



## Customer Engagement Strategy 2021



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# Contents

Items	Page No
1. Introduction	1
2. Aims and Objectives	1
3. How will we start our Customer Dialogue	1
4. Together with Tenants – Our Commitment	2
5. Connections and Conversations – How to get Involved!	3
6. Continuous Improvement and Review	5
7. Keeping you safe	6
8. Related Action Plans	6

## 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** Harrogate Housing Association's (HHA) Customer Engagement Strategy sets out how we will work with our customers to shape our services in a way that reflects what customers want. In the strategy HHA is making a commitment to listen to what is important for our customers. We recognise that different customers will have different priorities, and HHA will provide different opportunities for customers to get involved or have their say in a way that best suits them. Our strategy will ensure that we provide clear information on how the Association is performing and be open and honest with our customers in the delivery of services that reflect customers wishes.

## 2.0 Aims and Objectives

**2.1** HHA will offer opportunities for involvement with us that reflects the way customers want to be involved.

**2.2** HHA will be accountable to customers providing them with more information on our activities and performance.

**2.3** HHA will communicate clearly to our customers the impact that their feedback has had on making the decisions on how their service is delivered.

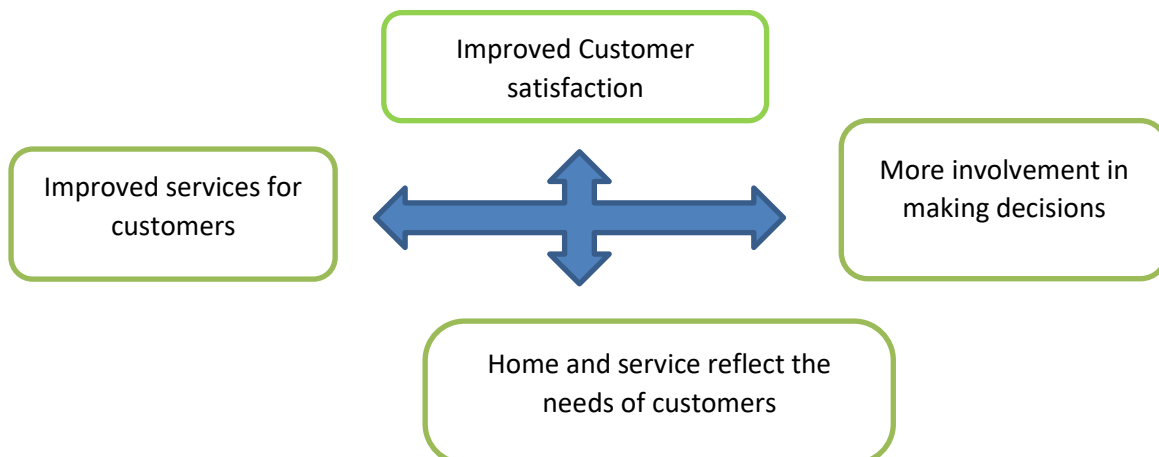
**2.4** HHA will work with our customers to deliver on the standards highlighted in the Social Housing White paper which cover:

- Being safe in your home
- Knowing how your landlord is performing
- Having complaints dealt with promptly
- Treating you with respect
- Having your voice heard
- Providing you with a good quality home and neighbourhood
- Supporting you into home ownership

## 3.0 How will we start our Customer Dialogue?

**3.1** The opportunities to involve our customers in feedback will start with a variety of events or circumstances, which, as a small association, will initially involve conversations on an individual/personal basis. It is our aim to build on this contact to develop established activities that deliver a variety of involvement opportunities.

**3.2** The stages to quality involvement: -



**3.3** The diagram shows how we aim to show the link that the Association can build between itself and meaningful interaction with customers. This will deliver not only direct benefits for our customers but will ensure we are continuously improving what the Association can offer.

## **4.0 Together with Tenants Charter – Our Commitment**

**4.1** The Together with Tenants initiative, led by the National Housing Federation, promotes effective working between customers and landlords. HHA are adopting this charter as our commitment towards a culture of collaboration and transparency to ensure that we are proactive, responsive, and accountable to the needs of our customers. HHA is creating a series of opportunities with customers in mind that will deliver the 6 commitments in the Charter: -

- **Relationships** - To treat all residents with respect in all our interactions. Relationships between customers and HHA will be based on openness, honesty, and transparency.
- **Communication.** HHA will provide to its customers clear, accessible, and timely information on the issues that matter to them. This will include important information about their homes and local community, how HHA is working to address problems, how HHA is run and important information about performance on key issues.
- **Voice and Influence.** HHA will seek and value the views of our customers and will use this information to inform decisions. All customers will feel listened to on the issues that matter to them and can talk to us without fear.
- **Accountability.** HHA will work in partnership with their customers especially around independent scrutiny and customers will hold us to account for decisions that affect the quality of their home and services.
- **Quality.** Customers expect their home to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed. HHA will deliver this.
- **When things go wrong.** Customers will have simple, accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Customers will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

