

**END HOMELESSNESS**  
ST. JOHN'S **#WECANENDIT**

**BUILDING WILL AMONGST LANDLORDS**

**#WECANENDIT**

# TODAY'S PRESENTER



**SHERWIN FLIGHT**

Landlord Engagement Lead  
End Homelessness St. John's

# ABOUT ME



2012

I became an active member of a Facebook group for tenants, later taking the group over. This provided a lot of insight into the problems people face.

2018

I started working for EHSJ on the creation of HomeConnect, including consultations with landlords and community agencies that deal with housing-related issues.

2020

HomeConnect was launched at the start of the pandemic to help ease the pressure on the shelter system. We started signing up new landlords for the program.





## Newfoundland Tenant & Landlord Support Group

Private group · 23.9K members

Join group



About Discussion

### About this group

The purpose of this group is to give tenants and landlords in Newfoundland and Labrador a place to ask questions about landlord-tenant issues, seek support from others, and share their stories.

If you have had a good, or bad, experience with a landlord feel free to share this in the group so that others may benefit from this information. [See less](#)



#### Private

Only members can see who's in the group and what they post.



#### Visible

Anyone can find this group.



#### Newfoundland and Labrador

# SLUMLORDS OF ST. JOHN'S (FACEBOOK GROUP)



## FIRST GROUP

In 2012 Slumlords of St. John's was the first social media group where people started to come together to share their experiences and problems as tenants in St. John's.



## A PLACE TO VENT

In the early days of the group most of the post were from tenants venting their frustrations with substandard landlords across the province, focusing mainly on the St. John's area.



## EXPOSED PROBLEMS

The group started to reveal the issues tenants were facing, and the fact that most people seemed unaware of their rights and responsibilities under the law.



## GREW RAPIDLY

The group grew rapidly as more tenants shared their stories, and people started wondering why more wasn't being done to prevent these problems from happening.

# REBRANDING: NEWFOUNDLAND TENANT & LANDLORD SUPPORT GROUP

## FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

While venting frustrations is still permitted, we wanted to move the group away from being just a place to complain to a place where people could get answers to their questions.

## BE MORE INCLUSIVE

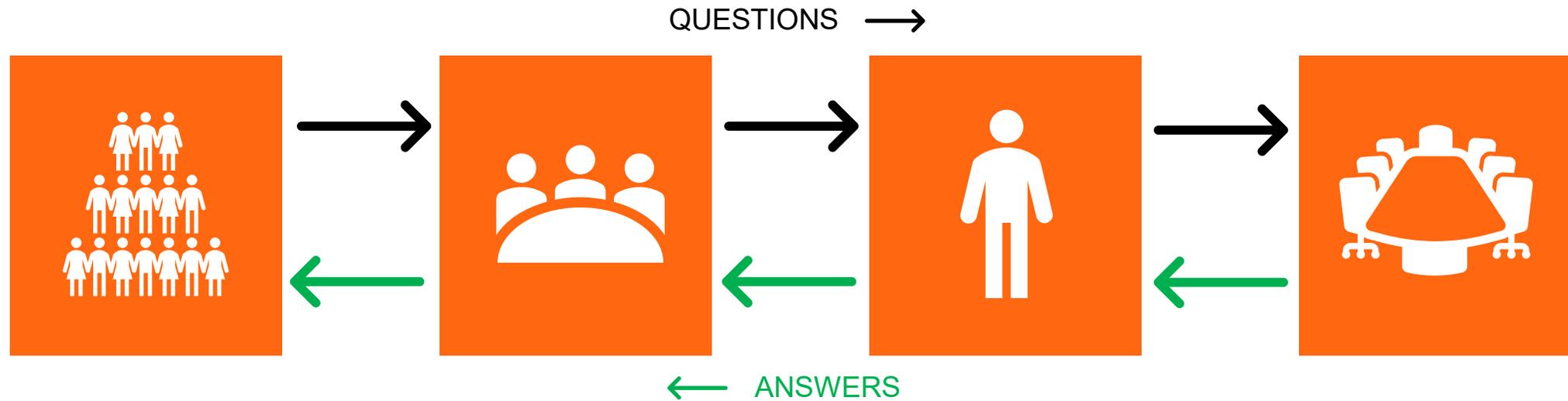
Renting is a two-way street, and landlords and tenants can't exist without each other. We decided to open the group to allow anyone with an interest to join, instead of excluding landlords.

