

1.6 Ensuring equal opportunities

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 was a major landmark in re-enforcing and promoting equal opportunities in Scottish housing. The Act requires landlords to approach tenant participation in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and observes equal opportunity requirements laid out in other legislation (section 106). Other relevant legislation includes the:

- Equal Pay Act 1970;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The Act introduced specific responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and tenant participation, and landlords are required to:

- ensure barriers to participation such as language, accessibility, timing, costs for tenants and childcare have been considered;
- consider the needs of equalities groups and proactively involve traditionally excluded groups in the participation process (see section 2.7 & 2.8); and
- ensure registered tenant organisations promote equal opportunities and are open and accessible to all tenants through the criteria for registration.

Registered tenant organisations (RTOs) are also required to promote equal opportunities for those in the communities they represent and their commitment to do so should be included in their constitution. Landlords should ensure, through support and encouragement, that equal opportunities are at the centre of their activities. RTOs should proactively seek the participation of excluded groups in their own organisation. See sections 2.7 & 2.8. More information on how some landlords have involved excluded groups are provided in the good practice briefings at Section 5.