



Meeting Housing Need  
In Windlaw

# About North View

**NORTH VIEW**  
Housing Association

Registered as a Scottish charity (SC032963)

**North View Housing Association aims to provide a high quality service that is responsive to the needs of its tenants and customers.**

# NORTH VIEW

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## WHO WE ARE

**North View Housing Association is a non-profit making social housing landlord, committed to providing quality housing at affordable rents.**

North View is a community based housing organisation that is controlled by local residents, and works for the benefit of local people.

The Association is a Scottish charity, an Industrial and Provident Society, and a 'Registered Social Landlord'.

North View operates in the Windlaw area of Castlemilk. Our 'area of operation' is quite compact and is contained within the boundaries formed by the Douglie Strip (to the north), Castlemilk Drive (to the east),

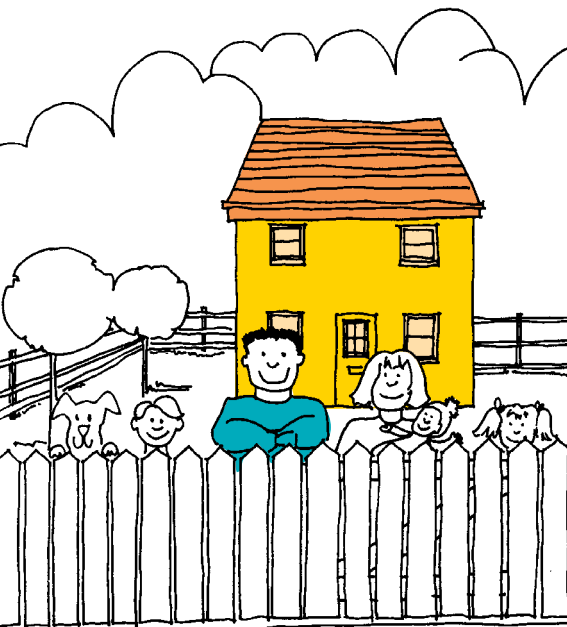
Arden Craig Road (to the south), and Birgidale Road (to the west).

The Association was established in November 1993 and has grown and developed since then. We now own approximately 680 properties, the vast majority of which are 'mainstream' rented houses and flats, but we also rent properties to groups that cater for people with particular housing needs, and have developed and built a small number of flats and houses for the owner occupation market.

On top of this we provide a factoring service to approximately 70 owners, and are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the open public greenspace in the area – including the Windlaw Strip.

*North View's area and Office.*





*North View Housing Association aims to provide quality housing at affordable rent levels.*

## OBJECTIVES

North View's core objectives are:-

- *to provide high quality housing at affordable rent levels.*
- *to provide and promote meaningful community control and participation in decision making.*
- *to provide an effective and high quality service to our tenants and residents.*

## HOW WE WORK

North View is owned entirely by its shareholders – *known as members*. Tenants, joint tenants and residents (of 18 years of age or over) can become members by purchasing a £1 share. The members elect a group of people to manage the Association on their behalf. This group is called the Management Committee.

## **The Management Committee**

***Our Management Committee exercises proper control over our activities and makes decisions in the best interests of the Association and its service users.***

The Management Committee acts for and in the name of the Association. The Committee retains ultimate control over all aspects of the Association's work and ensures that our financial and legal responsibilities are fulfilled.

The Management Committee meets regularly – *usually once a month* – to set policy, plan activities, assess progress etc. The Committee employ full-time professional staff to run the Association on a day to day basis. Members of the Management Committee do not get paid for the work they do. They are *all* volunteers.

The Management Committee delegates some aspects of its work to Sub-Committees or staff, but ultimately retains responsibility for making sure that those functions are carried out properly.

## **Membership**

Being a Member allows you to vote at our Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meetings that we may have. It also entitles you to stand for election to the Management Committee.

We are keen to encourage residents to become members of the Association and members of the Management Committee. Being a Committee Member takes up two or three evenings a month, but it gives you more opportunity to have your say on how we operate and what we do. Please contact the Office if you want to find out more about becoming a Shareholder or joining the Management Committee.



