part. Our Housing Officers and our Customer Information Officer work to ensure that any tenant who wishes to become involved in Tenant Participation can do so. We also have a commitment from all staff and Management Committee members towards Tenant Participation in all areas of our work.

We give you the opportunity to get involved in the management of your home in a number of ways, and at different levels, so you can be as involved as much or as little you want to be. The choice is yours.

What you can do

- Become a share member of the Association for £1.00
- Join our Management Committee
- Form a tenant or resident organisation in your area



- Read our leaflets and newsletter articles, and return the comments cards
- Complete and return one of our questionnaires or surveys
- Let our Customer Information Officer or your Housing Officer know that you would like to be involved and what subjects interest you
- Join our Tenant Participation Working Group
- Let us have your comments, suggestions and complaints
- Leaflets giving information about a service
- E-mail (if you provide us with an e-mail address)
- Telephone
- Text messages
- On our website

Satisfaction Surveys

We recognise that the best way to identify our strengths and weaknesses and make improvements is to ask our customers. We carry out a range of satisfaction surveys throughout the year to find out how well our customers think we are doing in various key areas of our service. These surveys may be on-line or postal questionnaires, telephone interviews or home visits. We hold a prize draw every month for all repair survey forms returned.

Every four years we carry out a comprehensive tenant survey using an independent researcher.

Some examples of how we will communicate with and/or consult with you are:

- Letters in Plain English (or in large print, on CD or a format to suit you, if required)
- Questionnaires to find out what you think about a particular subject
- Satisfaction surveys
- Meetings on specific subjects
- Newsletters



Equal Opportunities

We have clear policies and procedures which promote equal opportunities and respect the needs of everyone in our community.

Our policies cover opportunities for tenants to get involved in our work and the recruitment, employment and training of all staff.

We will act swiftly and firmly against any form of discrimination, for example on the grounds of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, colour, race or ethnic origin. Same sex couples have the same rights as heterosexual couples.