### **4.2 How will HHA deliver these?**

**4.2.1** HHA will support the delivery of the above by doing the following: -

- **Relationships** – our staff are committed to providing the best customer service and HHA will ensure that all staff provide you with as open and clear an answer as possible. If we are unable to fully meet what you have asked us to do, we will tell you why and tell you what we can do. At all times you will know what we are doing and we will keep you updated. We will communicate with you in the way you want us to and respect that this is your preferred method of contact.
- **Communication** – We will provide information to you in a way that best suits you such as electronically or in paper format. We will provide the opportunity for you to meet with us at a time and location that is acceptable to you. We will discuss our performance over the year through an annual in person customer meeting, where possible, and make this as easy and accessible for you to attend. We will tell you what we are doing as a result of your communication with us and learn from our interaction with you.
- **Voice and influence** – We will provide information on how we have delivered what you have asked us about in a “You said We did” format and publish this on our website and update this at our annual conference with you and in our Newsletters.
- **Accountability**- Listening we know is only part of the journey, what matters to customers are the actions we take. Through our Customer Liaison Committee (CLC) our customers challenge and hold the Association to account in

delivering what we said we would do. We will promote membership of the Customer Liaison Committee to ensure that membership is representative of all our customers. We will do this by offering accessible CLC meetings and ongoing promotion both through the website, newsletters, satisfaction surveys as well as personal contact with customers.

- **Quality-** We want our customers to be happy living in their homes and we aim to provide them with homes that are safe, warm and of a good standard. Our tenancy Audits and Estate Walkabouts will monitor and check we are achieving this. We will let our customers know the level we are investing in homes through the annual conference and newsletters. This will include not just the major elements such as kitchens and bathrooms but also the thermal comfort of those homes.
- **When things go wrong** – We will promote the ways that people can raise issues with us. Our aim is to do things right first time. Where this doesn't happen, we will not try and justify our actions, we will put it right. We will take ownership as individual staff members even if it is not in our normal work role. The website will have prominent information on how to make a complaint. Newsletters will also have how to complain as a regular feature. In our interactions with customers, we will act immediately, if there is a problem that either the Officers or you the customer have identified as a problem. All complaints will be monitored by the CLC, and they will hold us to account for our actions and ask us to put things right if they think we have not done something in the way a customer would expect.

**4.2.2 HHA Values-** HHA has adopted a set of core values for staff that encompass how our behaviours will deliver this Customer Engagement Strategy and it is incumbent on staff to demonstrate these. They are crystallised into 3 key words:

- **Local**
- **Approachable**
- **Customer-Focused**

These values will be embedded in 121s with staff, who will be required to demonstrate how they have delivered services in line with the values. This will keep the values relevant to their daily tasks. We will, in our recruitment process, recruit people who demonstrate behaviours that align to our values.

## 5.0 Connections and Conversations- How to get Involved!

**5.1** HHA will provide levels of engagement that our customers can get involved with to have their views, concerns and comments heard. We strive to offer both formal and informal opportunities to engage with customers in a way that suits them. By working together with customers, the aim is to shape services that meet their needs.

**5.2** HHA is an organisation that significantly values the ability that it has, to connect easily with customers. HHA will have meaningful conversations with customers that set-in motion actions that improves the services we offer. The purpose of the strategy is to set out ways that HHA will strive to consult with and inform customers. What will involvement look like? The ways to connect are listed in the table below.

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
<b>Customer Liaison</b>	<i>Meetings via Zoom and/or in person normally every 2 months.</i>	<i>The role of the CLC is to hold HHA to account. They have 3 core functions to scrutinise,</i>	<i>The committee ensures the output and findings are</i>

