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# The ‘Responsible’ Tenant and the Problem of Apathy

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*In the last decade, the UK New Labour government has emphasised tenant participation in housing policy. Consequently, those individuals who decide to opt out of participation processes have been problematised as ‘apathetic’, and identified as needing to be ‘empowered’ through professional interventions. Drawing on research about community ownership in Glasgow, this paper argues that tenants’ reasons for not getting involved are more than simply lack of interest. Tenants articulated an instrumental approach to participation, and rejected the conflation of tenant participation with tenant management. Practical barriers also obstructed their latent motivation.*

## Introduction

Tenant participation is an important and defining feature of housing policy under New Labour (Goodlad, 2001). A label which captures a range of different structures, processes and forms, tenant participation refers to the involvement of tenants in the housing services provided by their landlord (Hickman, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. It has been translated into a number of distinct initiatives including Best Value, Tenant Participation Compacts, and in Scotland, the statutory right to tenant participation for social housing tenants (Scott, 2004; Milnward, 2005; Hickman, 2006; Simmons and Birchall, 2007). Across Great Britain this emphasis on tenants as service users is further evident in attempts to modernise social housing by transforming its funding, organisation and management – a goal that is to be achieved through housing stock transfer (Scottish Office, 1999; DETR, 2000; Welsh Assembly Government, 2003).<sup>2</sup>

Whilst tenant participation remains very much an ill-defined and slippery concept (Goodlad, 2001), it has nonetheless been portrayed as ‘self-evidently a good thing’, with its benefits presented in ‘glowing terms’ (Riseborough, 1998: 230–8). By assuming that individuals will behave ‘responsibly’ and get involved, simultaneously those who choose to opt out of participation processes have been constructed as apathetic, alienated or excluded, with their lack of desire to act in their own interests questioned and subsequently ‘problematised’ (Cruikshank, 1999; McKee and Cooper, 2008).

In this context, tenant participation emerges as a fundamentally ‘moral’ project, in which ‘opting out is...not part of the message’ (Riseborough, 1998: 238; see also Flint, 2003). Yet this political ambition to address dependency on the state and promote a more active, empowered citizenry is also evident beyond the housing arena, in diverse fields such as welfare (Cruikshank, 1999; McDonald and Marston, 2005) and local government/public sector reform (Newman, 2001; Clarke *et al.*, 2007). It is not however just autonomy and control that is being devolved, but also the responsibilities

of citizenship (Flint, 2003). This emphasis on 'obligation' reflects a significant shift in state-citizen relations towards a more conditional, and potentially exclusionary, form of citizenship (Dwyer, 2002; Clarke, 2005). It has been a defining and enduring feature of New Labour's social policy reforms post-1997 (Heron and Dwyer, 1999).

In order to interrogate this top-down political desire to 'responsibilise' social housing tenants through their active involvement in decisions relating to their housing, it is important to go beyond normative agendas, which simply reverberate the benefits of tenant participation and governance (Somerville, 1998, 2005), or individuals' motivations to get involved (Milnward, 2005). The aim here is not to neglect nor undermine the undoubted benefits the participation process can offer (Paddison *et al.*, 2008). Rather it is to foster a more critical analysis of the participatory process, which considers how discourses of 'apathy' may be used to divide the tenant group and legitimate professional interventions, and provide a critical space in which tenants' own reasons for non-involvement can be articulated. The paper seeks to advance this research agenda by exploring these issues through the case study of community ownership of social housing in Glasgow. It begins with a discussion of the background to the study and the research methods used. This is followed by an emphasis on the centrality of discourses of empowerment to the Glasgow transfer framework, and the subsequent problematisation of 'inactive' tenants. Through focus group research, tenants' reasons for non-involvement and their appetite for tenant management through community ownership are then explored. The paper concludes by emphasising the need for housing policy to recognise the right of tenants to choose how and when they get involved, if at all.

### **Community ownership in Glasgow: the policy context**

Since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the Scottish Executive's<sup>3</sup> solution to modernising social housing has been to posit stock transfer as a policy vehicle to inject additional financial resources and to transform housing governance (Scottish Office, 1999). This has resulted in former council housing being transferred out of the public sector, and therefore from direct management by the local authority, to non-profit registered social landlords (RSLs) situated within the voluntary sector. Given the tradition of small-scale, neighbourhood-level stock transfers within Scotland, this is a policy that has been labelled 'community ownership' (Clapham *et al.*, 1996; Clapham and Kintrea, 2000; McKee, 2007, 2008; Paddison *et al.*, 2008).

