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# ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

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Scotland's  
Housing  
**Network**

*Your partner in housing*





## A word from the Chair

**It's been another busy year for the Network, we now have 132 members, this includes all Scottish Local Authorities and we were delighted when Hawthorn Housing Cooperative joined us in July 2019, taking us up to 100 RSL members.**

We were originally set up in 1995, as Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) therefore we will be celebrating our silver anniversary this year, which is a major milestone for a member organisation and to mark the occasion the theme for this year's report is '25 Reasons Why'.

During the year Elaine Byrne left us to pursue new challenges and we are really pleased to have recruited Andrea Finkel-Gates as our new CEO who joined us in September 2019. Misia Jack is a face well known in the sector and we were all very sad when Misia left after eight years' service. New staff have joined us, and we are pleased to welcome the latest addition to the team, Trudi Tokarczyk who has started with us as Service Improvement Manager. In addition to the staff changes, we also officially welcomed Yvonne Balk to the Board.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant we have all had to adjust and do things differently. We have continued to provide member services throughout the year and responded to the situation by taking all our practice exchange forums online. We've delivered webinars providing Charter and ARC updates and embraced Microsoft Teams, including developing Practice Exchange Teams, which has allowed us to facilitate even more practice exchange sessions outwith the forums. Learning and development is important to us and we've introduced CPD certificates for all forums, to support individual CPD records and we commissioned bespoke external, free CPD for members front line housing staff. The feedback received will allow us to further develop our services and the way we deliver them in the future.

As a member organisation we adopt a member led approach and we have received many positive comments about the services we provide, and we would actively encourage members to give us feedback on the work we do and the services we provide, to ensure we are providing the services that recognise and meet your needs.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all my fellow Board Members and our joint vice chairs, Morag Boyter and Graeme Winning for their support and input during the year. I'd also like to recognise and thank the staff team at SHN who continue to provide high quality services to members. Finally I'd like to thank all our members for their continued support, as I've said Scotland's Housing Network is a member organisation, therefore it's your network and we would encourage you to use the Networks resources, continue to provide us with feedback and let us know what we can do differently, or better.

**Bill Banks**  
**Chair of Scotland's Housing Network**

## About Us

Scotland's Housing Network is the largest housing benchmarking and practice exchange organisation in Scotland. We have all 32 Local Authorities and 100 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) as members and we have experienced significant growth in recent years. Over two thirds of social landlords in Scotland are our members, which in turn represents almost 90% of the sector by stock.

The size and diversity of our members, who operate throughout the length and breadth of Scotland, provides a rich source of information about performance and practice to share within the Network. We have supported member organisations to improve their performance and services for 25 years.

## Governance

As a registered charity and member led organisation we are governed by a Board of Trustees who are elected from our membership organisations. These trustees are elected at our AGM each year in October and the Board meets quarterly. In addition to their governance responsibilities, they also decide on the services that best support our members.

## Board Members



**Bill Banks**  
**Chair**

Kingdom Housing Association



**Peter Smith**  
**Member**

Glasgow Housing Association



**Morag Boyter**  
**Vice Chair**

Cairn Housing Association



**Fin Smith**  
**Member**

Clyde Valley Housing Association



**Graeme Winning**  
**Vice Chair**

East Ayrshire Council



**Stefan Kristmanns**  
**Member**

West Dunbartonshire Council



**Susan McLeod**  
**Member**

Aberdeen City Council

**Yvonne Baulk**  
**Member**

North Ayrshire Council



**John Wolstencroft**  
**Member**

Dundee City Council

**Neil Ferguson**  
**Member**

Leave of absence - February 2020

# KEY AIMS

Scotland's Housing Network has four key aims:



**To drive up the standard of housing services** across Scotland by identifying and sharing good practice through robust and routine cost and performance benchmarking;



