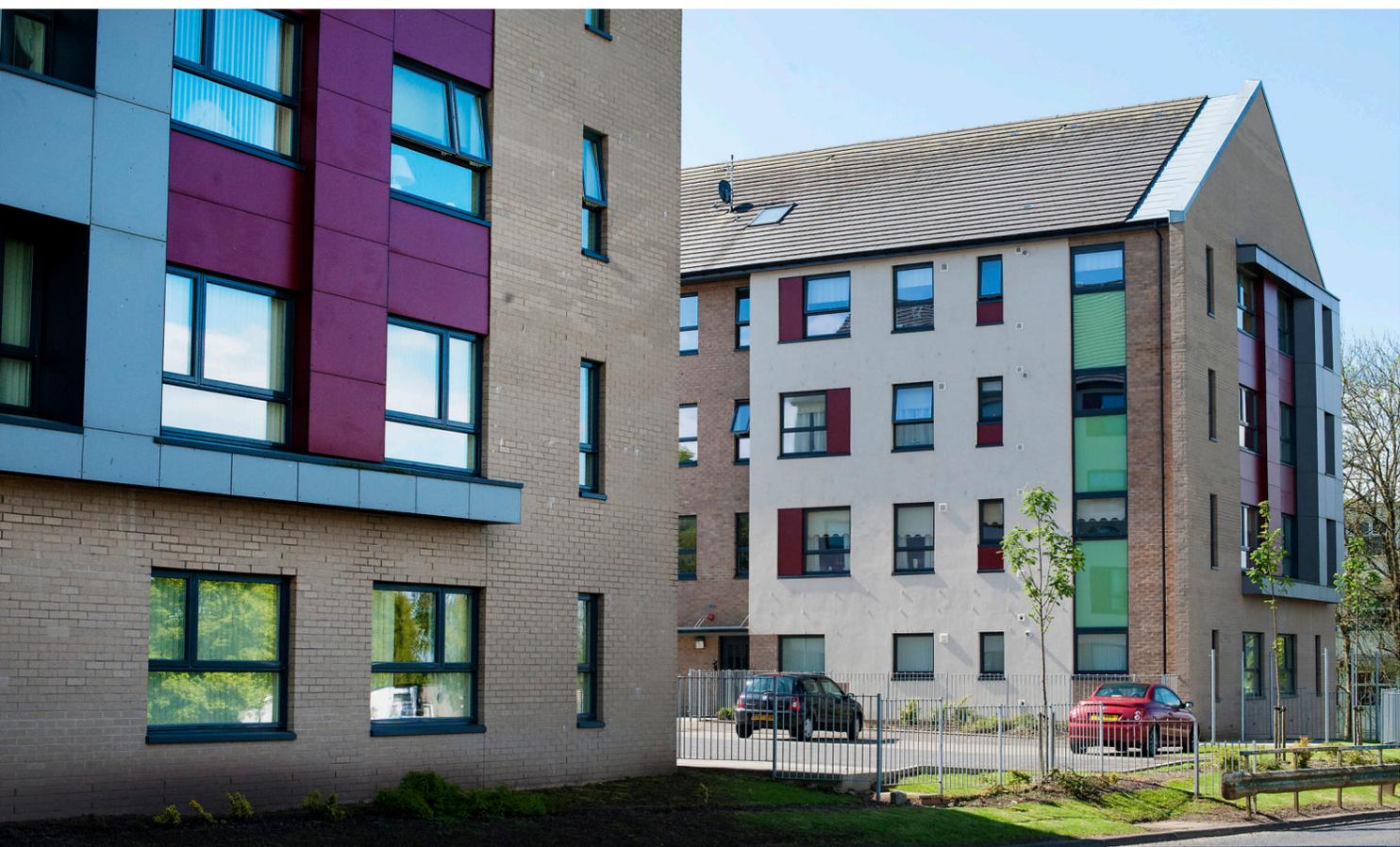


TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2019 – 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Sanctuary Scotland is a registered social landlord. We aim to provide affordable housing and to make our communities better. We operate on a 'not-for-profit' basis which means any extra money made is used to improve our homes and services. We are run by a governing body, appointed by the Sanctuary Group Board (in accordance with the rules of Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association), which employs staff to manage our operations.
- 1.2 This document outlines our approach to tenant participation in Scotland until 2022. We want our tenants to know about our work and to be able to influence decisions that affect how their homes are managed. This document will be used alongside the Sanctuary Group Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Strategy (2019).
- 1.3 This strategy sets out how we plan to engage with tenants (including residents and other service users) to make a positive impact in our neighbourhoods.

2. THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

- 2.1 The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into effect on 1 April 2012. The Charter requires landlords to consult with tenants and other service users. The purpose of this consultation is to help people understand how their landlord is performing and to help them hold their landlord to account.
- 2.2 To get people involved a mix of opportunities for involvement must be developed. The end result should help us improve our performance and see our services shaped by those who use them. The Charter replaces Performance Standards set out in the guidance issued under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 but does not replace its legal duties.
- 2.3 The Charter sets out standards and outcomes for all social landlords to achieve:
 - Better housing management through improved service delivery and increased value for money.
 - Involved tenants and governing body members more able to make decisions.
 - More choice and power for tenants as well as personal development.
 - Greater tenant satisfaction with the service and higher levels of job satisfaction for staff.
 - Community development and the reduction of barriers with tenants.
 - Improved quality of life for people in our neighbourhoods as the task of managing homes becomes easier.
- 2.4 Tenant participation is a two-way process. It involves the sharing of information, ideas and power to improve the standard of our housing conditions and services. Tenant participation sees tenants taking part in decision-making processes to influence decisions about:
 - Housing Policies.
 - Housing Conditions.
 - Housing and Related Services.
- 2.5 Our model includes the creation of a national scrutiny panel. Our 'National Review Panel' will be asked to examine our performance and services. Members will be given performance information and comparative data to help them ask informed questions about our business and about how our decisions are made.
- 2.6 The Scottish Housing Regulator monitors, assesses and reports how well landlords achieve the outcomes. The results are reported each year within an Annual Report on the Charter (ARC), published on the Regulator's website.



3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 Sanctuary Scotland subscribes to Sanctuary Group's equality scheme, 'Fairness for All'.
- 3.2 We are committed to providing information and services equally, without discrimination. We aim to meet the needs of all tenants and neighbourhoods.
- 3.3 We are committed to encouraging all tenants to participate. We will offer information in a range of formats and provide these on request, for example we can provide documents:
- In large print for those with visual impairment or deteriorating eyesight.
 - On tape for those who are unable to read print.
 - In Braille for those who prefer this means of communication.
 - Translated into another language.
 - In any other feasible format that tenants may find helpful.
- 3.4 Tenants should not be discouraged from attending a meeting of the Association. This includes but is not restricted to our AGM, review panel or focus groups. Where required transport will be provided for tenants with mobility problems. Expenses can be paid to cover the cost of child-minding and other caring responsibilities. If we are given enough notice we can arrange for a sign or language interpreter to attend a meeting. To give staff sufficient time to arrange transport and to locate a suitably qualified person, we would ask for as much prior notice as possible.
- 3.5 We strive to deliver fair and equitable services. We will respond to people's different needs regardless of their age, sex, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality), disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment, gender identity and gender expression.

