

About our Resident Involvement Statement

About this statement

Southern Housing Group is committed to seeing its residents shape the services they receive. Our Resident Involvement Statement is made up of two parts – this short introduction and the full statement, the *Active Residents' Guide*, which can be downloaded in PDF format from the Group's website at www.shgroup.org

Versions for South Wight and James Butcher Housing Association residents will also be available.

The full Guide sets out the opportunities residents have to become involved with the Group and it is primarily written for our residents.

This introductory statement sets out our general strategic approach and is aimed at residents, staff, partners and regulatory bodies.

Why we work with our residents

We recognise that resident involvement in the business develops both lines of accountability to our customers and social capital in the neighbourhoods we manage.

However, the prime focus of our resident involvement activity is to inform our business planning processes and our service improvement work. We believe that resident involvement is not an activity in itself, but a necessary component part of the way we improve our business.

A flexible approach to resident involvement: Our Resident Involvement Toolkit

We use a toolkit of methods to inform, consult and involve our residents. This toolkit comprises very basic tools such as estate and scheme newsletters, and estate inspections, deployed by our housing management teams, through to more complex and involved customer research tools such as depth interviews, focus group work, surveys and our resident inspectors' initiative. The more complex tools are delivered by our specialist staff.

We know that our customers will not respond to a one-size-fits-all approach and therefore tailor the involvement tool to the customer group we need to reach. Our toolkit is outcome focused. We are less concerned with structures and more concerned with what emerges from the work and how it improves our business.

We recognise that traditional representative community groups have an important role to play, but we also recognise that they appeal to a smaller number of our customers. The consultation and customer research work we have carried out during the production of this statement have confirmed this. We therefore see the flexible toolkit approach as a vital ingredient in ensuring that broad resident involvement in our business is possible.

How we deliver our resident involvement work

We seek to work with residents at two distinct levels.

Neighbourhoods

Each Group region identifies annual neighbourhood targets for resident involvement within the local service. These can be found in our regional business plans.

At the neighbourhood level we have two approaches. Firstly, our housing management staff are tasked to deliver a range of involvement opportunities at the level of an estate or scheme. On some estates, we agree localised service standards with residents. We offer our customers the opportunity to inspect these standards through our estate inspection programme. On our larger estates, our housing managers hold open meetings. Our neighbourhood newsletter programme aims to link these activities together publicly.

On some estates, we aim to establish a more comprehensive approach, by establishing neighbourhood project teams. Working with residents, the project team aims to produce and deliver neighbourhood plans across a range of locally-relevant targets.

Strategic level

We are committed to ensuring that our residents shape our services not only at the local level but at the strategic level. We believe that long-term strategic planning has to be based upon customer research and well-informed decision-making in our governance structures.

Our customers shape the strategic direction of our services in two main ways.

- **Through our governance structure.** We select residents for places on our Customer Services Committee and subsidiary boards. We have a place reserved on our Group main Board for a resident.
- **Through our Residents' Panel and customer forums.** We maintain a broadly representative Residents' Panel, which acts as a standing customer research tool and as a source of recruitment for initiatives such as the resident inspectors' project, our service review focus groups, depth interview programmes and other Group initiatives. We are working hard to ensure that our Residents' Panel and forums continue to be broadly representative of our customers.

Our strategic involvement targets can be found firstly in the Group's departmental, subsidiary and regional plans, but also in the Resident Involvement Team Plan.

Support to community groups

Although we place great emphasis on our proactive customer research work, we also seek to encourage, develop and support local community organisations. A range of training and coaching opportunities exists for local groups, as well as an opportunity to receive annual revenue funding. The detailed information on our support to community groups can be found in our Active Residents' Guide, downloadable from our website in PDF format.

Work in our neighbourhoods

Southern Housing Foundation

We have established a grant-giving charitable arm to support community activity further. Southern Housing Foundation supports the resident involvement work of the Group by aiding projects that develop across the communities we manage. Foundation staff also play a role in working within neighbourhood project teams on local involvement

and regeneration.

How we assess the impact of resident involvement in our business

We recognise that resident involvement is not an activity in itself. We believe that the use of resources to involve residents has to show impact in terms of tangible recommendations to improve our service delivery at both the strategic and local levels.

To evidence this linkage we ensure the following occurs.

At the strategic level we ensure that all involvement activities – primarily service review focus groups and depth interview programmes – produce concrete recommendations. Allowing time for consideration and implementation, we then produce an impact assessment report based upon these recommendations and any subsequent action. We ensure that these assessments are fed back to all residents through a 'What Happened Next' feature in the Group's resident magazine Open Door. We see this as providing accountability to customers and as closing a particular continuous improvement cycle.

At the neighbourhood/estate level we provide opportunities for residents to monitor the implementation of their service improvement ideas through estate inspections and regular estate meetings. We report on our progress through our local newsletter programme.

At the end of each financial year we produce a short impact assessment summary, detailing the key improvements to our services arising from our resident involvement work, which is available from our website.

Consultation on this statement

We have involved residents in drawing up the statement, in the following ways.

- Our Residents' Panel Readers' Group read the draft, commented and suggested amendments and additions.
- We consulted on the approaches we describe in the Active Residents' Guide, through a programme of focus groups with members of the Residents' Panel and the wider resident population.
- We submitted the statement to recognised tenant and resident groups.

Summary

We see resident involvement as vital to ensuring the success of our business. Our primary goal is to ensure that we use the right tools to reach the right people.

We believe a flexible approach to resident involvement has a clear and necessary role in developing our services. We will continue to focus on outcomes and continue to see our customers' ideas as a valuable asset. An asset that will grow our business into our second century.

If you have any questions about this introductory statement, please contact the resident involvement team on **0300 303 1771**.

- Arabic** .0300 303 1771 لمساعدتك في الترجمة يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة على هاتف
- Bengali** অনুবাদ সাহায্য পেতে হলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 0300 303 1682 নম্বরে ফোন করুন ।
- French** Si vous souhaitez recevoir de l'aide avec vos traductions, appelez le 0300 303 1771.
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