The Management Committee run the Association

## HOW WE ARE REGULATED

Each year we receive a lot of money and spend a lot of money, so we've put in place lots of checks and balances to make sure things are done properly. We are well regulated and well run.

In addition to our own 'in house' checking procedures, five outside bodies – *the Scottish Government, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), our external auditor, our internal auditor, and Investors in People* – regularly scrutinise what we do and how we do it.

**The Scottish Government** – At the moment the Scottish Government is working on plans to replace Communities Scotland (the organisation that has regulated us for the past few years). We expect them to create another body to take over that role, or to pass the responsibility on to a governmental department. Either way, they will no doubt put a structure in place to safeguard public interest and to promote the high standards that housing associations are required to meet.

**The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)** – As a charity, North View is required to meet the standards and regulations set out by OSCR.

OSCR has a statutory responsibility to monitor what charities do and has the power to carry out an enquiry into our activities.

**External Auditor** – It is a legal requirement that an independent qualified person or firm audits our finances each year.

The main purpose of the audit is to check that the Association's published accounts give a true and fair view of its financial position. The accounts are presented to the Shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

The External Auditors also provide the Management Committee with a report that details their audit findings. The report contains any recommendations that the Auditor thinks we should look at to strengthen how we do things. The Committee considers these and then writes back to let the Auditor know how we will deal with the points raised.



*Auditors regularly check what we do*

The external audit provides another safeguard to shareholders and tenants about how we operate.

**Internal Auditor** – The title is a bit misleading, although they are called the internal auditor, they are *completely* independent of North View.

The Internal Auditor usually comes in twice a year and each time spends two or three days looking at different aspects of what we do.

They interview staff and check our processes to see that we are doing things legally and in accordance with our policies. After their visit they too prepare a report for the Management Committee on their findings and recommendations. As with the External Auditor, Committee consider the recommendations then write to tell the Internal Auditor what we are going to do about the things that they think we need to look at.

The Internal Auditor also gives the Committee an Annual Report that summarises their audit work for the year.

All of the Internal Auditor's reports are publicly available.

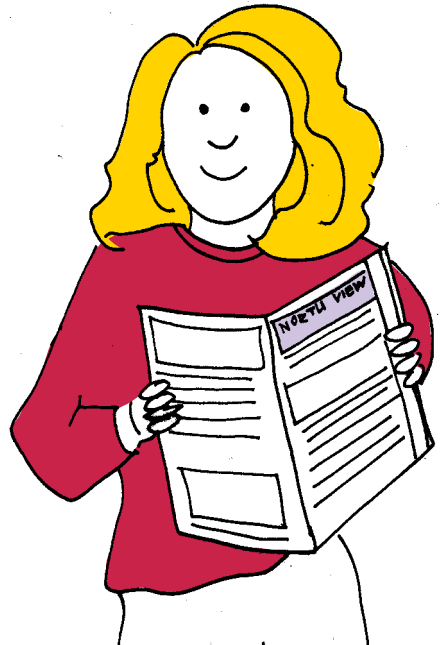
**Investors in People** – North View first became an Investor in People in 2003. The Investors in People standards are about

setting goals for the organisation, and the training and development of Committee and Staff to help the Association achieve these goals while managing their day to day workload at the same time. Like the other regulators, Investors in People visit us from time to time to check that we are still up to scratch.

We value the Investors in People principles. We believe that a well trained Committee and Staff improves our ability to plan, manage, and deliver an effective high quality service to our tenants and residents.

## SERVICE STANDARDS

Over the years the Association has developed a set of wide ranging targets relating to key service activities like repairs, allocations, relets, and estate management (to name but a few).



*Read your newsletter to find out if we are meeting our Service Standards*



*We aim to remove barriers and maximise opportunities for everyone*

These targets are called Service Standards.

