



# LOOKING BACK LOOKING FORWARD

Annual Report 2014-2015



Scottish Housing  
BEST VALUE NETWORK

## A word from the Chair

Welcome everyone to the Scottish Housing Best Value Network's Annual Report for 2014/15.

First things first – Happy 20th Birthday to SHBVN!

SHBVN has for twenty years supported member organisations to improve their performance and satisfaction. We have witnessed many changes during this time such as local government reorganisation and the changes from Scottish Homes to Communities Scotland to the now Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). We have provided support through many turbulent times and legislation changes – Housing Act 2001, Homelessness Act 2003, Housing Act 2006 and again the Housing Act 2014, which among other things brought about the end of Right to Buy. During this period we've seen other changes, a more regulated Private Rented Sector; as well as changes to the social care system, including the introduction of self-directed support placing a challenge on our members delivering care support. And of course in recent years the recession of 2009 (did we ever recover?) that brought about sweeping welfare reforms as part of the government's austerity measures and not to forget the Scottish independence referendum.

SHBVN offer a full range of services to our members including the popular and well attended practice exchanges forums, our guides and toolkits, our self-assessment packages, training and direct support to landlords. We also continue to collect and collate the benchmarking data including a validation service and data gathering for the ARC. Our performance analysis visits continue to provide detailed insight for those member organisations who receive this service.

In the last year we welcomed three housing association members onto our Board to reflect the growth in this membership area and ensure that they help shape our services going forward. These new members complement our strong board ensuring that our governance arrangements safeguard the leadership, direction and control of our member led organisation. .

During 2015 we have had to say a fond farewell to our most trusted leader and friend – Angela Currie. After 13 years service and overseeing the move from our humble beginnings providing administrative support to a group of Local Authorities seeking to collaborate and benchmark results and processes,

to the professional organisation that we are today with over 120 members. It has been a remarkable achievement and we wish her every

success in her continuing career. Thank you Angela for everything you have achieved here at SHBVN.

But as always, things never stop and I am delighted to welcome Elaine Byrne as our new director who has joined us from West Lothian Council just this September. Elaine, who previously worked as the council's Performance and Change Manager, joins us at an exciting time as we look to rebrand ourselves in our twentieth year and look to upgrade and relaunch our website.

Earlier this year we took the opportunity to enforce our commitment to being a member organisation, led by our members for our members. We developed the following set of values to underpin our four key aims, and I hope that you agree that these reflect putting members at the heart of everything we do and how we do it.

### Our values

- Deliver services that provide specialist and practical support to landlords
- Facilitate learning and sharing in a safe environment and encourage innovation
- Foster personal working relationships with individuals to ensure that services meet needs
- Be impartial and non-judgemental in all our activities

It only remains for me to say a huge thank you to you, our members, partners and friends and to all the staff at SHBVN. I look forward to your continued support and contribution.

**Peter Smith**  
**Chair**





## About Us

Since it was established in 1995, the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) has helped its members drive up service standards in the social housing sector through benchmarking, practice exchange and self assessment activities.

SHBVN has four key aims as detailed below:

- to drive up the standard of housing services across Scotland by identifying and sharing good practice through robust and routine cost and performance benchmarking;
- to facilitate and support co-operation between members to enable the exchange of performance results and good practice;
- to provide direct support to members to achieve continuous improvement and best value through training and facilitation of self assessment, peer review and inspection support activities;
- to promote the activities of the Network nationally to ensure the key challenges facing members are recognised and if possible addressed.

### Governance

As a registered charity, SHBVN is governed by a Board of Trustees. These trustees are elected at our AGM each year in October and the Board meet at our offices in Edinburgh on a regular basis.

### Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees is elected from our membership organisations. The current Board members are noted below.