4. CONSULTATION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

- 4.1 Tenant participation is a key aspect of how we operate.
- 4.2 We endorse the 10 widely accepted principles of tenant participation:
- There must be trust between Sanctuary Scotland and our tenants.
 - Participation is a continuous process of sharing information, ideas and power
 - All parties must be able to contribute to the agenda.
 - Decision-making should be open, clear and accountable.
 - We will allow enough time for all views to be properly considered.
 - We will ensure that tenants' groups have an opportunity to provide unbiased views, independent from those of Sanctuary Scotland.
 - We will aim to develop good working relationships, which will change as tenants requirements change.
 - We will provide resources for training, support and servicing of the groups.
 - Our strategy will be tailored to suit the individual needs of our communities.
 - Our strategy will be inclusive of all tenants living within our communities and, in particular, it will observe the principles of equal opportunities.
- 4.3 We recognise we need to make tenant information and participation better to improve our service to tenants. The methods used to achieve this must be approved by tenants and agreed in consultation with us.
- 4.4 Our Code of Conduct sets out the working relationship between Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs'), staff and governing body members. Individual tenants and officers from Sanctuary Scotland are encouraged to sign the Code of Conduct.
- 4.5 Sanctuary Scotland is involved with tenants through our focus groups and other groups which meet regularly. These groups are included in the model below:

National Review Panel

Joining our National Review Panel enables tenants to understand and challenge our performance. Support and training will show members how to examine performance information, understand how we are regulated and financed, and guide members on what questions to ask. The National Review Panel is independent of our governance and management structures and can formally suggest service improvements.

Becoming a tenant member of an Area Committee

Area Committees look at the delivery and performance of our operations on behalf of the Board of Management.

Registered Tenants Organisations/Factored Owners Groups

Our tenants and the factored owners we serve can respectively participate through these channels.