Each year we publish a list of the main Service Standards in our Spring Newsletter. These set out the level of service that we aim to provide to our tenants, and residents. We regularly monitor our performance against each one of these Standards and give update reports in our quarterly newsletters.

Our aim is to provide North View tenants and residents with as good a service as we possibly can. We believe that we already do that, but we are always trying to push it a bit more and do things that we do a bit better. In addition to Service Standards, we use a variety of other methods – like focus group meetings, surveys and even complaints – to help us keep an eye on how we are doing and to identify areas that we need to look at.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

***North View – no place for prejudice!***

***North View Housing Association is striving to ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination in all aspects of its work. North View aims to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices do not result in any individual or group receiving less favourable treatment.*** – equality statement.

Equal Opportunities is at the core of all North View activities. It goes beyond colour, race and religion, for us it's about removing barriers, maximising access and opportunities for people, and not disadvantaging any one person or group of people. With that in mind, North View Housing Association will:-

- ***Ensure that upholding and promoting equal opportunities is a core value for our organisation.***



- *Reflect this commitment in our decision-making and everyday working practices.*
- *Meet our statutory obligations and regulatory standards.*
- *Avoid setting conditions or requirements that exclude certain groups of people and result in direct or indirect discrimination.*
- *Be responsive to the individual circumstances of all our tenants and service users.*
- *Adopt a zero tolerance approach to harassment, acting sensitively and quickly to support victims.*
- *Monitor our performance in providing equal access to our services, and in achieving fair outcomes.*
- *Review our achievements at regular intervals, to identify and act upon areas for improvement.*

North View is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fair outcomes for everyone. We aim to make sure that no individual or group receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged as a result of our activities. Initiatives to support our commitment have been developed and implemented as part of our rolling Equal Opportunities Three-Year Action Plan.

## RESIDENT PARTICIPATION

***North View is strongly committed to consulting and involving its residents in all aspects of its work. We aim to create a good working relationship with residents so that we can continually improve what we do.***

We believe that resident participation is central to the ongoing success of the Association. We want our residents to play a meaningful role in shaping what we do.

North View was formed by tenants for the benefit of local residents. This ethos of tenant involvement has matured since the Association was established in 1993 and now strongly underpins our Resident Participation Strategy, the aims of which are:-

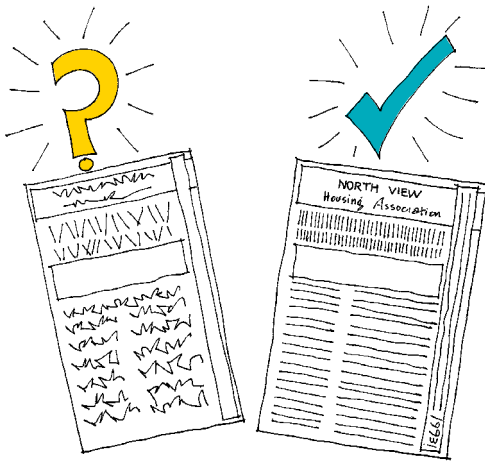
- *To provide all residents with opportunities to influence the work and decisions of the Association.*
- *To provide a range of options for involvement, so that people can participate in different ways, according to their own preferences.*
- *To be responsive to the issues that matter most to residents.*
- *To ensure that any barriers that prevent people from participating are identified and removed.*
- *To contribute to continuous improvement in service delivery and resident satisfaction.*

The three 'pillars' of our approach to resident participation are information, consultation and participation. Each can be summarised as follows:-



*You can influence what we do*





The Newsletters that we send you will be written in plain English

### Information

- We aim to make it as easy as possible for people to obtain information.
- We use a variety of methods to provide information – like the Newsletter, Annual Report, Tenants Handbook.
- We aim to use plain English and provide ‘easy to read’ information.
- We provide information in other languages and in other formats – i.e. for people who are visually impaired, or people whose first language is not English.