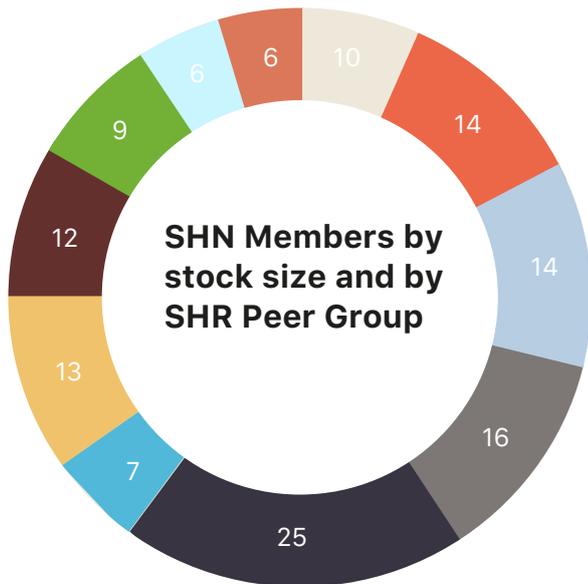
**To facilitate and support co-operation between members** to enable the exchange of performance results and good practice;



**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.



## SHN Members 2019/20

Housing Associations and Cooperatives

100

Local Authorities

32

Total Members

132

	Number	Stock
Specialist	10	18,105
Rural	14	12,722
Small urban RSLs	14	4,606
Medium urban RSLs	16	11,636
Large urban RSLs	25	70,965
Small stock transfer RSLs	7	5,280
Large stock transfer RSLs	13	43,908
Small LAs	12	64,919
Medium LAs	9	116,964
Large LAs	6	173,031
Stock transfer LAs	6	21



## Celebrating twenty-five years of supporting Scotland's social housing sector

# Member Benefits

<p>Exclusively for <b>Scotland's Social Landlords</b>, entirely focussed on improving social housing in <b>Scotland</b></p>	<p>Founded '<b>by</b>' the housing sector '<b>for</b>' the housing sector</p>	<p>We are a <b>member led charity</b> and we develop our services based entirely on the needs of our membership</p>	<p>We are <b>not-for-profit</b> meaning all of our resources are used to improve the services you receive</p>
<p>Access to a range of <b>practice exchange forums</b> that you can attend as part of your membership</p>	<p><b>Self-Assessment Tools</b> to support improved Practice and Governance, supporting our members through their own journey of self-improvement</p>	<p>Dedicated <b>Account Manager</b> for each member organisation, we deliver a personal touch</p>	<p>Our <b>governing board</b> is constituted from influential members of the Scottish RSL and Local Authority landscape</p>
<p>CPD certificates that promotes <b>reflective practice</b> for housing practitioners</p>	<p><b>Market leading Business Intelligence Tool</b> that allows you to access benchmarked performance data, any time, any place.</p>	<p>Investing in <b>new technologies</b> to ensure we still deliver membership services to you</p>	<p>Offering access to a huge range of opportunities to exchange practice in <b>themed contexts</b> with peers across your sector and beyond</p>
<p>132 members both large and small, rural and urban ensuring <b>best practice</b> and innovation is captured and shared across Scotland</p>	<p>Working in <b>partnership</b> to drive up performance and deliver quality services</p>	<p>Bespoke support services for our members at <b>discounted rates</b></p>	<p>The opportunity to learn the strengths and areas for growth in your performance within the <b>context of your peer landlords</b></p>
<p><b>ARC validation</b> service for members who wish to have their Charter Indicators audited to ensure they meet the definitions</p>	<p><b>Regular</b> performance bulletins and newsletters</p>	<p><b>Online discussion forum</b> to promote sharing of knowledge, 365 days a year</p>	<p>Supporting our members to provide, and evidence, <b>value for money</b></p>
<p><b>Exclusive</b> benchmarking information, for members only</p>	<p>Keeping you up to date with <b>welfare reform</b></p>	<p><b>Free CPD</b> sessions for front line housing staff</p>	<p>Experienced, knowledgeable and skilled <b>staff</b></p>
<p>Supporting your <b>private sector services</b></p>			



“ As the first employee of the network when there were just 6 local authority members I feel very proud of the remarkable transformation the organisation has made over the last 25 years. Some key highlights will stick with me forever.....expanding membership to housing associations and how quickly the benefits of a joined up approach were realised. Going digital early on given the Scotland wide coverage and not realising we were leading the way at the time.