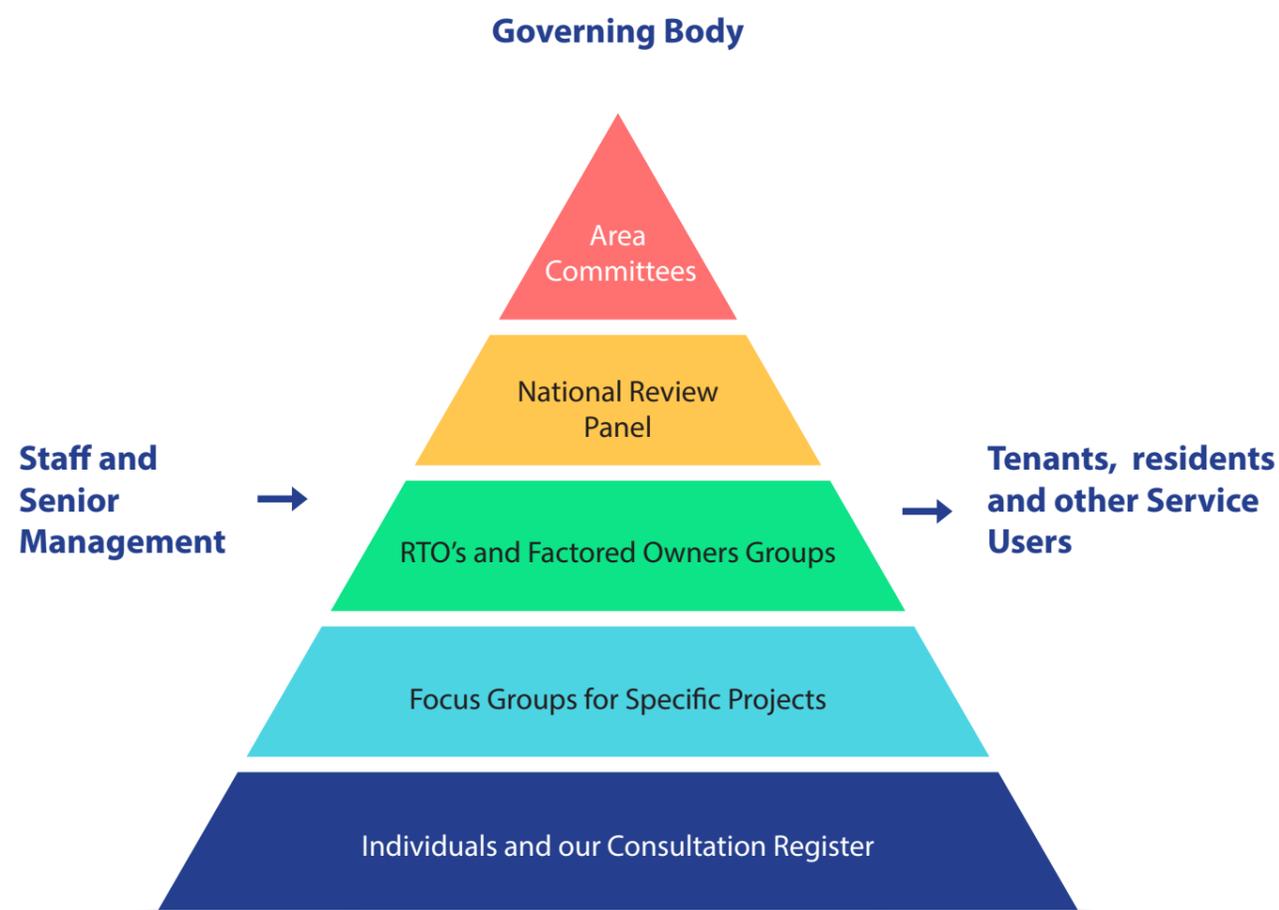
Focus Groups

Set up to consult on specific projects, such as re-investment works.

Individuals and our Consultation Register

To assist with exercises including scheme gradings, estate walkabouts, mystery shopping, focus groups and customer journey mapping.

Our model for consultation is detailed below :



- 4.6 We will continue to consult using:
- Letters and newsletters.
 - Questionnaires and satisfaction surveys.
 - Factored owner satisfaction surveys.
 - Our website.
 - Public meetings / Open days.
 - Displays and exhibitions.

4.7 Our review panel will agree the ways in which information is passed to tenants, and agree how the views of tenants are gathered for consideration when reviewing service standards and policies. The methods used will often depend on what is being reviewed. For example, for each annual rent increase consultation we write individually to all tenants, provide information notices and arrange meetings in order to gather feedback.

4.8 We provide information to tenants using the following methods, in line with tenant preferences:

The Tenants' Handbook

The Tenants' Handbook provides information on repairs and maintenance, termination of tenancy, neighbour complaints and other relevant topics (available on the Sanctuary Scotland website <https://www.sanctuary-scotland.co.uk/information-for-residents>).

The magazine, 'Voice'

A hard copy of the magazine is sent by post to all of our tenants and factored owners. Copies are also available to tenants, housing list applicants and visitors to our offices. Recent versions of the magazine can also be accessed on the Sanctuary Scotland website.

Letters

We write to tenants before major repairs or improvement works are carried out on their homes. The letter will state the work involved, contractor's details, proposed timescale, likely level of disturbance and any compensation due.

Information leaflets and bulletins

We regularly review the information displayed in our office receptions. Leaflets available may cover The Scottish Secure Tenancy, Right to Compensation for Improvements, Right to Repair, and Money Advice.

We prepare and make available leaflets on other issues when the need arises.

Public meetings

Where major changes affecting many tenants need discussed and as many views as possible are sought. Meetings are held at convenient times and locations with information distributed in good time.

Questionnaires and surveys

Sanctuary or a third party carry out a rolling survey of tenant satisfaction each year.

Questionnaires / surveys are carried out on completion of programmes of works to gauge tenant satisfaction with the works and the contractor.

Customer satisfaction surveys are also carried out by our reactive maintenance contractor.

Tenant views are recorded and taken into account when improving service delivery.

Website

The content of our website is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

4.9 Issues that tenants will be informed and consulted on: Sanctuary Scotland will provide tenants with the information they need.

We provide all tenants with:

- A tenancy agreement.
- Details of our complaints policy.
- Policies in relation to housing management, repairs or maintenance where a proposal, if implemented, is likely to significantly affect the tenant.
- Our Annual Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC) (on our website).

4.10 We provide tenants with the following information on request:

- Tenants Handbook.
- The terms of tenancy.
- Our policy on rent setting and service.
- How to apply for a house.
- Lettings policy (also available on our website).
- Repairs and maintenance policy.
- Tenant participation strategy.
- How we take decisions about housing management and services.