### Consultation

- We use a variety of methods to consult residents – such as Focus Groups, Open Meetings, Local Meetings, and Resident Surveys.
- Association staff will meet individual householders or groups of householders at their request to discuss issues of concern.
- We will consult tenants and registered tenant organisations about making or changing:-
  - Policies regarding housing management, repairs and maintenance if the proposal is likely to significantly affect you.

- Proposals for changes in rent and service charges.
- Proposals for the sale or transfer of your house to another landlord.
- Our Residents Participation Strategy.
- We will take your views into account before making a final decision.

### Participation

- We encourage residents to become involved in the running of the Association.
- We make opportunities available for residents to influence the work of the Association.
- We will have a registration scheme for tenant organisations to become registered, and keep a publicly available register of these organisations.

Contact our Office for more information about our Resident Participation Strategy.

### WORKING WITH OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We regularly work in partnership with the other Castlemilk based community controlled housing associations on many projects and initiatives. The nature of this type of work can vary radically from one project to the next, but it is always focussed on benefiting our tenants and/or the wider community in Castlemilk.

### NON HOUSING ACTIVITIES

At North View we have always been keen to get involved in ‘wider’ non-housing activities as long as it benefits local people. This has seen us work with various contractors to create employment opportunities, and secure apprenticeships for three Castlemilk teenagers.

*We get involved in wider non-housing activities only if it will benefit local people*



We have also provided placements for people on local training schemes and college students so that they can gain some 'hands on' experience of working in the Office or out with one of our tradesmen.

At a community level, we have promoted initiatives ranging from recycling projects, through to Strathclyde Fire Brigade carrying out free fire safety inspections in tenants' homes, to open classes for anyone wanting to learn about using a computer. We also have a tradition of organising social events for our tenants – be it a day trip to Ayr, a Burns Night, or a visit to the pantomime – but one of the most important aspects of our 'wider' work has focused on the young people that live in Windlaw.

### **Working with young people**

One aspect of this has been our 'Youth Housing Project'. It is aimed at young people from the south east of Glasgow in the 16 to 24 age bracket. Although housing based, it

has 'wider' elements to it. The young person benefits from the support and advice from Social Work Services, Scottish Association for Mental Health and GESERA, the local employment agency. All this support and help should lead to the young person being able to manage their tenancy and take up work and training opportunities.

The young person is usually in the Project for a couple of years and then they move on. The space that they free up in the Youth Housing then goes to another young person, and it starts all over again.

It can be a difficult process and it doesn't always work out for the young person, but it can be life changing for those that make a success of it.

The second aspect to this is the work that we have done with the Castlemilk Youth Complex. Workers from the Youth Complex have met our young people on the streets and got them involved in a variety of activities from floodlit football to making a DVD about their experiences as a young person in Windlaw. The Youth Workers are also on hand to provide advice about services available for young people.

Through this project we hope to work with our young people to reduce anti social behaviour, and improve the facilities and services available to them in Windlaw.

### OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We provide a lot of services for our tenants and residents, the majority of which are covered in other sections of this Handbook, but we also work with many agencies in Castlemilk so our tenants and residents can benefit from the services that they provide. You can find out more about them by referring to the *Advice and Information* section of the Handbook or by calling in at the Office.

### WELFARE RIGHTS

We provide a Welfare Rights service that all our tenants and residents can use.

When people talk about welfare rights they usually only think about things to do with paying rent. Welfare rights does cover that, but it is only one aspect of the service. There is a whole lot more on offer!

Our Welfare Rights Officer can provide you with advice and information on all types of benefit schemes that are run by the government. This can range from entitlement

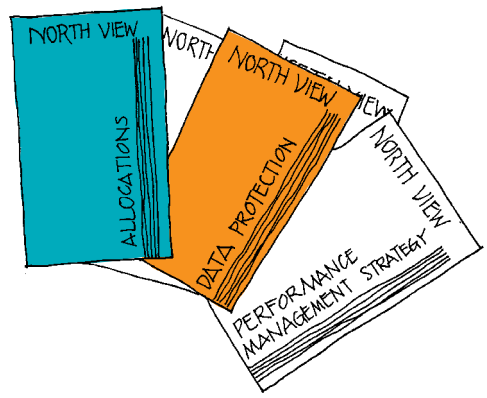
to a carers allowance right through to pension enquiries.

