



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

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CONTENTS

Section		<u>Page no</u>
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Our Definition of Resident Involvement	4
3.0	Support to Manage	6
4.0	Under Represented Groups	6
5.0	Our Aims	7
6.0	Our Approach to Achieving These Aims	7
7.0	Resources	9
8.0	Monitor and Review	9
	Appendix 1	11

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our commitment to involving residents in all that we do. The policy explains how we will engage with residents and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute effectively and equally in a way that suits them. We define a resident as being any customer of ours, regardless of tenure.
- 1.2 The policy has been written in consultation with our residents, staff and performance panel members, residents' panels, using suggestions from tenants across our region via a focus group, in consultation with our armchair panel and following publicity in our Chevin Views newsletter.
- 1.3 This policy supports the commitment we make in our business plan and in our resident involvement strategy to involve residents:

'to ensure that residents are given every opportunity to get involved in our business and in particular in the decisions that affect them and their communities. We will continue to work with residents to review the methods of engagement to ensure they are effective and relevant.'

- 1.4 In this policy we are mindful of the following:
 - i. The draft Tenant Services Authority standards setting out their expectation of associations to involve residents in all areas of activity and in particular the standard on Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
 - ii. The Housing Corporation's requirement (passported to the TSA) that associations to produce an annual involvement statement that sets out how tenants and residents can expect to be involved in the work of their housing associations and the benefits that this is expected to bring (2)
 - iii. The views of our residents. This is collated through satisfaction surveys at events (conferences, specific consultation days), on projects (like refurbishments, mystery shops), for service specific surveys and our annual resident panel survey. This is complimented by our profiling work informing us (by diversity category) who is involved in the different methods of involvement and so that we monitor take up of opportunity and adapt our engagement approach accordingly.
 - iv. Findings from our STATUS satisfaction survey (3) (last carried out in 2007 and due again in Autumn 2010) and on-going customer opinion surveys

- 2007 STATUS survey: Headline results – 85% satisfaction with Chevin as a landlord, 81% satisfaction with information and 60% satisfaction with account being taken of views
 - v. The Government’s Respect agenda (4) with particular reference to the commitments required by landlords to empower, reassure and tailor services for residents
 - vi. The Commission for Race Equality’s code of practice, which sets out a duty for public bodies to provide a fair and accessible service. In this context, we must ensure that we try to eliminate any discrimination or barriers to getting involved and to participating
 - vii. Current good practice – we continually seek out and remain abreast of good practice and innovation and to learn from this to improve our services where appropriate. We are members of Housemark and benchmark our resident involvement activities against others.
- 1.5 This policy is supported by our annual involvement statement which is drawn up and reviewed each year in consultation with residents.

2.0 Our Definition of Resident Involvement

2.1 We define resident involvement as:

‘The participation of residents, prior to, during and after any activity that affects them, their household or the community in which they live and by working together for mutual benefit to improve the services that all our customers receive’.

2.2 We believe that resident involvement covers a wide range of activities. We therefore offer a choice of involvement methods (outlined in our Get Involved leaflet) and a scale of involvement, from:

i. Information:

We define this as passing on information about our services, activities, strategies general information to keep residents up-to-date with the latest developments within the organisation. We will do this through letters, leaflets and our newsletters.

ii. Feedback:

a. We will seek feedback on our services, on how they affect our customers and what our customers think of them.

We will do this through satisfaction surveys and customer opinion surveys as well as resident inspectors and mystery shoppers. We will learn from expressions of dissatisfaction and complaints

b. We will provide feedback to our residents to demonstrate how their input has affected the way we do things and when services have been improved as a result. We will feedback to residents in the following ways:

- In Chevin Views – in our ‘You said – we did’ we will feedback to all tenants on changes to services as a result of involvement
- On our website – we will publicise our You said – we did, we will have a survey section to seek views on a different range of topics and we will advertise our menu of involvement and involvement documents
- At resident panel meetings to outline the ways we have changed things as a result of their involvement
- By letter to individual survey respondents
- In our annual review of resident involvement.

