



Customer Engagement and Involvement Strategy



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Contents

Items	Page No
1. Introduction	2
2. Aims and Objectives	2
3. HHA Values	2
4. Defining What Engagement and Involvement means	3
5 .Together with Tenants – Our Commitment	3
6. Ask Customers what they want from Engagement and Involvement	4
7. Re Set the Culture to allow Engagement and Involvement to Thrive	7
8. Related Action Plans	8

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 for engagement or involvement and 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 transparent with our customers in the delivery of services that reflect customers wishes.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 HHA will engage with customers to listen and better understand their needs.

2.2 HHA will offer opportunities for involvement with us that reflects the way customers want to be involved and increase the numbers of involved customers.

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

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

2.5 HHA will work with our customers to deliver on our 3 tier plan for successful engagement and involvement. This is as follows:

1. Define what Engagement and Involvement means to our customers
2. Ask Customers what they want from engagement and involvement
3. Reset the culture to allow engagement and involvement to thrive.

2.6 The plans ensure that the Association remains committed to you:

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

3.0 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-Focussed**

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.

4.0 Defining what Engagement and Involvement means

4.1 HHA and its customers define **Engagement** as:-

“The ongoing dialogue between the Association and our customers. The conversations we will have allow us to provide a series of checks and balances on the services we deliver, show that we value the opinion of the customer and look to improve the way we do things that makes a real difference.”

HHA and its customers define **Involvement** as:-

“The active Involvement of and participation of our customers in different parts of the Association’s business.”

5.0 Together with Tenants Charter – Our Commitment

5.1 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.

5.2 How will HHA deliver these?

5.2.1 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 Home Reviews 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.

6.0 Ask Customers what they want from engagement and involvement

6.1 HHA will engage with our customers in various ways to listen to their views, concerns and comments about the services we provide and how they may want to be involved. We strive to offer both formal and informal opportunities to engage with customers in a way that suits them. By working together with customers, we aim to shape services that meet their needs.

6.2 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 improve 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.

6.3 Connections and Conversations

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
Customer Liaison Committee (CLC) <i>(Involvement)</i>	<i>Meetings are in person normally 4 times a year. HHA offers the facility of a virtual meeting for those wishing to join but unable to attend an in person meeting.</i> <i>Chaired by a Customer who leads the committee</i> <i>virtual or in person attendance</i>	<i>The role of the CLC is to hold HHA to account. They have 3 core functions to scrutinise, advise and work with us to improve services to you. Shapes the policies of the Association. .</i>	<i>The committee ensures the output and findings are reported back to Board.</i> <i>Minutes and outcomes/successes are reported on the website</i> <i>Dates of meetings are advertised on the HHA website</i>
Customer Satisfaction Surveys <i>(Involvement)</i>	<i>A 2 yearly in-depth survey on how HHA deliver their service and what the customer experience is.</i> <i>Some telephone interviews are also used to garner further responses.</i> <i>Online</i> <i>By post</i> <i>By Phone</i>	<i>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.</i> <i>Includes specific questions about current issues.</i> <i>Provides feedback on our customer service.</i>	<i>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 2026</i> <i>Using the feedback from surveys adjust survey to how customers what to be surveyed eg by phone</i>
Customer Conference <i>(Involvement)</i>	<i>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.</i> <i>In person</i>	<i>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</i>	<i>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</i> <i>Use PR expert to professionalise YSWD</i>