Any of our tenants or residents that are interested in using this service should contact the Office to make an appointment to see the Welfare Rights Officer.

### INFORMATION

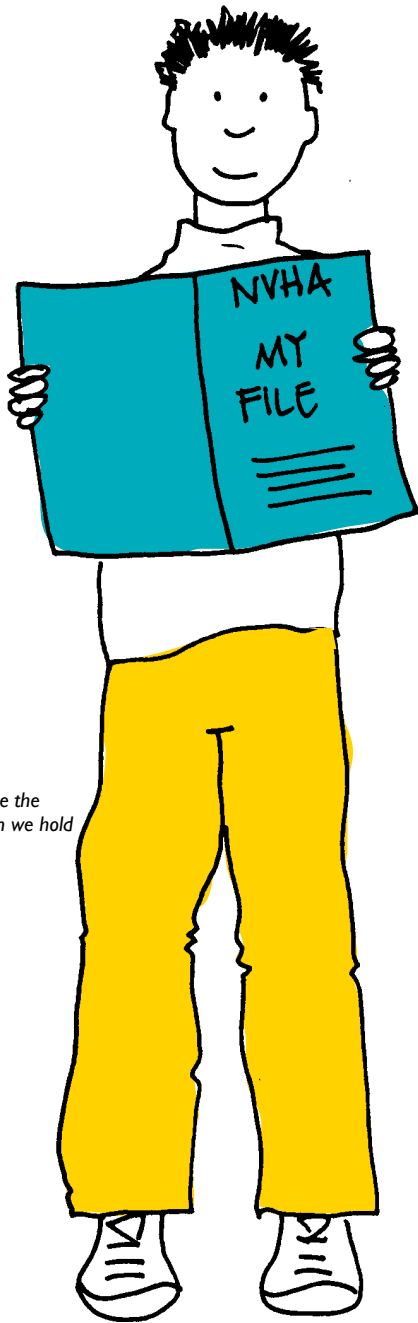
**We respond openly to requests for information, unless there are justifiable reasons for withholding it.**

We work on the principle of making as much information as possible publicly available. This means that any individual – including tenants and residents – can access Association documents like minutes of meetings, policies, reports, financial accounts, audit reports etc. The only time access will be restricted is if the information is commercially ‘sensitive’ – *commercially sensitive includes things like the make up of a tender list for a ‘live’ contract.*



*Every one of North View’s policies is available to the public*

As well as getting access to information about North View, tenants can get access to the information we hold on them. This information is known as personal ‘data’ and how we deal with it is covered by the Data



You can see the information we hold on you

We do not normally charge for giving out personal information but we will make a charge of £10 – to cover administration costs – if a lot of information is requested or if it is difficult for us to gather the information. We have procedures covering the giving out of information.

Anyone wishing a copy of either personal data or information about the Association should contact the Office.

Staying with information, if you come to us with a query that we can't help you with, we will try and signpost you on to someone who can.

**We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work. We treat people with respect and are responsive to their views and priorities.**

We will readily provide you with information and advice and will help you as much as we can.

Our staff and agents will treat you with courtesy and respect, and we expect you to treat them in the same way.

There will be times when you will not be happy with what we do or what we say, but no matter the reason, it is not acceptable

Protection Act. We have to comply with the Act and have set procedures governing how we store the information and how we process it to maintain confidentiality.



We will do all we can to help you

for you to swear at staff or agents acting on our behalf – *including workmen*. We will discontinue meetings with you if you act in a threatening or abusive manner, or if you use threatening or abusive language. You will also be in breach of the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement if you behave in such a way.

If you are unhappy with how we have dealt with you, your best option is to use our Complaints Policy. The Complaints Policy is there for your benefit, so *you* should use it for *your* benefit.