We will endeavour to feedback to residents as soon as possible after events of how their comments have influenced services or policies. We will seek to agree timescales and feedback mechanisms with residents on long-term projects or initiatives.

iii. Consultation:

By this, we mean that we will ask residents for an opinion of a proposal or new idea that we would like to introduce. We will do this through tenant and resident panels, focus groups, tenant conferences and our armchair panel.

iv. Involvement:

When residents become actively involved in our work, they have an opportunity to take part in our decision-making and will be involved in developing ideas and proposals to improve services. This can also mean helping us to monitor and review services.

Some examples of the ways that residents can get involved are: by becoming tenant Board members, through our Equality and Diversity panel (which has delegated authority from the Board for diversity matter), through the performance panel, by joining a residents' panel, by becoming involved in the selection of contractors.

There is an annual budget given to each resident panel and advertised to local residents for them to apply for money to use on improving their neighbourhood, to support community activities and or residents' groups.

- 2.3 We offer a menu of involvement methods so that residents can choose a level of engagement that they feel comfortable with. We are continually broadening the choices available to residents in response to customer surveys and we are committed to exploring more innovative and engaging ways for residents to get involved to ensure fair access to these opportunities. These are itemised in appendix one.

3.0 The Support to Manage

- 3.1 Although we recognise that our tenants do not have a statutory right to manage as defined by the Housing (Right to Manage) (England) Regulations 2008 we would fully support any request by our tenants to take on the management of services at their scheme. Should tenants wish to have more involvement in managing their homes and estates we will provide guidance and support to enable them to explore all the options.

4.0 Under Represented Groups

- 4.1 We are committed to providing appropriate opportunities to encourage resident involvement from our currently under represented residents.
- 4.2 We recognise that not all residents want to get involved in our work; in our 2005 STATUS survey 54% of tenants said that they did not want to get involved. We monitor the take up of our involvement events and activities and satisfaction with these. We know through our customer profiling work that there are some under represented groups and who are more difficult to attract to our involvement opportunities.
- 4.3 We have set out our commitment to involving Black and Minority Ethnic residents in our race equality strategy. Our profiling information shows us that 10% of our tenants are from a BME background; 7% of residents who get involved are from a BME background.

Results from our last STATUS survey in 2007 showed us that our BME tenants are slightly less satisfied than white British tenants with our services.

- 4.4 We know that younger tenants (especially those under the age of 30) are not represented in many of our involvement activities. We know that the most attractive methods of involvement are surveys, mystery shopping (which is paid) and electronic forms of communication.
- 4.5 We will use our annual involvement statement to identify new and innovative ways to attract new tenants and those in the under represented groups. These ways will include social networking, discussion portals on our website and a young person's reference group.
- 4.6 We are continually developing our consultation methods to encourage participation from other groups of residents who don't access our traditional consultation events, such as working tenants or the younger age groups.

5.0 Our aims

- 5.1 In consultation with residents, we have decided upon the following aims for resident involvement.
 - i. To put residents at the heart of our work and involving them in this process before, during and after decision-making on issues that affect them
 - ii. To develop a greater customer focus in all of our work to help us deliver better quality services and ones that customers want and need
 - iii. To seek out as many comments as possible to get a representative view from residents and to break down barriers to involvement through a better understanding of customers' needs
 - iv. To provide a choice in the ways residents can get involved, suitable to their commitment and their individual circumstances.

6.0 Our Approach to Achieving These Aims

- 6.1 When we are considering making any policy changes or changes to the way that we work, as a minimum we will involve our tenant Board and our residents' panels.

This is to ensure we retain a customer perspective when developing policies and procedures and to increase satisfaction with any changes or new initiatives that are introduced. This will be done before we consult more widely on these proposals.