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
<b>Committee (CLC)</b>	<p>Chaired by a Customer who leads the committee</p> <p>Online In person</p>	<p>advise and work with us to improve services to you. Shapes the policies of the Association. Over the coming months Committee members will determine their priorities and focus.</p>	<p>reported back to Board.</p> <p>Minutes and outcomes/successes are reported on the website</p> <p>Meetings are held every 8 weeks</p>
<b>Customer Satisfaction Surveys</b>	<p>A 2 yearly in-depth survey on how HHA deliver their service and what the customer experience is.</p> <p>Some telephone interviews are also used to garner further responses.</p> <p>Online By post</p>	<p>All customers invited to take part in the survey carried out by an independent survey company. Provides an in-depth position on how HHA are doing and through a comments section, how it can get better. Customers will be asked about planned replacement works where relevant and what investment in areas such as Energy Efficiency they would support.</p> <p>Provides feedback on our customer service.</p>	<p>Following the completion of the survey the CLC panel are provided with an action plan to improve the areas that have been highlighted. They monitor the progress and actions that are taken. CLC keeps HHA accountable for delivery. Incentives are made available to customers to complete the surveys. Action plan is posted on the website and publicised in the Newsletter. Next survey due 2023</p>
<b>Customer Conference</b>	<p>Annual in person meeting of customers to discuss the performance of the association over the last 12 months and the future including investment in planned works.</p> <p>In person</p>	<p>Customers are provided with key performance information to show how we are performing, and customers can scrutinise the information and are able to discuss their priorities with staff</p>	<p>A You Said We Did outcome will be available for all customers to view on the website. CLC monitor the delivery of actions at their meetings</p>
<b>Use of Independent Survey sources</b>	<p>Look to engage with an independent company (Acuity) to provide feedback on how the service was for the customer.</p>	<p>This will carry out surveys to new customer gauging how their first impression of the Association's service was received and provide feedback</p>	<p>Feedback to CLC and staff and a lesson learned – ways to improve are instigated. Commencing December 2021</p>
<b>Lightening surveys</b>	<p>Quick capture surveys on events appropriate for the neighbourhood/ community. These are done as and when required.</p> <p>Online/ email</p>	<p>The Housing Officer will send out a short and specific survey to capture customers perceptions over events that have happened on their scheme/neighbourhood etc.</p> <p>This will include Repair surveys on day to day, planned and major works that have been carried out.</p>	<p>Actions are provided quickly to the scheme/ neighbourhood where the survey was carried</p> <p>CLC are made aware and monitor outcomes.</p> <p>Currently being delivered</p>

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
		<i>These have also been used on areas with high levels of Nuisance.</i>	
<b>Newsletters</b>	<i>Twice a year information and bulletin information in the Summer and Winter times that keeps people in touch with our customers. Paper/ email</i>	<i>General updating for customers, providing information on their rent account and on wider issues of interest to customers such as what is going on in their Neighbourhood.</i>	<i>This is circulated via paper copy, Website and HHA are looking at the process of informing customers via email.  Winter Newsletter due in December Summer due July</i>
<b>Estate Walkabouts and Tenancy Audits</b>	<i>Surveys are carried out on a quarterly basis of the external areas of schemes and areas by the Housing Officer and customers from the area.  In person Email</i>	<i>Customers are invited to attend with the Officers on walkabouts and can highlight and agree the actions required. The survey looks at how the schemes look and should pick up issues such as fencing, painting and any other external issues. Tenancy Inspections are carried out every 2 years and provide an opportunity to monitor the quality and standard of stock The survey and photos are logged on our system and actions on repairs are raised and followed up.</i>	<i>The timetable for future walkabouts is advertised on the website and in newsletters.  Housing Officer will invite customers a week before hand either to attend or for issues prior to visiting.  CLC are provided with the outcomes and actions</i>
<b>Facebook Account</b>	<i>Bite size pieces of information that keep customers informed of what is going in the Association and where and who to contact for further information.</i>	<i>Customers are online and key bits of information are provided in a quick and easy way to keep customers updated on what is happening in the Association.</i>	<i>CLC have approved the use of the Facebook communication, and this is to be launched in February 2022</i>

## 6.0 Continuous Improvement and Review

**6.1** The Customer Engagement Strategy will comply with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Action Plan that the Association has developed in respect of the Social Housing White Paper. As part of this and our commitment to continuous improvement we will provide evidence of how we continue to seek ways to improve our engagement with customers.

**6.2** To remain accountable to our customers, HHA will record the actions we have taken that continue to meet all regulatory standards, record our lessons learned and outcomes that have changed because of customers engagement activities, such as Neighbourhood Action plans. These will be scrutinised by the Customer Liaison Committee.

**6.3** To ensure transparency HHA will review the Strategy's success with the Customer Liaison Committee and publish outcomes on our website and customer newsletter.

## 7.0 Keeping you Safe

**7.1** The safety of our customers is paramount to HHA, and we want our customers to be confident that their home is safe and provide you with the information you need to reassure you of this. A safe place to live is an important element of what we should have proactive engagement with our customers around.

**7.2** The Association currently provides customers with key information relating to you home such as: -

- Landlords Gas Safety Certificate – annually
- Electrical Safety Certificate – every 5 years
- Asbestos information (where appropriate), location and advice.
- Fire Risk Assessment of your building (for those living in accommodation with communal areas)
- Information on what to do in case of a fire/ fire evacuation information.
- Portable Appliance Testing of small electrical appliances where they have had appliances provided by HHA.

**7.3** HHA reports compliance on safety to the Customer Liaison Committee and Board and it is reviewed by them at the meetings. As part of our engagement strategy our Tenancy Audits allow the Association to monitor and check the quality of the homes we provide and ensure our customers are safe.

## **8.0 Related Action Plans**

**8.1** The Association has several actions and policies that have relevance to how the Association provides Customer Engagement these are

- Social Housing White paper – Action Plan
- Customer satisfaction survey Action Plan
- Neighbourhood Action Plan
- Better Places to Live Action Plan
- Estate Walkabouts Survey and Timetable
- Customer Satisfaction Survey