But my fondest memories beyond the organisational change and are of the people I worked with along the way that were truly inspiring. The Board members who were brave and supported the transition to an independent company 10 years ago. The team who made it all happen – so dedicated and hard working with a passion for the sector that fuelled the development and delivery of so many great services and products.

Finally, all of the great many people who worked in the sector and turned up at the events, who listened and learned but gave back in the bucket loads. Who shared their fears and successes and we were all richer, better informed and braver as a result. A consultant who facilitated an early Board Strategy day helped us see that the core success of the network is reciprocity. It took me a few attempts to say the word properly that day but I've used many times since.

For me the network is and always will be a place to learn, share and flourish and the principle of reciprocity lives on.”

**Angela Currie**  
Operations Director, Blackwood Group



“ I remember clearly the creation and early days of the Network, as local government emerged from preparing for compulsory competitive tendering for housing management in to the brave new world of Best Value. My role at Dumbarton District Council, and then West Dunbartonshire Council, lead me to be part of the team drawn from across councils that got the Network off the ground. There was a lot of hard work, but also great fun, and fantastic opportunities to work with and learn from talented people from local government across Scotland. Learning, collaboration and improvement were the principles that drove us then, and still drive the Network today.”

**Michael Cameron**  
Chief Executive Officer, SHR

# Performance Management

## Benchmarking

Our members continued to benefit from accessing ARC data from early June, couple that with our Network indicators this provides our members with a detailed understanding of their own performance, both individually and relative to the sector and their peer group. We produced reports on the charter for our members and bespoke reports for ALACHO and GWSF.

## Performance Analysis Visits

Our PAVs continue to be popular with 67 of our members taking advantage of the service this year. Nine of our members also benefited from the data validation services that we operate.

### Performance analysis visits undertaken



27

LOCAL  
AUTHORITIES



38

HOUSING  
ASSOCIATIONS AND  
COOPERATIVES



2

HUBS



67

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF PERFORMANCE  
ANALYSIS VISITS

## Business Intelligence Tool

Our BIT is available for our members 365 days a year, it is online, full training is provided and can be used to by our members to scrutinise their own performance, by peer group and/or over time. Reports can be produced at the click of a button and is a great tool to support in scrutiny and assurance.

## Financial Scrutiny

More landlords are continuing to look at evidencing value for money (VfM) to their tenants and other stakeholders, our VfM tool provides them with the externality required to do that. By analysing cost and performance both overtime and against peers, it provides members with valuable evidence to support financial decision making and provide assurance to all stakeholders.

We pride ourselves on developing a tool that is both impactful and user friendly. To that end we have worked with a representative group of members to review the tool and the associated guidance.

We have continued to work with the Scottish Government to develop a tool to monitor cost and satisfaction data associated with new build developments. An enhanced pilot has been completed with the report and lessons learned due out in late 2020.

## Self-Assessment Services

A range of on-line self-assessment resources are available to members. Included in members' annual subscription is access to the practice self-assessment website. Here members will find eighteen frameworks against which service delivery standards can be assessed at three different levels, customer focus, operational and leadership. Fourteen of the frameworks relate to performance against Charter indicators. Frameworks are constantly being updated and added to. This year, for example, we added a framework to support assessment of tenancy sustainment services.

Featuring seven frameworks for Governance, we developed our Meeting the Regulatory Standards toolkit to assist our members in carrying out governance self-assessment and to provide an easy to use facility to collate evidence in the course of preparing annual Assurance Statement. It was developed in collaboration with a Working Group consisting of both board members and senior officers drawn from our membership.

