

# Resident Engagement Policy



<b>Reference:</b>	HS_POL_CCC_RES_0.1	<b>Author:</b>	Lorna Collisson
<b>Scope:</b>	Board Members Employees Residents	<b>Approved by:</b>	Board
<b>Legislation:</b>	Bribery Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR)	<b>Date of approval:</b>	18 May 2022
<b>Regulatory/ Governance:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RSH Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard</li><li>• RSH Neighbourhood and Community Standard</li><li>• Equality Act 2010</li><li>• The Charter for Social Housing Residents</li><li>• NHF Code of Governance 2020</li></ul>	<b>Date of next review:</b>	2023
<b>Related Policies:</b>	Volunteer Policy Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Vulnerable Customer Policy Data Protection Policy Data Retention Policy Whistleblowing Policy Professional Boundaries Policy ICT Acceptable Use Policy Safeguarding Policy		

## 1. Policy Statement

1.1 This policy supports our Corporate Strategy, and Resident Engagement Strategy and sets out the principles of our approach to resident engagement and involvement to ensure that residents' needs are the focus of our strategic decision-making and that residents are supported in the wider scrutiny of our services. The policy is also aligned with our Digital Strategy in supporting resident engagement and participation in a variety of ways, reflecting the growing need for

online engagement with residents.

1.2 This document refers to ‘residents’ and much of the work we do will be with tenants of the organisation, but due to the nature of the work we do, the tenures we manage and our wider community activities we will also engage and listen to those stakeholders who are not ‘tenants’.

1.3 For Housing Solutions, Resident Engagement is a way in which we can work collaboratively with and through those people who live in the homes we provide, to identify and address service delivery and community issues, working closely together to deliver a solution. We aim to work in partnership with residents and create an environment and culture where we continuously listen to concerns, so that we can allow services to continually evolve and meet resident’s needs.

1.4 Housing Solutions is focused on providing localised and personalised services to residents, ensuring that we not only meet their needs but also exceed their expectations. We are a community based, resident focused organisation and resident engagement is a key part of what we do. Our mission is to make our residents proud of where they live and our colleagues proud of where they work. We have three strategic objectives to underpin our mission:

- Safe, to keep residents and colleagues safe
- Satisfied, value for money services for residents and fulfilling careers for colleagues
- Sustainable, deliver more effective services and more efficient homes

We cannot be successful in the delivery of these objectives, or know if we have done the right thing unless we are engaging with residents in a meaningful and effective way.

1.5 Housing Solutions is committed to listening to the voice of the resident and is committed to the promotion of resident engagement in empowering residents to participate in the work of Housing Solutions in different ways. Whether you are living in social housing, sheltered accommodation, a supported property, a shared owner, or you are a leaseholder who owns their home, we want residents to have a real role in how Housing Solutions operates, which helps the organisation to deliver effective services and meet the needs of the diverse communities it serves.

We have several different forums in which residents can get involved and are

seeking to develop these further as part of our commitment to engagement, listening to residents on what are most effective for them, and in doing so overcome the barriers to engagement. Currently these forums are;

- Scrutiny and Improvement Team (SIT)
- Community Living Panel (Older Peoples Housing)
- E-Panel
- Homeowner Panel

We also support a number of informal feedback events where we encourage engagement and partnership working including Estate Action days, 'Stay and Play' sessions for younger parents and social activities in sheltered schemes.

In line with our Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy priorities we will use these forums and events, to increase resident data in the categories where we hold least information so that we can develop a deeper understanding of both current and future resident needs. As we evolve the quality of data held, we will seek to improve how we can use resident satisfaction data to identify, target and work with underrepresented groups.

