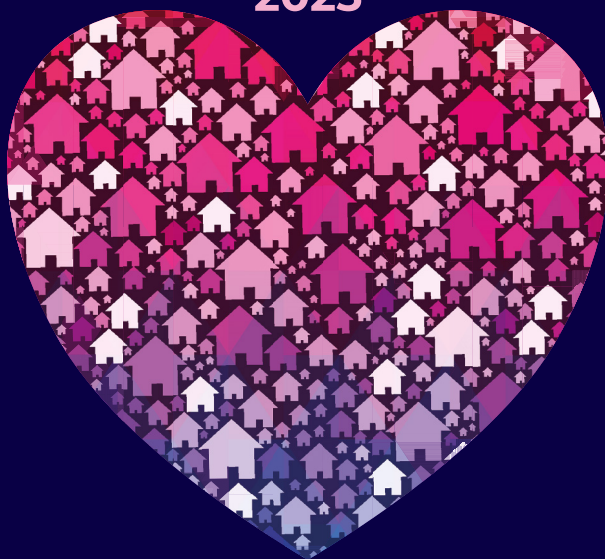# SCOTTISH HOUSING DAY REPORT

EVERYBODY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS

SCOTTISH
HOUSING DAY
2025

17 SEPTEMBER 2025

1 Introduction

Our neighbourhoods and communities affect us all and the most recent Scottish Household Survey shows that across Scotland, the majority of people (95 per cent) rate their neighbourhood as a 'good' place to live, with 55 percent of adults rating their neighbourhood as a 'very good' place to live, albeit this is a slight fall from 57 per cent in 2022.

But what is it that makes people positive about their community? Is it place-based features, people-based features or is it something else?

For Scottish Housing Day, we wanted to explore what it means to be part of a good community in Scotland today, because 'everybody needs good neighbours'.

We know that good neighbours and strong communities can lead to positive outcomes for individuals including social support, reduced loneliness and better physical health.

However, we also know that realisation of this across the country is patchy. Peoples' experiences are not consistent and often the power local people have to direct change is a consequence of other organisations and agencies.

For Scottish Housing Day 2025, we undertook a survey of housing professionals and tenants to better understand their attitudes towards their neighbours and communities. We received 66 responses to the survey which closed on 11 July 2025, and we hosted a workshop on 9 July with 21 participants. The insights and findings from the survey and workshop have been used to inform this report.

In this report, we conclude with a call for government and local people to have a renewed focus on building and supporting communities across Scotland, because everybody needs good neighbours.

Callum Chomczuk
Chair of the Scottish Housing Day Steering Group 2025

The Scottish Housing Day 2025 partners are: Age Scotland, The Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO), The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland, Co-Housing Scotland, East Ayrshire Council, Edinburgh Tenants Federation, Hanover Housing Association, Housing Options Scotland, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF), Kingdom Housing Association, Scotland's Housing Network, The Scottish Association of Landlords (SAL), The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), The Scottish Government, Share, SURF – Scotland's Regeneration Forum, TIS, TPAS Scotland, Under One Roof, The University of Stirling, West Dunbartonshire Council, and the Wheatley Group.

2 The place

We asked respondents what they thought about the place-based features of their neighbourhood.

On the whole, they highly rated their community as a good place to live. 43 out of 66 respondents to the survey said that their community is a good or very good place to live, with each of those respondents noting that they felt a connection to their neighbourhood. Only three respondents said that their community is a poor or very poor place to live and of those, only two reported that they feel no real connection to the local area. This is also reflected in the online workshop, where all but one participant noted that their community is a good place to live.

However, despite the overall positive perception of one's own neighbourhood, there is a more mixed view of whether things had improved in the last two years. While 18 respondents in the survey felt that their neighbourhood had improved over this period, 17 said that it had worsened and 31 out of 66 said that things had stayed the same. This perhaps suggests that people are favourable towards their community, regardless of the objective reality of its amenities and what it offers.

In addition, community gatherings/street parties are a recognisable feature to a significant minority with 22 out of 66 people (a third) noting that they are sometimes or often present in their community. However, two thirds of respondents (44 people) noted that they are rarely or never present.