#### **Peter Smith – Chair**

Glasgow Housing Association

#### **John Wolstencroft – Vice Chair**

Dundee City Council

#### **Francine Abercrombie – Member**

Clackmannanshire Council

#### **Karen Finlayson – Member**

East Dunbartonshire Council

#### **Morag Boyter – Member**

Fife Council

#### **May Callan – Member**

Angus Council

#### **Susan McLeod – Member**

Aberdeen City Council

#### **Siobhan Mullen – Member**

West Lothian Council

#### **Neil Ferguson – Member**

Trust Housing Association

#### **Jean Gray – Member**

Berwickshire Housing Association

#### **Bill Banks – Member**

Kingdom Housing Association

### Members

We now have over 120 members from across the length and breadth of Scotland.

The size and diversity of our members provides a rich source of performance and practice to share within the network.

## “Looking back”

In 2014/15 we continued to deliver key services to our members through a range of mechanisms.

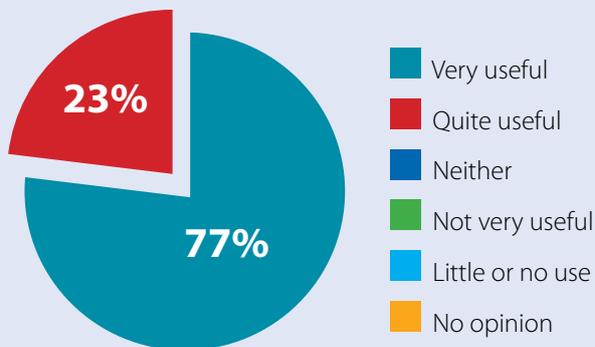
### Benchmarking and the Charter

Landlords were required to make their first return to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) back in May 2014 on the indicators for the Scottish Social Housing Charter. We provided guides and training sessions to our members to help them with their return. We continued to provide much valued external validation services to support our members to have confidence in their data.

We were able to process the returns to allow all our members to view their results and compare with other members 11 weeks before they were published by the SHR. This allowed members to implement any required improvement plans earlier in the new year and gave them more time to prepare their Charter Report to Tenants.

Our performance analysis visits continued to be a very popular service and are designed around the Charter outcomes. Feedback from the 55 visits we undertook was extremely positive and we are seeing a growing number of members take up this invaluable service.

### Overall, how useful did you find the performance analysis presentation?



We worked closely on a project with our members and some of their tenants to produce a Charter Customer Reporting publication, in conjunction with partners TIS and TPAS Scotland. This helped members prepare for their Charter report to their tenants. Examples of around 100 reports were also made available on the website.

We also launched an online data collection system for our quarterly indicators, which now include both Local Authorities and RSLs. Around 60 members have provided quarterly data, allowing more regular monitoring against the Charter indicators and real time benchmarking information. And for the first time a quarterly report was prepared for members.

Our online data collection was also developed for the annual SHBVN indicators for 2014-15.

We have developed and piloted a framework to measure and compare value for money delivered through new build developments to help members benchmark costs, timescales, housing quality and satisfaction. The framework has been aligned with the Scottish Government's HARP data collection system and is ready to undergo final testing and we will continue to refine this throughout 2015/16.

### Practice Exchange Forums

Our practice exchange and learning events were a continued success last year with a growing number of events and delegate attendance at capacity for many of them. This proves that we are responding to our members needs and providing meaningful learning opportunities to share best practice. We listened to our members and added new practice exchange forums: joint Asset Management and Maintenance for local authorities and housing associations; and Scrutiny and Value for Money for housing associations; both forums have proved very popular. To complement the Scrutiny and VFM forum we have also been collaborating with TIS to develop and pilot the Scrutiny Approved accreditation for all our members.

### Scrutiny Approved Accreditation Model



Also with part funding from the Scottish Government, we launched a forum to support local authority officers to implement the *Guidance on the Operation of Local Authority HRA's in Scotland*. The quarterly forum met for the first time in September 2014 and has made links with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants, Audit Scotland and the SHR. As well as the quarterly forum meetings, this project will be developing a new self assessment resource framework to support implementation of the guidance. We have also been facilitating the tenant involvement element of this project with around 20 tenants on average attending this working group.