1.6 We work in a challenging environment, where encouraging good levels of engagement and involvement and then working with residents to deliver this, is vital for Housing Solutions and for the communities we serve. We want the aims and aspirations of Housing Solutions to be closely aligned to those of our communities, setting the right direction of travel for our team, residents and wider stakeholders. That means we'll need to be agile and make the best use of digital technology in order to enhance the engagement offer. The 2022 – 25/6 Resident Engagement Strategy gives more detail on how we will achieve this, but we will seek to make better use of existing and new channels for social media;

1.6.1 More resident feedback and development of Facebook

1.6.2 More regular and coordinated activity on Twitter, Next Door, and local community group sites

1.6.3 Adopting a 'Tik Tok' style approach to information, to attract younger residents, and offer engagement activities

1.7 The need for effective resident engagement runs through our Corporate Plan

objectives and strategy, to deliver more effective services and more efficient homes in collaboration with others, building on our community profile and working with community groups. We cannot be successful and know we have done the right things unless we are engaging our residents effectively and meaningfully. This policy underpins our Resident Engagement Strategy and is the starting point for our Resident Engagement Offer based on 4 clear principles

- 1.7.1 **A Range of Opportunities** - Residents will have, and will be made aware of a range of opportunities for engaging with Housing Solutions both formally, and informally
- 1.7.2 **Meaningful Influence** - We will ensure that residents can meaningfully influence service delivery, by facilitating input into the development and monitoring of services, and measuring the effects and improvements of our approach
- 1.7.3 **Resourcing & Enabling** Ensuring that residents are supported and encouraged to engage and become involved, providing the budgets and staffing resources that will deliver, provide access to personal development and support of key activities
- 1.7.4 **Information Flow** – That there is a clear information flow between Board, staff, residents, and the wider community. It is crucial that the ‘voice’ of the resident can clearly be heard at all levels of the organisation

## 2. Scope

### 2.1 Scope of the Policy

- 2.1.1 The Resident Engagement Policy applies to all Board Members, employees and involved residents of Housing Solutions.
- 2.1.2 The policy applies to all our resident engagement activities, which will include residents of all tenures; potential residents and the wider community in which we operate.

### 2.2 The aims of the Policy are to:

2.2.1 Overcome the barriers to engagement, including but not exclusive to those around age, digital inclusion, language, and disability.

2.2.2 Promote and embed engagement throughout the organisation;

2.2.3 Ensure that our residents are engaged at the earliest possible stage in the development of services or policies or changes which are likely to substantially impact them ;

2.2.4 Ensure residents feel empowered to engage with Housing Solutions and have influence and a voice in respect of decisions taken at all levels of the organisation; and.

2.2.5 To ensure that Housing Solutions complies with the necessary statutory and regulatory requirements, in respect of resident engagement and involvement.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
The Board, Chief Executive and Executive Team	Responsible for demonstrating a clear and active commitment to resident engagement, listening and reporting to residents regularly on delivery of our commitments under this policy.
The Director of Resident Services and Community	Responsible for ensuring this policy remains effective and up to date and in alignment with the Resident Engagement strategy provides a pathway for continuous improvement on engagement
Operational service leads	Responsible for ensuring their teams are aware of and abide by the wording and the principles set out in this policy, and the wider Resident Engagement strategy
Community Engagement Officer	Responsible for day-to-day activities and reporting in support of this policy and wider Resident Engagement strategy, maintenance, and monitoring of the action plan in conjunction with residents
Employees	Responsible for considering how residents can be more involved in their service area and promote opportunities for involvement

	wherever possible
Residents	Will hold us to account to ensure we are committed to resident engagement and meeting actions and targets set out within the Resident Engagement Strategy

#### 4. Legislation / Regulation / Governance

- 4.1 It is a regulatory requirement for Housing Solutions to have meaningful resident engagement, including mechanisms for co-regulation where it is clearly demonstrable that there can be a direct influence on services.
- 4.2 It is also a requirement that residents are made aware of these opportunities and are given a wide range of opportunities for engagement and influence including;
  - 4.2.1 Formulation and review of appropriate policies and strategic priorities
  - 4.2.2 Setting of service standards
  - 4.2.3 Scrutiny of Landlord performance
  - 4.2.4 Management / monitoring of repair and maintenance tasks, giving feedback and agreeing local offers around service delivery
- 4.3 Housing Solutions will ensure that we remain compliant with all regulation and guidance set out on page 1 of this policy. We will also ensure that the policy will be updated if there are any changes in legislation, guidance, or best practice.