Given Glasgow's well-documented legacy of poor housing, urban decay and social-economic deprivation (Gibb, 2003), it was deemed by the Scottish Executive that if this flagship policy of community ownership could not succeed there, it could not succeed anywhere (Kintrea, 2006). Following a successful tenant ballot, the entirety of Glasgow's council housing was transferred to the newly created Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) in 2003 (Daly *et al.*, 2005). As the size of the Glasgow transfer was significantly larger than traditional community ownership transfers, and the issues inevitably more complex, a two-tier stock transfer process was proposed. From the outset, housing management was devolved to a citywide network of community-based Local Housing Organisations (LHOs), which was to be complemented by plans for further Second Stage Transfers, in order that these local organisations may own as well as manage the housing (McKee, 2007). The Glasgow stock transfer was therefore not an end in itself. Rather it was a policy vehicle to achieve wider political ambitions such as community ownership, community

governance and local control, as well as provide a new source of investment for social housing in the city. As such, it represents an ideal case study with which to explore the complexities and nuances surrounding why tenants choose to opt out of formal participation processes.

### **The research**

The research was conducted in Glasgow between August 2005 and April 2006. It involved a plethora of qualitative methods: both community-level case study research, as well as work with key actors at the citywide/national level. This included 54 semi-structured interviews with local housing staff, committee members and key actors; analysis of key documents at the local, citywide and national levels; observation of committee meetings and other pertinent local and strategic events; and five focus groups involving 36 tenants who were not actively involved in their local management committee. The case studies involved two LHOs involved in the GHA's pilot Second Stage Transfer programme and as a comparator an RSL operating outwith the GHA context.

Given the difficulty of presenting rich qualitative data within a limited word count, summarised memos have been used for focus group data (Catterall and Maclaran, 1997). By complementing stand-alone quotes with an analysis of group dynamics and interaction, this has the advantage of offering a 'moving picture' of the data as well as a 'snapshot' (1997: 1). Where direct quotes are used the author's comments are in italics.

### **'Empowering' Glasgow's tenants through community ownership**

The 2003 housing stock transfer of Glasgow's council housing, or community ownership as the former Scottish Executive preferred to call it, is premised on the political ideal that local people will actively participate in the management and ownership of their housing. It is a governance model that seeks to put people into action rather than reaffirm their apathy, docility or negate their involvement in local participation structures. In doing so, it assumes that social housing tenants will act 'responsibly' and get involved (for further discussion see McKee and Cooper, 2008).

Post-stock transfer, tenants have been accorded a lead role in transforming Glasgow's social housing, as autonomy and control has been devolved from the state to 'active' tenants in the context of their communities. As the quote below suggests, the explicit aim was to challenge the bureaucracy and paternalism that were deemed to characterise the 'council days' by recreating social housing for the consumers (i.e. the tenants), as opposed to the politicians and the bureaucrats.

*we really understood the need for a step change in housing provision in Glasgow . . . we didn't want what they wanted in the past we needed a new model, and that local management was deemed to be more effective and you could link it in with regeneration . . . And also I think a political principle which is you should empower the people who use the service . . . it [empowerment] was seen as a mechanism to improve housing provision and improve communities. (Glasgow Labour, Member of the Scottish Parliament)*

Although historically the City Council was innovative in pioneering models of community housing and had a proactive Tenant Participation section (Clapham

*et al.*, 1996; Clapham and Kintrea, 2000; McKee, 2007), its organisational culture was nonetheless perceived very negatively by tenants, local housing staff and key actors alike.

Central to the transfer framework was the political belief that 'empowering' tenants to act in their own interests would address Glasgow's housing 'problem'. This was to be achieved by establishing a more bottom-up decision-making process, in which tenants were to be actively consulted on their views and mobilised to become involved in local decision making. Pivotal was the creation of the LHO network in Glasgow. Governed by a management committee comprising a majority of local tenants, these small, community-based organisations allow residents to have their say in shaping local services to suit the needs of their area. Not only do they provide a mechanism for tenants to get actively involved at the community level, but they are also lead agencies in delivering community development and regeneration in their locality. Whilst a tenant majority on a housing association board is not uncommon in the west of Scotland, it is atypical and unusual elsewhere in the UK. It reflects the different origins of tenant management north of the border (Scott, 2000), as well as the Scottish emphasis on using stock transfer as a policy vehicle to transform housing governance (Kintrea, 2006).