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
Use of Survey sources (Engagement)	<i>Utilise staff not included in the sign up process to survey new customers on the service they received in a "first impressions count". The outcomes are reported back to Operations Manager, the CLC and Board</i>	<i>This process will allow HHA to refine and improve our service to customers at the start of their tenancy. It will set down a positive communication channel with our new customers and get their views on - What do you want to be called Customer/Tenant/Resident</i>	<i>Feedback to CLC and staff and a lesson learned – ways to improve are instigated. Use of Plain English</i>
Lightening surveys (Engagement)	<i>Quick capture surveys on events appropriate for the neighbourhood/ community. These are done as and when required.</i> <i>Online/ email/Text</i>	<i>The Neighbourhood Officer will send out a short and specific survey to capture customers perceptions over events that have happened on their scheme/neighbourhood etc.</i> <i>These have also been used on areas with high levels of Nuisance.</i>	<i>Actions are provided quickly to the scheme/ neighbourhood where the survey was carried</i> <i>Feedback to be received promptly CLC are made aware and monitor outcomes.</i> <i>Potential to use for repairs satisfaction feedback</i>
Newsletters (Engagement)	<i>Information in the Newsletter sent out in the Summer and Winter times that keeps us in touch with our customers. Provides information on activities of the Association and performance. Look to have 4 newsletters a year with specific updates Paper/ email/ text link</i>	<i>General updating for customers, providing information on specific activities and on wider issues of interest to customers such as what is going on in their Neighbourhood.</i>	<i>This is circulated via email, copy on Website and text. Applegarth prefer a paper copy.</i>
Estate Walkabouts (Involvement)	<i>Visits are carried out on a quarterly/half yearly basis of the external areas of schemes and areas by the Neighbourhood Officer and customers from the area.</i> <i>Publish outcomes locally after Walkabout and on website of what happened as a result. Full EW timetable is available on Website</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. Actions on repairs are raised and followed up.</i> <i>Is part of the Neighbourhood Planning process of an Area including Rural Villages' plans.</i>	<i>The timetable for future walkabouts is advertised on the website and in newsletters. Text all customer prior to walkabout. If not available request comments to be passed back on issues. Text customers just prior to visit.</i> <i>CLC are provided with the outcomes and actions</i>

Connection	Conversation	Context	Communication
Home Reviews <i>(Engagement)</i>	<i>Reviews undertaken in person</i>	<i>Home Reviews are carried out every 2 years and provide an opportunity to meet with customers and discuss how we can engage with them better and understand what type of involvement they want.</i> <i>Identify who is interested in particular issues etc</i>	<i>The Home review has developed a “coffee table talk” with customers so that we take time to understand what meaningful engagement is.</i> <i>The Repairs Surveyor carries out a technical survey of the property at the Home Review which allows for accurate records of the condition of the property and allows a better flow of conversation with Neighbourhood Officers on engagement and involvement.</i> <i>Feedback on survey work generated through Home Review to customers, CLC and Board</i>
Facebook Account <i>(Engagement)</i>	<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>Weekly Facebook Posts</i> <i>Use of a PR expert to make posts more meaningful</i>
Inbound Texts <i>(Engagement)</i>	<i>We respond to inbound texts from customers.</i>	<i>Customers reply to texts received from HHA. These are picked up in the info box and recorded into the CRM notes and actioned as necessary</i>	<i>Customers reply to texts and receive a response to their text – a two way conversation</i>

7.0 Reset the culture to allow engagement and involvement to thrive

7.1 The Customer Engagement and Involvement Strategy will comply with the Consumer Standards and in particular the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

The standard requires the Association to “*be open with tenants, treat them with fairness and respect, and provide information to enable tenants to hold them accountable*”. We will do this by ensuring that the culture of the Association reflects an environment that seeks to improve our engagement with and involvement of customers.

7.2 The table below shows how the Association aims to reset the culture on engagement and involvement.

Reset	How we do this	Action
All colleagues to embrace engagement and Involvement	Embed the principles and definition of engagement and involvement Celebrate success	Team sessions on how we work together to take forward the principles of engagement and involvement. Sessions include how we manage complaints, new legislation, repairs etc Recognise and reward
Examine work place culture and embed engagement practices	Strengthen governance by a Board member lead on customers. Cover expectations in Job descriptions	Board member to ensure that there are consistent behaviours when involving customers (attending CLC and other events and literature) Job descriptions reviewed 2025 to deliver to customer engagement and involvement. Recruit those with a passion for engagement.
Engagement is part of the business as usual	Using performance management tools to ensure right behaviour and values are embedded. Analyse current skills and behaviours to learn from good examples. Prioritise investments in the right areas	Team meetings and 121s embed the nature of engagement and involvement. Provide training and development opportunities for staff. Identify barriers that stops them from delivering and resolve Small Improvements make a difference Support and encourage professional qualifications for staff such as CIH qualification TPAS membership and access to training resources available to staff and allocate specific time for review.

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

- Customer satisfaction survey Action Plan
- Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Estate Walkabouts Survey and Timetable
- Customer Satisfaction Survey