We assisted members to develop the Scottish Government's revised guidance on preparing Housing Needs and Demands Assessments and Local Housing Strategies. We held meetings with government officials and assisted our members by discussing their comments on the drafts before their final publication.

## Welfare Reform

Thanks to the continued support from the Scottish Government, we were able to run a network of regional events throughout Scotland to support our members with the challenges they are facing as a result of the welfare reforms. We held 15 specific Welfare Reform forums throughout the year and saw an increase in delegates attending from both member and non-members organisations.

More information about the Welfare Reform services can be found at our dedicated website: <http://shbvn.org.uk/welfare-reform/>

## The Private Sector Service

The Private Sector Service continued to expand and this year the service incorporated two additional groups:

- Scottish Houses in Multiple Occupation Network Group (SHMONG)
- National Private Landlord Registration Network Group.

A key theme emerging from the forum meetings was the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which included many Private Sector Housing provisions and this will continue to be the focus in the coming year with the introduction of compulsory registration for letting agents.

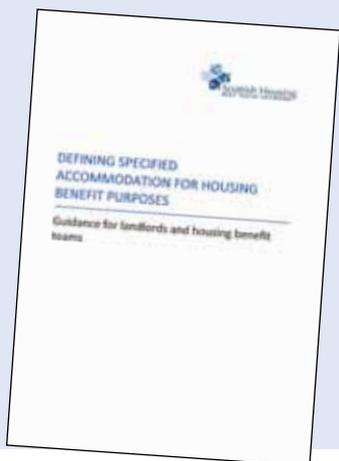
Private Sector training "Common Repairs and Enforcement" remained popular with every session being fully booked.

## Homelessness and Housing Support

We continue to support the Tayside Fife and Central Housing Options Hub and in doing so work alongside a core group of Local Authorities as well as the Scottish Government. In addition to this, with the support of members from the Homelessness and Housing Support Forum, we developed and published a *Guide to Defining Specified Accommodation for Housing Benefit Purposes*. The definition of Specified Accommodation is a highly technical but important issue for all providers of supported accommodation including temporary accommodation and this guide will go along way to assist members safeguard funding.

## Health and Social Care Integration

The health and social care integration agenda will undoubtedly have a major impact on all our member organisations. We are working with the Joint Improvement Team of the Scottish Government as well



as colleagues in the health and social care sectors to undertake a series of masterclasses and other services to support our members.

## Self Assessment & Support

We launched a brand new self assessment website in March of this year ([www.shbvnselfassessment.org](http://www.shbvnselfassessment.org)), where member organisations can record, maintain and download all their organisations' self assessment records. The site includes sixteen self assessment frameworks, thirteen of which cover Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes, with further frameworks planned.

We have continued to support several members in reviewing their strategic plans to ensure they are fully connected to their performance management frameworks.

The importance of effective governance has been a high priority for the Scottish Housing Regulator over the past two years. In recognition of this, and in collaboration with Blackwood, Grampian Housing Association, SHARE, EVH and Board Development Agency we have devised a robust approach to self assessment by boards of governance. The self assessment framework will shortly be piloted and made available as an on-line tool.

## Customer Survey and Satisfaction

During 2014/15, we delivered training to support the planning, delivery and interpretation of large scale surveys of tenants. A staff course delivered by Ipsos Mori, the authors of the SHR's guidance on large scale surveys, was complemented by a course specifically aimed at supporting the involvement of tenants in the survey process.

In the light of the new Charter and ARC requirements, we carried out a wholesale review of our *Guide to Customer Satisfaction Measurement*. The revised guidance was published in February and is available on the SHBVN website.

We teamed up with HouseMark to produce *STAR in Scotland* which combines the regulatory requirements under the Scottish Social Housing Charter with STAR's established framework for comparing satisfaction.

Practising what we preach, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our own approach to the assessment of customer satisfaction with its services. You will have noticed new evaluation approaches to our events, visits and other services. These activities contribute towards the continuous improvement of our member services.