#### 5. Recognition and Reward

- 5.1 We believe that everyone’s time and effort should be recognised and rewarded when working with us to help improve our services to residents. We incentivise residents to engage with us as a part of our resident involvement offer. We understand that recognition of residents’ work and time commitments through various means, including rewards and incentives, goes a long way to building stronger partnerships.

5.2 To make our rewards structure as fair as possible to all residents, monetary compensation is not provided as involvement activities are not considered as paid work. Remuneration in the form of monetary payments would also be deemed as a salary, which has tax and benefits implications, for both residents and Housing Solutions.

5.3 Rewards and Incentives offered may include:

- Thank you, events,
- Vouchers for those who participate on our Panels or Task and Finish Groups
- Seasonal gifts
- Prize draws
- Opportunities to attend conferences and other events
- Training opportunities

5.4 Any rewards or incentives are given in addition to expenses (see Volunteer Policy for further details on expenses).

## **6. Recognising the contribution of residents**

6.1 We value the contribution of all our residents and will regularly communicate and promote activities and involvement in a variety of formats. We will ensure that residents are appropriately supported and encouraged to get involved with Housing Solutions' service delivery and community-based activities.

6.2 We will consider all comments and suggestions made by residents.

6.3 We will promote where changes have been made due to resident involvement, and give reasons if something cannot be implemented.

6.4 We will provide training and practical support to residents to gain new skills within their volunteering role.

- 6.5 We will encourage involved residents to attend relevant training / conferences with external providers and partner agencies.
- 6.6 We will work to ensure full participation of residents in line with our commitments to diversity and inclusion, seeking to identify and remove barriers that may prevent the engagement of groups or individual residents. This will be achieved by providing tailored support and resources, taking account the diverse needs of the communities where we provide homes and services. This includes;
- 6.6.1 Funding, staffing and training – with a commitment to deliver and support key engagement and involvement activities
  - 6.6.2 Creating and funding training opportunities to increase resident skills and confidence.
  - 6.6.3 Assisting with recruitment to tenant bodies, both ‘corporate’ and local.
  - 6.6.4 Promoting how tenants / residents can become a member of the various involvement groups
  - 6.6.5 Analysing data to understand communities and work flexibly to reach diverse groups, taking the steps to prevent exclusion.
  - 6.6.6 Ensuring close cross directorate working, including a local Neighbourhood team engaging with residents on a daily basis to capture real time opinion and concerns and respond to them
  - 6.6.7 Organising a regular Tenants Conference including reasonable adjustments to make the event as accessible as possible.
- 6.7 By implementing the actions above, this will enable residents to fully engage with the organisation at a level, and in ways that suits them.

## **7. Procedure**

- 7.1 The Resident Engagement Strategy and action plan will support and develop the overall aims and objectives of this Policy, along with relevant timescales.



## **8. Vulnerable Residents**

- 8.1 We recognise that residents will engage with us in different ways and our approach must adapt and be flexible to accommodate the needs of all residents, especially those who are more vulnerable. We will work closely with colleagues and partners to sensitively engage with residents and aim to make involvement activities fully accessible. For further details please refer to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our Vulnerable Customer Policy.

## **9. Consumer Standards**

- 9.1 This policy is guided by two consumer standards:
- 9.1.1 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.
  - 9.1.2 The Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

## **10. Equality & Diversity**

- 10.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, and the Equality Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear, regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse, and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability, and disability.

## **11. Confidentiality**

- 11.1 All personal information, however received, is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation. This

includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, colleague, or board member

Confidential business information will also be treated sensitively.

11.2 Housing Solutions' employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a relevant legal basis for processing the information.

## **12. Review**

12.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice, or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.

12.2 Our performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our established reporting mechanisms to our Senior Management Team, Executive Team, Board, and associated committees.