Finally, clean streets are also a highly visible feature of neighbourhoods, with almost half (32) of respondents noting that these are present within their community and only 10 respondents reporting that these are rare or never present. Conversely, despite more than half of respondents recognising that their neighbourhood had clean streets, more than a third (24) said that litter is often or always present in their community, while the same number said it is rare or never present. This overlap in responses perhaps highlights that communities are not one thing and they can contain a mix of positive and negative characteristics at the same time, even characteristics that can seemingly be in contradiction to each other.

3 The people

When asked about the specific people-based features of their neighbourhood, it was noted by 58 respondents that they often or always experience thoughtful neighbours, whereas only eight respondents said that these were never present or a rarity. Correspondingly, only nine respondents noted that disputes with neighbours were often or always present, with 27 reporting that such disputes were rare or never happened. Equally, less than a fifth of respondents (12) reported that noisy and disruptive neighbours were often or always present, and more than half (26) said that this is something that is rarely or never present. The survey responses here show that respondents have a real regard for the people-based features of their community.

The next few questions explored the concept of trust in the community, asking respondents if they feel that they could turn to someone in their neighbourhood for advice or support. On that question, 33 respondents, exactly half, strongly agreed with the premise, while only seven respondents (10 per cent) somewhat or strongly disagreed. In the workshop, the issue of trust came up strongly and the need for local people and organisations to trust each other to achieve local priorities.

Strengthening this view, when asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, one respondent said:

"If I was alone and needed help, I could rely on someone in this neighbourhood to help me."

48 out of 66 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while only eight respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. While in an emergency, respondents noted that they would be willing to offer help to their neighbours and community, with 58 out of 66 respondents noting that they would offer help to those that may not be able to cope. This shows that perhaps people are more willing to offer help than ask for it themselves, and there is a lack of confidence or trust when it comes to seeking help if required.

4 Community living: how you and your neighbours behave

When respondents were asked about the best characteristics of their neighbourhood, the answers became clustered around the following themes, which are a mix of both people and place-based characteristics:

- Peace and quiet: the words "peaceful," "quiet," and "tranquillity" came up often
- Friendly neighbours: "neighbours," "friendly," "helpful," "respectful," and "community spirit" were repeatedly mentioned
- Safety and security: a strong sense of feeling safe in one's home or street was mentioned here
- Green spaces and nature: including "woods," "forest," "green space," "sea," and "environment"
- Convenience: proximity to local amenities like schools, shops, and public transport.

Equally, when asked about the worst aspects of their community, many respondents reported feeling frustrated or disappointed, especially in relation to council inaction and ongoing issues, while others expressed genuine concern for safety and cleanliness. Although one respondent stood out with their positivity:

"Nothing – I love where I live."

The main themes of concern were:

Environmental neglect
- o Mentions of rubbish, fly tipping, dog mess, and overgrown grass. Streets are often described as untidy or overlooked by the council.

Transport and infrastructure
- o Poor public transport services, uneven pavements, remote locations, and lack of adequate car parking (especially misuse of disabled spaces).
- o Speeding cars and inadequate traffic calming measures also came up multiple times.

Social isolation and lack of engagement
- o Comments about neighbours not getting involved, low communication, and a sense of disconnection.

Crime and antisocial behaviour
- o Drug misuse, groups of intimidating youths, vandalism, and general safety concerns.

Children and youth concerns
- o Lack of outdoor play but also children out late with little supervision, and youths showing less respect than in the past.

Neighbours
- o Misinformation, gossip, excessive parties, inconsiderate parking, and some spreading criticism or negativity about new housing developments

We also asked people to reflect on their own behaviour and how they would characterise it with regards to neighbourliness, as well as some examples as to how they and their neighbours behave towards each other. In the responses, there is a tone of pride and responsibility, as people clearly value their communities and the mutual support they offer.