Despite the limitations of the Glasgow transfer in realising ambitions for full community ownership through Second Stage Transfer of the local housing stock, it has delivered positive change for tenants (for further discussion, see McKee, 2007). For example, as was discussed in the previous section, over 60 LHOs have been established across the city. Stock transfer has therefore resulted not only in the growth of the city's housing movement, but also the number of active tenant committee members. These LHOs have also entered into a contractual management agreement with the GHA in order to deliver local housing management services. This affords 'active' tenants autonomy within specific spheres of delegated decision making, including making local investment plans, developing local variations to GHA model policies, managing staff locally and monitoring their performance.

Beyond the LHO network, the GHA has also exceeded the baseline commitment required by the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which introduced a statutory right to tenant participation.<sup>4</sup> The GHA have introduced a variety of formal structures, supported by significant financial resources in order to work towards their end goal of involving tenants more closely with the activities of the organisation and to improve both their methods of consultation and information provision (GHA, 2006). Focus group research highlights that tenants not involved in formal LHO structures (i.e. not-committee members) placed a particular emphasis on this positive change in tenant participation post-transfer.

Importantly, this shift was understood not just in terms of the change in landlord through stock transfer, but as indicative of a more general increase in individual citizens' rights and their desire to enforce them.

You know it's like a lot of things in life I think we're a wee bit more out spoken now and say 'wait a minute' and 'why?' Even in a kind of hospital you would say to a doctor 'I want to know' and before you would never have spoken to a doctor or a surgeon. Now you've got that right to say, 'I'm sorry I want to know what all this involves.' (GHA Tenant, Focus Group 5)

This reflects wider societal developments, for across a range of policy arenas citizens have now been elevated as 'partners' in identifying and resolving policy problems (Barnes

*et al.*, 2007). Despite the government's endeavour to democratise public services, the tendency remains for citizens to be conceived quite narrowly as rational consumers who can be empowered through quasi-consumerist models of participation, which emphasise 'choice' and 'voice' (Clarke *et al.*, 2007).

### **Mobilising the inactive**

The elevation of tenant involvement in Glasgow has been accompanied by the targeting and problematisation of those individuals who choose to opt out of participation processes: the 'apathetic'. Both front-line housing practitioners and active tenants expressed a sense of frustration at the lack of wider involvement or even interest amongst the local residents in their area. They described turnout at organised events and responses to consultation exercises as 'low', and normally comprising of the 'same old faces' and 'hardcore stalwarts' who were actively involved in their community and could be relied upon to participate. For example, in two of the three case studies the full quota of positions on the management committee was not taken up; one case study had to hold its Annual General Meeting again as it was initially inquorate due to an insufficient turnout from shareholding members; and even with what can be regarded as important issues such as the introduction of the new Scottish Secure Tenancy or on the fundamental issue of housing stock transfer, all the case studies reported difficulty in securing attendance at specially organised open days or public meetings.

Significantly, this reluctance of the majority to actively engage with their landlord constructed a divide between the responsible tenants, 'the participators', and the other 'negligent' members of the community who decided to opt out of participation processes. The passivity of their fellow tenants and their preference to 'leave things to others' was a real source of irritation for 'active' tenants. They were exasperated by their neighbours' lack of 'motivation', for they seemed quite happy to moan about their landlord and the quality of the service provided, yet were reluctant to get together and actually do something about it.

*Are there many people involved?* Not really, they [the 'inactive' tenants] won't join anything; they won't do anything. But they've plenty to say a lot of them. But nobody will come forward and do anything. (LHO Committee Member)

Without the active involvement of local residents such a model of community governance cannot be successful, for 'community ownership' requires the willingness of local residents to voluntarily give their time to mobilise around the issues that affect them, and their wider community (McKee and Cooper, 2008). This divide, in turn, creates an additional and reinvigorated role for front-line housing professionals. Far from being made redundant post-stock transfer, they have been accorded a key role in maximising tenant participation at the local level and promoting individual capacity. The political desire to 'empower' Glasgow's tenants has therefore created new avenues for professional knowledge both in identifying potential problems in facilitating participation at the local level, and also in offering solutions. It requires housing practitioners to be innovative and develop more inspiring and attractive ways of engaging with their tenants, what one housing manager described as making tenant participation more 'more sexy' and

'appealing to folk'. The expertise of housing officers, especially their knowledge of the tenants in their area and what modes of engagement are likely to be the most successful, is vital here. Indeed, several committee members recalled that it was the encouragement of their own housing officer that prompted them to become involved.