- Any policy changes likely to affect tenants including housing management, repairs and maintenance.
- Any proposals for changes to rent and service charges.
- Decisions about the information to be provided relating to standards of housing management and performance.
- Business Information report and performance data.

4.11 We are legally bound under Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to consult annually on our proposed rent increase. The consultation process begins several months before any increase takes effect, enabling all responses to be taken into account.

4.12 Service user consultation
Sanctuary Scotland provides a range of services to householders who are not our tenants. We provide information on our factoring service and maintenance contracts to owners who receive a service from us. Owners who do not receive a service from us (i.e. owners of terraced houses and garages) may receive information on local Sanctuary projects.

We will consult with tenants, RTOs and stakeholders to ensure our consultation methods meet their needs. Time is built into the consultation process to allow consideration of the issues before feedback is requested.



5. CONSULTATION REGISTER

5.1 Joining a tenants group does not suit all tenants. A consultation register has been developed for tenants who want to be consulted on issues that may affect them but do not wish to join an RTO. The Consultation Register is a list of tenants who are happy to be asked their views by letter or questionnaire, or who wish to be kept informed about our Focus Groups.

5.2 Tenants can write, email, visit our offices or phone us to ask us to include them on our consultation register.

5.3.1 We actively encourage the use of this service through:

- Our magazine, 'Voice'.
- Housing Officer visits.
- Personal letters.

5.3.2 Staff are briefed on our consultation register at team meetings.

5.3.3 Draft policies are available to interested parties on request.

6. REGISTERED TENANT ORGANISATIONS

6.1 We have active Registered Tenants Organisations in our areas of operation.

6.2 We can provide financial and administrative support to tenants and residents groups. Allowances include start up grants, annual grants and special grants for items such as lap tops. Allowances are reviewed annually.

6.3 Tenants and residents who set up their own tenant association may opt to register with us. Those who register with us are given the legal status of a Registered Tenants' Organisation. RTOs are legally entitled to be consulted over decisions about possible changes to housing conditions, policy and housing related services.

6.4 The legislation's requirements include having:

- a publicly available written constitution.
- a managing committee with elected office bearers and minuted meetings.
- a defined geographic area, appropriate accounting records, and the ability to demonstrate that it is representative of the tenants within its area.

More detailed information on RTO registration is available on request.

6.5 Sanctuary Scotland is fully supportive of the principles of RTOs. We will work to develop an effective RTO framework which also recognises the importance of consultation with individuals.

6.6 We will establish and maintain a register of all active RTOs in our areas, available for public inspection.

6.7 Promoting the concept of RTOs

- 6.7.1 Sanctuary Scotland will promote the benefits of starting a tenants group and getting registered through:
 - Our magazine, 'Voice'.
 - Our website.
 - Sanctuary's social media channels.
- 6.7.2 Promotional material will explain that tenants' groups can help draw attention to issues by creating a collective voice. We will emphasise the potential influence groups can have over the services we deliver.
- 6.7.3 We will make it clear people can get support from us to set up a group. We will also advise groups of grants that may be available from other sources.
- 6.7.4 RTOs will receive annual grants to pay for core functions. A sum of £1 per property will be included in our budgets to support annual grants.
- 6.7.5 RTOs will also receive support in kind. We can, for example, help with the reproduction of newsletters, provide access to meeting rooms and provide reasonable access to photocopying.
- 6.7.6 Non RTOs will be given help to meet RTO criteria. Groups who do not wish to register will receive support in kind at the discretion of Sanctuary Scotland.

7. TRAINING FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION

- 7.1 To help people get the most from their efforts, interested tenants will be offered training and support. Where tenants have decided to set up an RTO, this can be achieved through an agreed programme. Training for tenant participation will be one of the first elements addressed by staff. The actual type of training and way it is delivered will be discussed once the RTO has been identified.

Internal and external training opportunities are offered on a regular basis. Sanctuary will attempt to secure a budget where there is a cost.

- 7.2 We will help to pay for training which assists tenants performing their role as committee members of RTOs, subject to budget constraints. We will extend invitations to in-house joint governing body/staff training events to RTO members where appropriate.