Theme	Quality	Real life example
Kindness and support	Being caring, compassionate and empathetic.	Checking on neighbours, bringing food, emotional support.
Practical help	Willingness to assist with daily needs.	Taking bins out/in, accepting parcels, helping with shopping.
Safety and vigilance	Looking out for neighbours' wellbeing and surroundings.	Watching houses while away, reporting suspicious activity, holding spare keys.
Respect and consideration	Being thoughtful of others' needs and behaviours.	Keeping noise levels down, tidying gardens, clearing snow and paths.
Being part of the community	Involvement in local groups.	Volunteering for committees, running sports clubs, participating in school activities.
Childcare and pet care	Helping care for each other's loved ones.	Pet-sitting, child-minding, helping kids get to school.
Connection	Being open to communication and sharing.	Lending tools, recommending tradespeople.
Emergency help	Stepping up when a neighbour is in crisis.	Offering transport, providing daily care during illness, helping with legal issues

5 What's next: how do we systemise improvement to neighbourhoods and communities?

How we drive systemic improvement is a point reiterated in the workshop, which highlighted good examples of local people helping each other through initiatives like litter picking and bringing bins in. The use of technology such as WhatsApp was also noted for bringing people together in a shared forum and helping to create a sense of community. However, it also highlighted the lack of local leadership from some local authorities, charities and agencies. Participants in this session centred on the issues of trust to improve neighbourhoods and communities. They reflected that any successful organisation needs the trust of the community and to have this they must (i) be present (ii) be impactful and (iii) be consistent.

These characteristics were considered critical to building trust between people and organisations and through this trust, systemic change can be made.

From the survey respondents, there is also recognition about the challenge of achieving long term change. Reflections were made about disengagement and apathy from some local people, as well as some areas being more transient and local people not developing deep relationships with each other.

Nonetheless, respondents made a number of suggestions which they feel would support sustainable improvements to their neighbourhood:

Physical environment and infrastructure

- Better housing options for privacy, space and comfort
- Improved maintenance of communal areas like stairwells and bins
- Safer public spaces through traffic calming and more police presence
- Responsible dog ownership
- Greater limits on disruptive developments such as short-term lets

Social activity

- Community events and activities: fairs, lunch clubs, group cleanups, daycentre initiatives
- Access to local and affordable shared spaces like cafes, community centres, swimming pools, gyms
- Encouraging interactions: simple greetings, helping neighbours, sharing resources
- Group communication: messaging groups for updates and neighbour support

Culture, respect and awareness

- Raising awareness of different cultural norms and encouraging acceptance
- Clarifying community expectations for new tenants
- Highlighting both active and passive forms of neighbourliness including noise levels

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The feedback from the survey and workshop highlights that local people are keen for connection, kindness, and convenience, but they're equally bothered by neglect, antisocial behaviour, and community disconnection.

Respondents highly value their community, particularly the people-based characteristics and for the most part, are proud to live there. However, they also recognise that there is need for improvement, particularly to the place-based features and believe that agencies, organisations and public bodies need to work with local people to develop long term plans and improvements. The tone of the respondents to the survey and in the workshop highlighted that when frustrations are voiced, it often comes from a place of wanting things to be better, not just complaining.

A key conclusion is that respondents highly value the people-based features of their communities and many of the suggestions made are to support more social interaction. However, respondents are also hesitant about expecting too much from their neighbours and would be more willing to offer, rather than ask, for assistance, suggesting a lack of community confidence and trust. This lack of trust between people, and between people and organisations, is identified as the biggest barrier to improving neighbourhoods.

Recommendations

For public sector

1. Invest in core duties. This means addressing frustrations like fly-tipping, rubbish collection and maintaining roads and pavements, as well as ensuring things like grass cutting and street cleaning.
2. Proactive and responsive housing maintenance will help build trust and improve housing stock.
3. Dynamic policing can address local peoples' concerns about safety at certain times of the year.
4. Consider traffic calming measures in high-speed zones.
5. Provide better street lighting, accessible transport, and well-maintained public spaces, especially in areas with older or disabled populations.
6. Review parking issues, ensuring designs fit current car ownership and mobility needs.
7. Offer grants or support for local improvement efforts, like neighbourhood clean-ups, event planning, or property enhancements.
8. Actively listen to community feedback and be present throughout the year. Ensure local people can feed into decision making but in doing so help build community capacity. Make getting involved easy, fun and rewarding.

For local people

1. Support and start online groups or messaging channels for street-level co-ordination. Many already use WhatsApp and Facebook to share updates, check in on each other, and organise help.
2. Help with wheelie bins, deliveries, and snow clearing – actions often mentioned with pride and warmth.
3. Keep gardens tidy, respect shared spaces, and offer help where you can. Visible care cultivates mutual respect–even among people who "keep to themselves."