- 6.2 The aim of our performance panel is to scrutinise and monitor service improvement action plans and to carry out service reviews based on key performance indicators, resident feedback and audits.
- 6.3 We will involve residents when carrying out a review of a service area. This will either be done through established groups like the re-investment group, disability panel, website group or we will hold specific events to ensure we listen to residents' views. Policies or projects will not be approved by the Board unless they have been through resident consultation and had an equality impact assessment carried out.
- 6.4 We will abide by the agreements within our tenants' and residents' panels membership document and code of conduct. We will monitor staff and residents adherence to these commitments.
- 6.5 We will consult all affected parties before implementing any changes to our practices, policies or strategies where the outcome is likely to affect residents, their households or the community in which they live. We will keep residents informed about how and what decisions are made.
- 6.6 We will provide a choice of involvement methods to allow residents to get involved or to comment on our work in a way that suits them and within a reasonable timescale so that we can take account of residents' views.
- 6.7 We will seek out residents' comments and views of our services to help us continually improve our services. We will learn from feedback we receive from opinion surveys, from satisfaction questionnaires and from complaints or compliments that we receive.
- 6.8 We will accept collective complaints from tenant and resident groups and from our panels. These will be given the same attention and priority as all complaints and will feed into our improvement mechanisms.
- 6.9 We will inform residents on how their comments have influenced or changed the way we operate or the way that services are delivered, or service improvements that have been implemented. We will agree with residents their preferred method for this information.

- 6.10 We will work in partnership with tenants' and residents' groups to improve their local area and the communities in which we work.
- 6.11 We will take account of individual representations that are made to us when taking account of residents' views when we are making proposals or considering changes to the way we work.
- 6.12 We will support residents with training and development, to ensure that they gain the skills and confidence to be able to put forward their views and to take advantage of the opportunities we offer.

7.0 Resources

- 7.1 In order to fulfil these commitments, we have a budget to support resident involvement. We will pay for residents' reasonable travelling expenses and parking, to allow them to attend events, and meetings. We will pay for childcare when it is required. We will ensure that our venues for events are accessible and suit the requirements of attendees. We will give good notice of when events are to be held and will be flexible with the timings of events to maximise attendance. Where residents cannot make a meeting or event, we will make alternative arrangements for information to be disseminated.
- 7.2 We will carry out periodic value for money exercises asking residents to rate the value of the work we do to help us to assess the benefit of it.
- 7.3 We will ensure that our budget for resident involvement is monitored monthly and reviewed on an annual basis.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 In order to determine our success with this policy we will:
- Monitor the take up of our resident involvement opportunities
 - Via Housemark benchmarking service, compare our involvement costs, numbers involvement, outcomes and changes to service
 - Carry out periodic satisfaction surveys of participants and survey our resident panel members annually and act on any areas of concern or dissatisfaction
 - Monitor, record and publicise the impact of our annual involvement statement

- Involve residents in a periodic review of this policy and our aims and commitments
- Keep a record of the impact that residents have had on our services, policies and procedures
- Ask front-line staff for their views of how resident involvement has brought about positive changes to estates or the way that we operate.

8.2 We will report the impact of our residents' panels activity annually to our Board. Minutes of resident panel meetings will be put onto our staff Intranet and external website as well as sent to the Performance Panel. The annual involvement statement will be developed with residents, approved by Board and its impact on services will be monitored twice yearly by our resident panels and reported to the Board.

Appendix One

These are the ways that residents can get involved in shaping and improving our services.

Method	Opportunity
INFORMATION	Correspondence
Newsletters	
Website	
FEEDBACK	
(i) From us	Newsletters
Website	
Presentations	
Tenants' conferences	
Tenants' and residents' panel meetings	
(ii) From you	Complaints and compliments
Tenants' talk back video	
Satisfaction surveys	
CONSULTATION	Armchair panel
Focus groups	
Tenants' and residents' panels	
Tenants' conferences	
Leaseholders' panel	
Component clinics	
Surveys and questionnaires	
Gala days/community events	
Community organisations	
INVOLVEMENT	Resident Board & committee members
Tenant and resident panels	
Estate walkabouts	
Leaseholders' panel	
Contractor selection	
Mystery shopping	
Website design	
Membership of steering groups e.g. equalities steering group	
Contributing newsletter articles	