

# Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers - Type I Summary Report

February 2010

Forth Housing Association Ltd.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND AUDIT OUTCOME

Forth Housing Association Ltd is a not-for-profit housing provider, a Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, and a Registered Scottish Charity. The Association is governed by a Management Committee. It is a relatively new Housing Association having been established 21 years ago. Over the past 21 years the Association has markedly grown; it currently lets just over 500 homes, is undertaking a large development project and expects to have a further 250 homes available for let in the next 5 years. Forth Housing Association provides housing across Stirling and has formed very effective partnerships with neighbouring Housing Associations.

The small team involved in the provision of information and advice are dedicated to ensuring the delivery of the aims of the Association and that tenants are afforded a comprehensive information and advice service.

The remit of the service is:

- To provide quality advice and information as an integral part of our service to meet our customers needs.
- Signposting customers to appropriate agencies where we are unable to provide the type of service required by them. Advising them on the availability of these services from other agencies and making referrals as appropriate.

### 1.1 AUDIT OUTCOME

The on-site audit visit took place on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

Following the audit visit, it was concluded that the advice service provided by Forth Housing Association Ltd. meets the requirements of the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers (the Standards).

Forth Housing Association Ltd is accredited to the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers in the topics and for the types of service shown below until February 2014.

#### Housing topics accredited

TOPIC	Applied for	Accredited
2.1 Rent Arrears		
2.2 Mortgages/Secured Loans		
2.3 Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit		
2.4 Disrepair in Rented Housing		

2.5 Housing Options		
2.6 Discrimination in Housing		
2.7 Eviction		
2.8 Anti Social Behaviour		
2.9 Harassment and Illegal Eviction (includes race discrimination)		
2.10 Homelessness		
2.11 Relationship Breakdown		
2.12 Rent: Private Sector		
2.13 Security of Tenure		
2.14 Statutory Tenancy rights		
2.15 Repair and Improvement Grants		

## 2 AUDIT FINDINGS

### 2.1 STRENGTHS

The service is delivered by a small team who work well together and have a clear understanding of their own roles and those of their colleagues. The agency's remit is clearly understood and is actively implemented by all of the staff involved in the delivery of the service.

Staff directly involved in the provision of information and advice are very experienced and appear passionate about the service that they provide. Their experience, knowledge, and comprehensive understanding of local advice providers undoubtedly benefits service users.

### 2.2 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### a) PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

**Recommendation:** Formal guidance in relation to how any potential conflicts of interest between the agency or agency staff and their service users in relation to advice provision should be incorporated into all relevant policy documents.

(Standard 4.1)

b) DIRECTORY OF REFERRAL CONTACTS

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Association produce a directory of relevant service providers, clearly detailing; contact details; opening hours; type of service provided and the range of issues that they can provide advice and assistance with. This list should be updated at least annually in order to ensure that the information remains current.

(Standard 4.3)