### Registered users on the practice self-assessment websites



86

Member  
Organisations

PRACTICE SITE

232

Users



37

Member  
Organisations

GOVERNANCE SITE

35

Users

# Learning and Sharing

## Practice Exchange

With over 15 different practice exchange forums covering every aspect of housing we have a forum for all our members' needs. We continually review our forums and themes to ensure that they are relevant and responding to sector issues; this year we successfully merged the SOLO and Link Officer forums facilitating joint working between the two groups. We have also held thematic forums specifically facilitating practice exchange in relation to the COVID crisis. In total we held over 48 different events last year with over 1566 delegates attending. Our forums are regularly at or near capacity demonstrating these are a valuable resource for our members.

### Practice exchange forums and events



EVENTS

48



DELEGATES

1566

## Staying Connected

### Social Media



NEWSLETTER

1987

(As of March 2020)



TWITTER

1308

(As of March 2020)



WEBSITE

36,624

(Members' website page views)

Forum	Description	Frequency
<b>Charter Briefing</b> LA/RSL	Essential preparation for completing your Charter return	Annually
<b>Asset Management and Development</b> RSL/LA	Focussing on all aspects of service delivery relating to asset management and maintenance, environmental sustainability of existing and new housing stock, application, performance and use of new technologies as well as funding and value for money investment	Quarterly
<b>Tenant Participation</b> LA/RSL	Focussing on all aspects of tenant and wider community engagement	Bi-annually
<b>SOLO and Link Officer</b> LA/RSL	Supporting our members meeting the challenges associated with the housing of offenders in the community	Tri-annually
<b>Older People</b> LA/RSL	Focussing on meeting the strategic housing needs of, and the planning and management of housing for, older people	Quarterly
<b>Local Housing Strategy</b> LA	Supporting council staff preparing and implementing LHS	Quarterly
<b>MMR</b> LA/RSL	With the growth of mid-market renting as an affordable housing provision across Scotland, this practice exchange was set up to facilitate discussion around emerging trends in MMR, review policies and practice across Scotland while also benchmarking key associated indicators.	Annually
<b>RSL and Cooperatives</b> RSL	This quarterly forum provides networking and development opportunities for staff of housing association and co-operatives who are engaged in the planning, delivery and management of any aspect of housing management.	Quarterly
<b>Scrutiny and VfM</b> RSL	This quarterly forum meets to share practice on regulatory requirements and developments as well as national scrutiny developments. It is aimed at performance managers, service improvement managers and general housing managers and officers who are responsible for co-ordinating and managing service monitoring and improvement activities.	Quarterly
<b>VfM Service</b> LA/RSL	Supporting members who participate in VFM benchmarking	Annually
<b>Homelessness Forum</b> LA	Supporting those members with a statutory responsibility for homelessness, assessment and investigation, temporary accommodation, permanent rehousing and support.	Quarterly
<b>Stock Transfer Authorities Forum</b> LA	Supporting those members with statutory homelessness functions but no housing stock of their own	Bi-annually

LA = service to Local Authority members

RSL = service to Registered Social Landlord members

## Private Sector Services

The Private Sector service has been well supported by members over the past year with almost all forums being "sold out". Discussion topics have included including the best way to secure successful maintenance and improvement of tenement property, and the vital issue of how best to improve and fund the energy efficiency of our older private sector dwellings. Our Private Sector Officer continues to work in collaboration with a range of external partners including Scottish Government and Under One Roof.