## EXPAND PROVINCIALY

The rules for renting are the same province wide. By expanding beyond St. John's, we can help more people and spot any regional trends in the issues people are facing.

- Most of our 24,000 members are landlords, tenants, housing workers, and advocates.
- 80-90% of our members are active in the group on a monthly basis.
- Has become the go-to resource for landlords and tenants in the province.

# FLOW OF INFORMATION



## Members

Members post in the group or ask in the private chat if they have questions about their rights/responsibilities

## Moderators

Assist members with their questions. If unsure about something, issues are escalated to the Admin for further clarification

## Administrator

Ensures that Moderators have accurate info to assist members. If necessary, contact government for clarification on law or policies

## Government

It's important to direct questions to appropriate department. Residential Tenancies, Human Rights, Privacy, etc.



# 2017 RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

In 2017 recommendations were made to the government on ways to improve the Residential Tenancies Act.

- Recommendations were based on a review of common themes in the Facebook group, and the trends the Moderator team was seeing.
- Group polls and discussions were used to collect feedback from our members.
- Recommendations were supported with real-world examples taken directly from the group.

# GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

## New law strikes balance between landlords and tenants, Service NL Minister says

Landlords can evict without notice, fines increased, violence provisions added

Ryan Cooke · CBC News · Posted: May 17, 2018 12:36 PM NT | Last Updated: May 17, 2018



## Victims of domestic violence can end rental agreements under new legislation changes

Electronic communication is also now allowed for official notices

CBC News · Posted: Jan 07, 2019 11:00 AM NT | Last Updated: January 7, 2019



## IN DEPTH: Newfoundland and Labrador to see revamped law for tenants, landlords

Residential Tenancies Act set for an overhaul

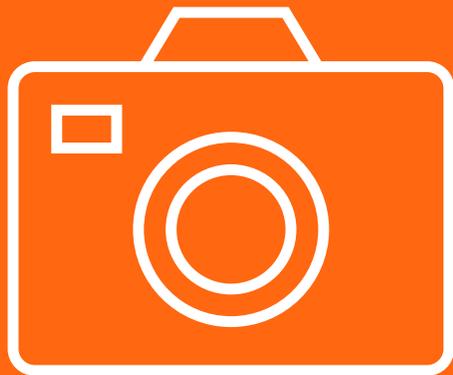
Ashley Fitzpatrick | Posted: May 17, 2018, 4:46 a.m. | Updated: May 18, 2018, 4:41 a.m. | 3 Min Read



“That’s huge when we use groups like that because that’s where you’ll hear the stories.” – MHA Kevin Parsons

- Met with senior Government officials to discuss recommendations.
- Invited for a technical briefing before the bill was introduced.
- Thanked in the media for participation in the consultation process.
- New Residential Tenancies Act with improvements for landlords and tenants.
- Helped build the relationship between our group and Government.