## COMPLAINTS ...

### *... listening... acting... Improving!*

We aim to deal fairly and efficiently with anyone wanting to appeal against, or complain about, any of our decisions or activities.

At North View we try to give everyone as good a service as we possibly can, but, unfortunately, sometimes people may not be happy with the way we've done things. If that's the case, we need to know about it, so tell us – *complain!*

Problems can usually be resolved quickly and easily by addressing them when they happen. If you have a complaint, you should contact your Housing Officer or the appropriate member of staff. They will try and sort it out for you there and then, but if it can't be sorted out, or if it is about something more serious, you can make a formal complaint.

### **Formal Complaints**

Broadly speaking, anyone who receives a service from the Association can make a formal complaint. All they have to do is write it down, sign and date it, and hand it in to the



*If you are not happy with something we have done, TELL US*

Association's Office. If you don't like writing things down, one of our staff members will do that for you, as long as you sign and date it. Also, if you are not too keen on making a formal complaint, you can get someone to do it for you, someone like a relative or friend perhaps. If you decide to do that, then all we need from you is a signed mandate to permit that person to deal with it for you.

We take complaints about anything to do with the services that we provide, but we don't take complaints about things that are outwith our control. For example, we'll accept complaints about repairs, but not about bin collection – *because that is the Council's responsibility*.

Another area not covered under the Complaints Policy is neighbour disputes. Complaints about neighbour disputes are dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy, but the Complaints Policy can kick in if you are not happy with the way we have tackled the problem.

Formal complaints usually go to the Director who will consider your complaint then write to tell you the outcome. If you aren't happy

with the Director's decision or how we have handled your complaint, you can appeal to the Management Committee. Committee then consider it and decide what to do. If you're still not satisfied, you can take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

### **The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman can be contacted by post, at:-

SPSO  
Freepost EH641  
EDINBURGH  
EH3 0BR

by telephone, on **0800 377 7330**  
by fax, on **0800 377 7731**  
by text, on **0790 049 4372**  
or by email at [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk)

You can also appeal to the Ombudsman by visiting their website:

**[www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk)**  
and filling out a complaints form on line.

The Ombudsman will not normally accept complaints that are more than a year old, and will not usually consider your complaint unless you've gone through our Complaints Procedure first. The Ombudsman would rather you gave us the chance to resolve the problem before going to them.

### **Timescales for addressing complaints**

We try to sort out all complaints as quickly as possible and have set timescale targets to help push the process along; acknowledgement letters for receipt of complaints and appeals are sent out within three working days,

our target for responding to complaints is ten working days from the date on the acknowledgement letter, and we send out a letter within three working days of a decision being made.

Appeals can take a bit longer to deal with because the decision has to be ratified at a Management Committee meeting, and the ten day target for dealing with complaints can sometimes be a bit tight, but we always try and keep you informed about how things are going and let you know if dates are going to slip a bit.

### **Confidentiality**

We deal with complaints as sensitively as we possibly can. We take all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality, and to ensure that the person overseeing the process does not have a vested interest in the matter.

### **Learning from Complaints**

Complaints can seem negative, but positive things can come from them. We regularly look at what residents complain about and learn from them. In the past we've changed procedures and introduced policies to deal with situations that we have only become aware of because residents used our complaints procedure. So we use complaints to help us to identify how we can do things better.

You can get more information about how we deal with complaints by contacting our Office, and you can also get a copy of our full Complaints Policy if you want one.

We use complaints to help us to identify how we can do things better





Meeting Housing Need  
in Windlaw

**North View Housing Association**

**29A Stravanan Road**

**Castlemilk**

**GLASGOW G45 9LY**

**telephone:- 0141 634 0555**

**facsimilie:- 0141 631 3231**

**e-mail:- enquires@nvha.org.uk**

**web:- www.nvha.org.uk**

***Out of Hours Emergency Contact***

**Telephone no:- 0141 634 0555**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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