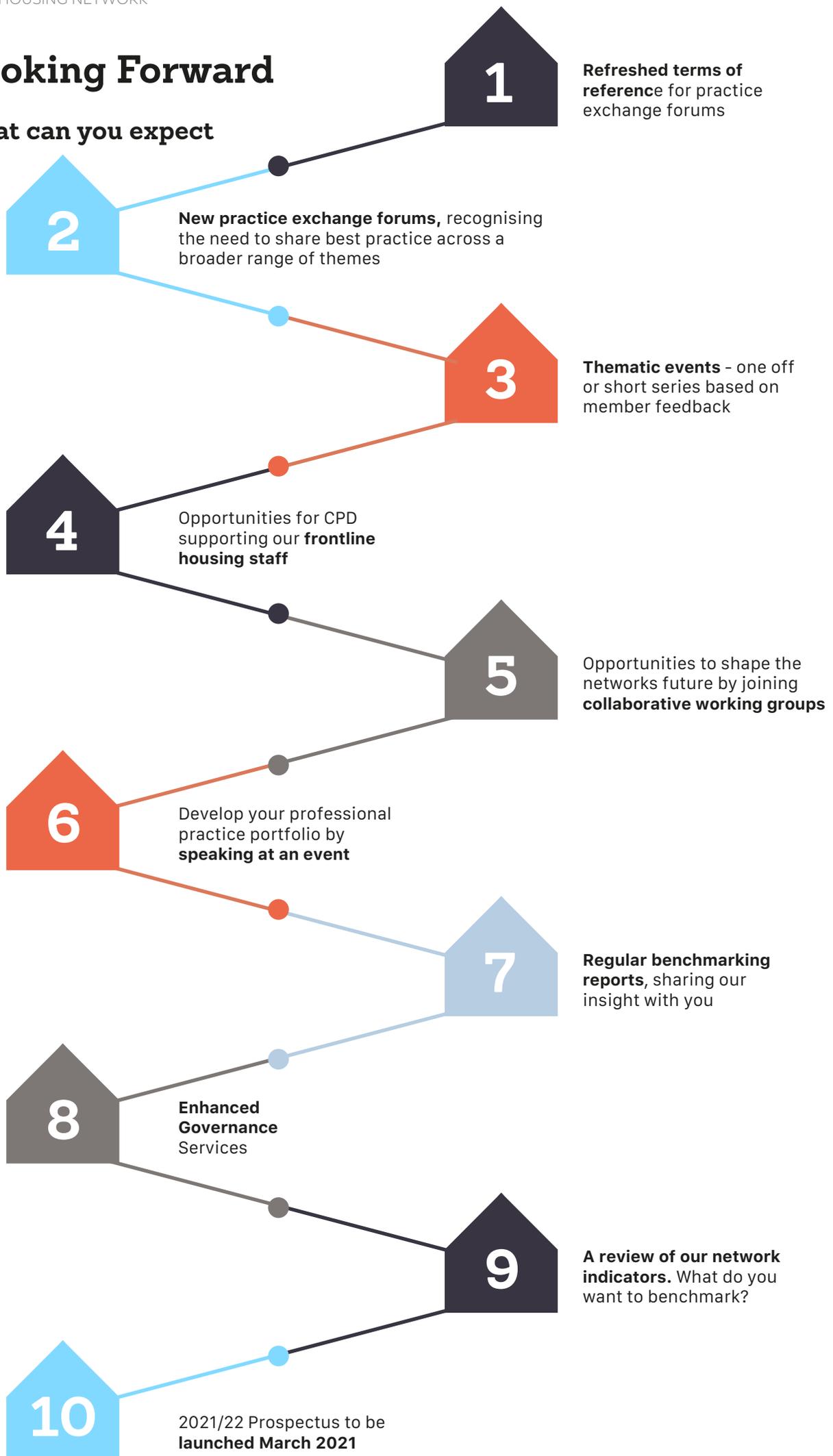


## Welfare Reform Service

Our welfare reform forums continue to prove popular to members and non-members alike. Hosted three times per year in the North, East and West of Scotland, forum members hear the latest updates on universal credit policy and practical roll out. Forum members are also able to provide peer support to one another and of course share best practice.

# Looking Forward

## What can you expect



## Who we are



**Andrea Finkel-Gates**

Chief Executive Officer



**Fiona Jackson**

Finance and Admin Officer /  
Service Improvement Manager



**James Duffy**

Service Improvement Manager



**Tim Pogson**

Service Improvement Manager



**Trudi Tokarczyk**

Service Improvement Manager



**Andrew Smith**

Data and Comms Officer



**Jim Hayten**

Private Sector Officer



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