# MEDIA COVERAGE

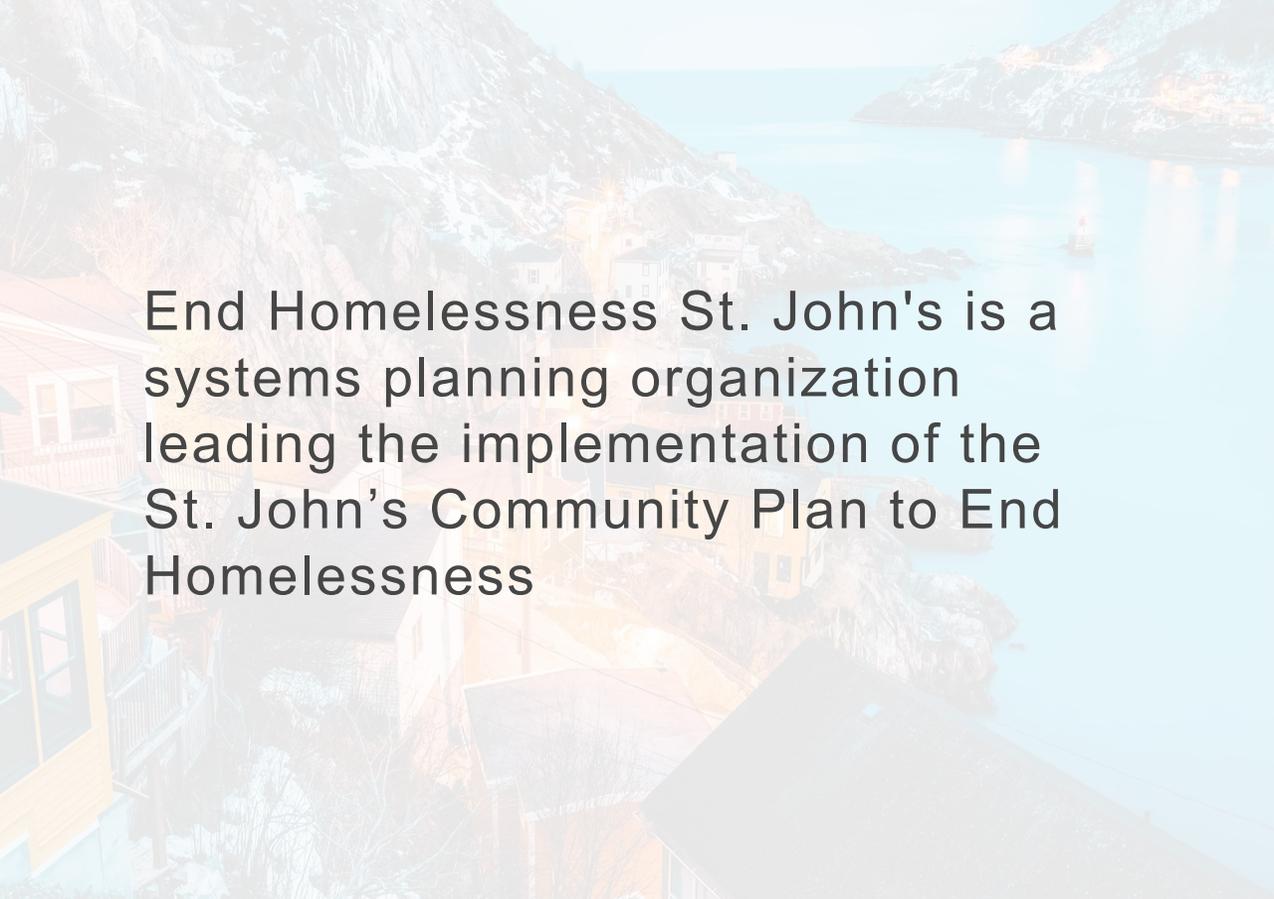


- **Why a renters' rights advocate launched a website to fight the (Newfoundland) Power**  
CBC - Aug 21, 2018
- **Renting to students in N.L? Some insurance companies might refuse to cover you**  
CBC - Nov 1, 2019
- **Sex-for-rent offers quietly persist in N.L. — and this tenant dropped everything to escape it**  
CBC - May 5, 2020
- **Finding a Rental Property in NL Getting More Difficult: Support Group**  
VOCM - July 13, 2022
- **When a scam hits home: St. John's man spots suspicious rental ad for his mom's house**  
CBC - July 15, 2022
- **Come Home Where? A look at Airbnb's impacts on housing in St. John's**  
The Independent - July 22, 2022
- **The housing crisis in NL means that tenants are “desperately” looking for an apartment**  
Canada Today - July 25, 2022

# END HOMELESSNESS

ST. JOHN'S **HomeConnect**

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End Homelessness St. John's is a systems planning organization leading the implementation of the St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness



We work together, with all our stakeholders towards a vision in which every resident of St. John's has a place to call home