The pivotal role of welfare professionals in reconciling the interests of the individual with the goals of governance is also evident outside the housing arena. Examples include, reconstructing the identity of the long-term unemployed as 'active' jobseekers (McDonald and Marston, 2005) and urban programmes aimed at 'empowering' the socially excluded (Cruikshank, 1999). Power is therefore not a zero-sum game; the political desire to empower Glasgow's tenants has not resulted in a loss of professional power, rather its reconfiguration. Indeed, as Baistow (1994/5) highlights, deciding who is to be empowered is itself a sign of power and a new form of professional practice. This does not pit officers and tenants against each other, although it does involve judgements and assumptions about some groups of inactive tenants.

Housing practitioners were however pragmatic about their role in facilitating participation. Whilst they acknowledged the important job they had to play in providing opportunities for involvement, making tenants aware how they could exercise these rights, and supporting them in doing so, they nonetheless protested that they could not 'force' or 'make' people get involved. Rather it was a tenants' 'right' to choose if, when and how they wanted to be involved. This was not an example of housing practitioners protecting their sphere of autonomy by trying to keep tenants out of participation processes, rather a critique of the housing regulatory and inspection framework and its emphasis upon 'formal' and 'organised' participation structures.

I think people have a right to participate when they want to and if they want to and at what level. I think the danger is that we all get fixated on there having to be tenant participation . . . I see my job as being about enabling that process . . . so if people want to be involved they know how to get involved, they know how to access it and that they're welcomed and encouraged into that. (Tenant Participation Officer, GHA)

Front-line housing practitioners perceived such top-down agendas as 'unrealistic', and by contrast were keen to stress the organic nature of participation and the plethora of reasons why tenants may choose to opt-out. In doing so, they demonstrated a more sympathetic approach towards tenants' non-involvement.

### **Opting out: a tenant's perspective**

Focus group discussions with these 'inactive' tenants illustrated that their reasons for non-involvement were inevitably more complex than can be captured by discourses of apathy. Labelling all tenants as disinterested may therefore preclude a greater understanding as to why tenants choose to opt out of participation processes.

When asked directly, the majority of focus group participants' expressed no demand for continual, formal involvement. Indeed, they had little day-to-day contact with their landlord other than when they had a personal issue to raise, such as a repair or neighbour complaint – they simply paid their rent and kept to themselves.

*Moderator* Are there any issues, any housing issues that you would like to have more of a say in that you don't get at the moment?

Tenant C They [the landlord] are no bad. Anything you need done gets done very quickly.

*Moderator* What about you ladies at the back are there any more issues you would like more of a say in?

Tenant H No, no really.

Tenant L No.

*Moderator* Not really? Quite happy with the way things are going.

Tenant H Aye.

(GHA Tenants Focus Group 1)

As the excerpt highlights, this was legitimated in terms of being 'satisfied' with their service. Landlords in turn, interpreted this lack of appetite for involvement as a sign that they were performing well: they perceived tenants as rational actors who only got involved when they had an 'axe to grind', and therefore when they were happy with the service there was no impetus for them to get involved. This is particularly pertinent in the stock transfer context, where the massive cash injection has allowed landlords to address tenants' fundamental concerns about the condition of the properties.

Tenants' views were however somewhat contradictory: despite the majority expressing no initial interest in getting involved, when probed if there were any issues on which they would like 'more of a say', or quizzed on specific examples, the majority responded positively as explored in the memos below:

Memo: (When I probed the group to think about practical issues they could have more of a say in, Tenant A acknowledges involvement can be merited under certain conditions.)

Tenant A <sup>FG1</sup>: 'I think it would only be if something came up that they [tenants] didn't agree with, they should be allowed to have their say ... just if something got up their nose.'

Memo: (When asked if she would like to have an input into selecting colours/styles of communal investment work, Tenant C indicated she would be interested in having her say; this is despite her earlier lack of interest.)

Tenant C <sup>FG1</sup>: 'That's something I would like, because I don't like dark gloomy colours, I like bright.'

Memo: (This position was echoed by another participant in the group who also placed value on having an input on decisions involving colours, styles etc. and that this should not be restricted to the committee; discussion from FGs 3 and 5 indicated they were already making such decisions.)