8. RESOURCING TENANT PARTICIPATION

- 8.1 The amount of resource needed for successful tenant participation will be reviewed once a year. Our Head of Housing is responsible for developing the Tenant Participation Strategy. Our Housing Managers are responsible for liaising with each RTO and tenants housing committee. Sanctuary Scotland has identified the following support provision to aid tenants in the participation process:

8.1.1 Support Services

Including the provision of photocopying, posting, printing, administrative assistance and use of Board Rooms for meetings.



- 8.1.2 **Training**
Tenants and tenants groups will be encouraged to use the training seminars and conferences offered by organisations such as the Tenants Information Service (TIS) and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). Training needs will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
- 8.1.3 **Grants and Costs**
It is anticipated that we will assist tenants' organisations by allocating annual grants based on a quota system. Special grants for specific purposes will be considered on their merits. RTOs will be asked to submit annual budget proposals. The total amount of grant available will be divided equally between RTOs who represent tenants in the same areas.
- 8.1.4 **Interpreting and Translation Services**

We will provide interpreting and translation services where required.

9. THE TENANTS' RIGHT NOT TO PARTICIPATE

- 9.1 We involve tenants as much as possible in formulating the policies and other documents affecting them.
- 9.2 We must, however, respect a tenant's right not to get involved. If an individual tenant/household does not wish to participate, this right will be respected.

10. ACTION PLAN

- 10.1 Our objectives for tenant participation can be found in our Operations Plan: to promote and enable the active participation of tenants, home owners and applicants in our work.
- 10.2 Our Tenant Participation Action Plan states how we wish to ensure effective tenant participation until 2022. The plan supplements the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 to develop local outcomes for the Scottish Social Housing Charter in consultation with tenants. The methods used to encourage tenants to participate will include:
 - Attending local events to raise awareness.
 - Training staff and registered tenants' organisations.
 - The introduction of self-assessment models.
 - Developing our Code of Conduct with RTOs and tenants.
 - Advertising tenant participation events.
 - Discussing tenant participation at sign ups, new tenant visits and annual visits.
 - Encouraging involvement from Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) tenants.

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 11.1 The strategy is subject to governing body evaluation to ensure it continues to be relevant.
- 11.2 Our National Review Panel, focus groups and other tenant groups will influence our decision-making by:
 - Providing information and/or expert local knowledge.
 - Identifying issues of concern to tenants.
 - Representing the views and interests of tenants and by campaigning for changes and improvements.

- 11.3 Sanctuary Scotland must be able to show the Scottish Housing Regulator our tenant participation strategy is effective, current and relevant.

12. MONITORING SANCTUARY SCOTLAND'S PERFORMANCE

- 12.1 Sanctuary Scotland is committed to improving performance and satisfaction levels across all aspects of service delivery. Key performance indicators are monitored monthly by the Senior Management Team, at each Board of Management meeting and quarterly by our Area Committees.]
- 12.2 Performance information is also reported in our Annual Report and in the Annual Return of the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 12.3 The National Review Panel will also test and scrutinise a range of performance indicators throughout the year. The topics will be chosen using an evidence-based approach.

13. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

- 13.1 Sanctuary Scotland values complaints. We use the information complaints provide to improve our services. If tenants or residents are unhappy we deal with such issues through our complaints handling procedure.
- 13.2 Independent advice on tenant participation can be obtained from:
- Scottish Government
 - TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Services)
 - TIS (Tenant Information Service)
 - The Scottish Housing Regulator
 - Shelter Scotland

14. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

- 14.1 Personal information provided for the purposes of tenant participation will not be passed to any third party.
- 14.2 Sanctuary Scotland's Tenant Participation Strategy will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation.

15. CONCLUSION

- 15.1 Tenant Participation is important to us. We aim to involve tenants in the running of our business to improve services and to give value for money. This strategy will be reviewed in consultation with tenants and other stakeholders every three years. It will be subject to annual evaluation to ensure it meets best practice, complies with current legislation and is up-to-date and relevant.