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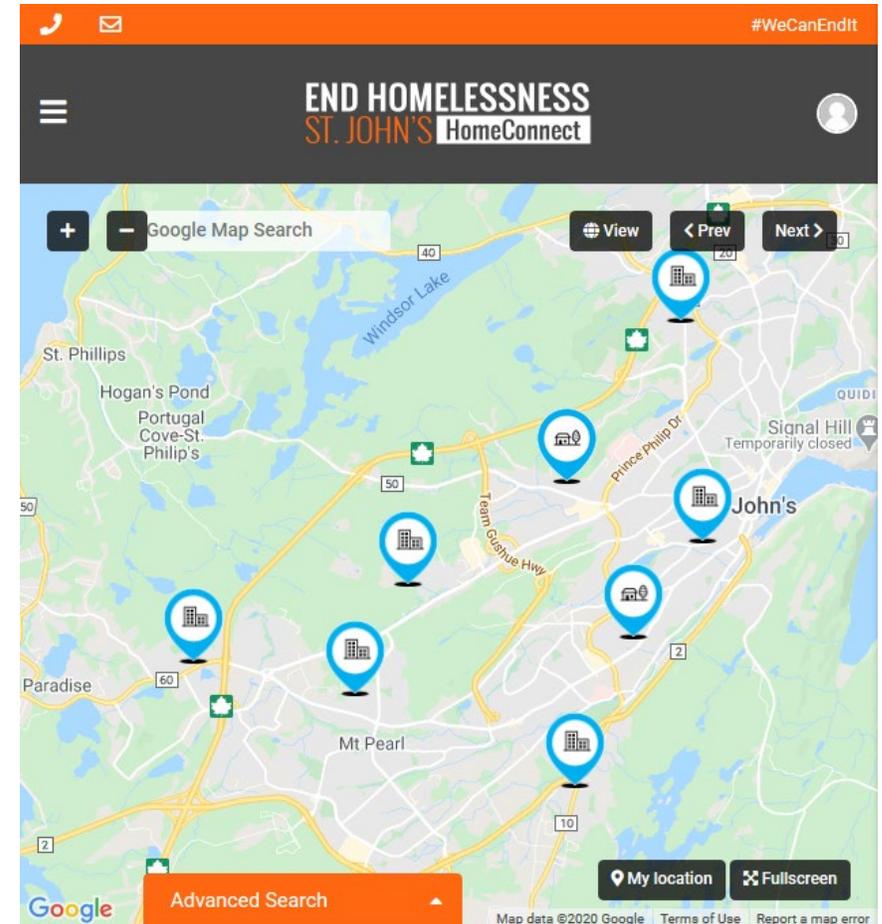
# COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

- EHSJ conducted consultations with landlords and community partners to see what their struggles were, and how we could help.
- Landlords were reluctant to rent to tenants they perceived as riskier.
- Little or no support for landlords in the community.
- Community agencies were struggling to find suitable homes for their clients.
- The concept for HomeConnect was developed.



# WHAT IS HOMECONNECT?

- A Centralized Housing Inventory
- A Standardized Process
- Supports & Benefits



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# LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT



## WHERE TO LOOK

Look for landlords anywhere that landlords in your community advertise. Ask existing landlords and agencies to refer landlords to you if they may be interested.



## HOW TO ENGAGE

Let landlords know who you are and why you're contacting them. Explain how your program can benefit them and solve problems they may be having.



## SEALING THE DEAL

Emphasize the benefits of your program and some of the ways you've been able to help other landlords in the community solve problems they've had.



## INCENTIVES MAY HELP

Things like signing bonuses, training opportunities, and the chance to network with other landlords are incentives that can help persuade hesitant landlords to sign up.



# BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

Setting realistic expectations with landlords is the key to a successful relationship.

- Be honest about your program and how it works.
  - Be up-front about the types of situations that may arise.
  - Maintain frequent communication with landlords and communicate in a way that works for them.
  - Be willing to listen to landlord feedback, good and bad!
  - Consider networking events that help bring landlords and program staff together.
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# MAINTAINING LANDLORD RELATIONSHIPS



Regular communication with landlords is a very important part of the relationship-building process.



Educational opportunities help landlords develop skills that can benefit everyone in the community.



Ensuring landlords are equal partners in the relationship will make them feel like they are part of the decision-making process.



Incentives can help you find in-demand rental units and help encourage hesitant landlords to give the program a try.

*Not every landlord will be a good fit for your program.  
Losing a landlord isn't a failure, it's a learning opportunity and can be a chance to improve your program!*

# BE THERE FOR THE LANDLORD

*“You’re the only one that seems to care how I feel as a landlord”*

- HomeConnect Landlord

*“At least I have you that I can call if I need help or information”*

- HomeConnect Landlord

*“Any issues that have come up under HomeConnect come up outside of HomeConnect too. At least with HomeConnect I’m not on my own to sort the problems out”*

- HomeConnect Landlord





# MORE INFORMATION

[sflight@wecanendit.com](mailto:sflight@wecanendit.com)



[WECANENDIT.COM](http://WECANENDIT.COM)



[FB.COM/WECANENDIT709](https://fb.com/wecanendit709)



[@EHSJ709](https://twitter.com/EHSJ709)