Tenant B <sup>FG1</sup>: 'You can't have just the LHO sitting round the table and making decisions about colours because colours involve everyone, colours have an emotional and a psychological effect and I don't want them choosing colours for me without I have a say so in it.'

Tenant N <sup>FG3</sup>: 'A simple thing like the decoration of this hall the [paint colours] was all there for people to look at.'

Memo: (By contrast in FG 2, one tenant argued this was a trivial issue compared to who was moving into the houses and the decline of the area – an issue the majority of participants expressed an interest in having more say in.)



Tenant A<sup>FG1</sup>: 'I think that's a kind of triviality compared to sick in the lifts and who they are letting move in.'

This indicates a latent motivation to participate in a range of decision making from practical issues (e.g. colours of doors, upkeep of communal areas) to more political questions (e.g. housing allocations, anti-social behaviour). Such an instrumental approach to participation, in which tenants will only get involved when an issue directly affects them, also suggests that tenants' levels of satisfaction may only be limited and conditional. Interestingly, the main issue that tenants articulated they wanted more control over was housing allocations. Paradoxically, this is the very sphere of decision making they are excluded from because it is protected by statute.<sup>5</sup> This constraint on local autonomy and control highlights the limitations of empowering tenants through participation processes. Strategic policy decisions remain within the remit of central government, with citizen participation occurring within strictly delimited parameters (for further discussion see McKee, 2008).

Focus group discussions also indicated that a plethora of practical barriers continue to obstruct tenants' latent motivation to become involved. For example, tenants described: a lack of available transport and inconvenient meeting times; the cost and availability of childcare; a lack of awareness of the opportunities available to them; and perceived cliques within formal participation structures. The persistence of these long-standing issues, further underlines that there is more going on here than simply a lack of interest on the behalf of tenants. The inability of landlords to address these barriers is striking given the policy focus that the UK New Labour government has directed towards maximising user involvement post-1997. Participation is not however cost free. Rather it requires significant financial resourcing if it is to deliver its objectives.

### **Support for community ownership**

Despite the political desire to devolve ownership and control of social housing in Glasgow from the state to local communities, 'community ownership' does not appear to have won over the hearts and minds of tenants, with focus group research indicating a striking ambivalence towards plans for Second Stage Transfer of the housing stock. For example, when asked if they supported community ownership in order for their LHO to own as well as manage the local housing stock, the majority of participants from the LHO case studies (17 out of 22 tenants) responded they simply 'did not know', and qualified this statement by professing they simply did not have enough information or knowledge about the subject to have an informed opinion. Only one tenant expressed positive support for the proposals, with another four exhibiting strongly negative views.

In particular, one tenant expressed concern about whether there would be enough professional support to help tenants make decisions; indeed she questioned the entire legitimacy of tenants making decisions that involved such significant sums of money and which had potential ramifications for other people in the community. This position was firmly rooted in the rejection of the responsibility that tenant management demanded; she felt this should remain with paid professionals and not lay tenants.

You need the professionals to be quite honest with you ... I wouldn't like to make those decisions ... as I say we need the professional people ... I wouldn't make the decisions, no

way ... there's no way I would make decisions for all these people. (GHA Tenant, Focus Group 5)

Although this focus group research was small scale, and care therefore needs to be taken interpreting the results, its general findings have been echoed by GHA's own citywide tenant survey (Communities Scotland, 2007: 46).<sup>6</sup> Crucially, this suggests that whilst community ownership may have become a life project and top priority for LHOs actors (i.e. housing practitioners and 'active' tenants), it was not necessarily accorded the same emphasis amongst ordinary tenants. Whilst tenants will mobilise around issues they are interested in and affect them, this does not necessarily equate with a desire to become involved in formalised community governance structures. By focusing overwhelmingly on promoting local 'ownership', the Glasgow transfer therefore adopts a very narrow view of participation that is overwhelmingly focused on the 'management committee'. In this context, tenants' scepticism about Second Stage Transfer can be interpreted as a rejection of the Scottish Executive's conflation of tenant participation with tenant management. This is a significant finding given the political emphasis upon delivering 'community ownership' in Glasgow, especially as plans for Second Stage Transfer cannot be realised without majority tenant support at local ballots.

The elision of 'community ownership' with tenant management was also critiqued by key actors within the wider housing/political community. Whilst they were supportive of the political ambition to 'empower' tenants, they nonetheless believed that what tenants' wanted was ownership of decisions, but not necessarily the housing.