## EESH Pilot

In preparation for the first data collection next year relating to the new energy efficiency standard for social housing (EESH) we ran a national pilot to test robustness of SHR's guidance and members'

readiness to embrace the new standard. Results of the pilot have been disseminated through awareness raising sessions run in collaboration with SHR, SFHA and GWSF. The outcomes from the pilot are designed to inform SHR's revision of their guidance, but the a key objective is to help us facilitate continuous improvements in the way our members improve energy performance of the housing stock they manage

### The Figures

Last year we delivered **71** events which included:

- 35 practice exchange forums
- 15 welfare reform seminars
- 9 training courses
- 12 briefing sessions

Overall we had:

- approximately 1600 delegates attended events
- over 170 guest presenters at events



These numbers have increased from the previous year and demonstrate that SHBVN members continue to value our events and that we are responding to their needs.

## “Looking Forward”

### New Name – New Look

As we embark on our twentieth year it is a fitting time to review and rebrand our organisation. The Board, at its business planning away day in February, agreed some challenging initiatives to build on its successes over the last two decades and move the organisation forward.

During 2015/16 we will assume a new name and launch our new brand. To complement this we will modernise our website and will work with members to ensure it meets their needs. We will make best use of the advances in technology to streamline our data collection processes and provide modern and interactive benchmarking tools for members to use.

### 2015/16 Initiatives

In addition to the extensive rebranding exercise we have set a demanding work plan for 2015/16 bringing on new developments and building on the preparatory work undertaken last year. Specifically we will:

- Continue our collaboration with TIS and launch and embed the tenant scrutiny model.
- Complete the review of our model to assess VFM and support members with its introduction as we recognise the increasing focus landlords, tenants and the SHR are placing on value for money.

- In consultation with our members, review our subscription fees and service packages so that we can continue to provide value for our services in a way that is transparent and fair.
- Enhance the self assessment toolkit content and improve take up levels by offering further assistance to members, including their Management Boards.
- Produce more results analysis reports – turning data into information and insight.
- Work to increase our membership base to further increase benchmarking opportunities to a growing Network.

### Members Services

We will continue to support our members by providing the performance benchmarking services to support continuous improvement in the housing sector. We will continue with our extremely popular and informative practice exchange forums and listen to the needs of our members so we continue to be responsive and supportive. Peer review and validation are services we will also continue to support and promote.

# Financial Statement

## DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	2014/15 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	
<b>VOLUNTARY INCOME</b>	
Grant from Scottish Government	28,660
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>	
Bank interest receivable	1,190
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	
Public sector subscriptions	220,734
Private sector subscriptions	103,102
Management and consultancy services	68,743
ALACHO memberships	62,000
	<u>454,579</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b><u>484,429</u></b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	
<b>CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	
Staff costs - Wages & Salaries	219,500
Staff costs - Employer's NIC	18,879
Staff costs - Pension costs	8,086
Staff costs - Insurance	1,273
Establishment - Rent	15,819
Establishment - Repairs & maintenance	4,162
Establishment - Insurance	818
Establishment - Subscriptions	9,514
Motor and travel costs	11,400
Professional - Accountancy fees	2,317
Legal & professional – Pension scheme fees	2,100
Office expenses - Telephone	1,458
Office expenses	55,335
Depreciation	2,450
AGM costs	1,291
Forum and conference costs	92,956
Bank charges and interest	83
Staff training and recruitment	347
Marketing	5,475
Sundry expenses	1,082
	<u>454,345</u>
<b>GOVERNANCE COSTS</b>	
Independent examination fees	950
Legal and professional fees	3,491
Costs of trustees' meetings	2,317
	<u>6,758</u>
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b><u>461,103</u></b>
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b><u><u>23,326</u></u></b>



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## The SHBVN office address is:

Fourth Floor,  
125 Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 4AD  
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Email: [info@shbvn.org](mailto:info@shbvn.org)

## The SHBVN website addresses are:

[www.shbvn.org.uk](http://www.shbvn.org.uk) (public site)  
[www.shbvn.org](http://www.shbvn.org) (member site)

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