I would say the tenants we work with don't see ownership as an issue ... Not everyone wants to get up fifty hours of their week to sit on a management board. And if you sit on a landlord board you're part of the landlord operation ... This term community ownership is a problem ... What does ownership mean: own the houses or influence decisions; I think local people would rather have [the] latter. (Senior Representative, Tenant/Housing Association Representative Organisation)

The quote also highlights how tenant management may actually incorporate local activists into established legislative and regulatory frameworks, thereby undermining their potential for spontaneous and critical protest. Again, this underlines the need for RSLs to consider alternative mechanisms of involvement, which enable tenants to engage on their own terms and in pursuit of their own agendas. In this context, single issue involvement may be just as valid as a regular participation in formal structures. Indeed, whilst housing staff were frustrated by low turn-out at formalised events such as the Annual General Meeting, they did recall high attendance at special open days in which tenants could choose between different options for their new kitchens and bathrooms, or at ad-hoc meetings where planned investment for the local area was to be discussed.

## **Conclusion**

Through the case study of the Glasgow housing stock transfer, this paper has highlighted how the emphasis on empowering social housing tenants through 'community ownership' has created a divide between the 'responsible' participants and the 'inactive' majority. It has resulted in those individuals who choose to opt out of participation processes

being constructed as apathetic, alienated or excluded, and subject to professional interventions in order for them to be 'empowered' to mobilise in their own interests. In turn, this has created new forms of professional knowledge and a reinvigorated role for housing practitioners in enabling, facilitating and maximising tenant participation. Power is therefore not a zero sum game, for the 'empowerment' of social housing tenants is paralleled by the emergence of new professional practices. This is a finding which is likely to have wider relevance in other fields of social policy where there has been a similar emphasis on reconstructing the citizen as both 'active' and 'responsible' for their own well-being.

Despite the 'problematism' of inactive tenants, focus group research suggests that tenants' reasons for non-involvement are more than simply lack of interest. Tenants exhibited an instrumental approach to participation, and were willing to mobilise around issues they deemed important. Whilst this suggests a latent motivation to participate, it nonetheless represents a rejection of the emphasis of 'community ownership' upon local control of decision making, and the conflation of tenant participation with tenant management this implies. This is significant given the top-down emphasis by governments across the UK on modernising housing governance through stock transfer, especially in the Scottish context with its policy emphasis on 'community ownership'.

The more pragmatic approach to participation, as expressed by tenants themselves, is also something that landlords need to both acknowledge and engage with directly, by providing a diversity of opportunities for tenants to make their voices heard, both within and beyond the management committee. The importance of landlords adopting a proactive approach to minimising the barriers to participation also emerged as significant – especially as these are long-standing, well-documented issues that would require little imagination to address.

In conclusion, this paper argues for a rejection of the moral discourse underpinning tenant participation, which assumes that tenants will behave 'responsibly' and get involved. In doing so, it advocates the need to be sensitive to the varied reasons why tenants choose not to actively participate, and for housing policy to respect the rights of tenants to choose how they become involved, if at all. These findings are pertinent to other spheres of social policy, in which public participation has been a central feature of modernising reforms, and both autonomy and responsibility devolved from the state to active citizens.

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### **Notes**

1 The functions of tenant participation are potentially diverse, involving deciding, shaping, delivering and evaluating housing services. This can range from a one-way information flow, to involvement in

housing management through formal governance structures. Tenant participation and tenant management are therefore not necessarily synonymous.

2 Stock transfer has not been a feature of housing policy in Northern Ireland (Paris *et al.*, 2003).

3 This refers to the first Labour–Liberal Democrat coalition government in Scotland, elected in 1999. Following the Scottish election victory of the SNP in 2007, the Scottish Executive has since been renamed the Scottish Government.

4 The statutory right to participation requires social landlords in Scotland to develop and implement a tenant participation strategy, to establish arrangements for 'registering' tenant groups that meet specified criteria and to consult with individual tenants and registered tenants' groups on a range of specific issues (Scott, 2004).

5 Social Housing must be allocated on a needs basis, with the most vulnerable tenants being awarded priority.

6 GHA's tenant satisfaction survey indicated that 91 per cent of tenants who responded had not heard of Second Stage Transfer, 57 per cent were not interested in Second Stage Transfer for their area and 39 per cent were unsure whether they wanted it (cited in Communities Scotland, 2007: 46)

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