

Customer Engagement Strategy

2016 - 2020



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Customer engagement provides the opportunity for Solihull Community Housing and our customers to share information, ideas and decision making to improve the standard of housing conditions, services and neighbourhoods.

Our Customer Engagement Strategy sets out how we intend to engage with and involve our customers. It also details the support offered to customers to help them to get involved as well as our aims and objectives.

We have worked with our customers to produce this document. Their involvement through the Board, Scrutiny Committee, hot topics workshops attended by involved customers and surveys has shaped its aims and objectives.

Our Vision for Customer Engagement

Our vision is to ensure:

- There is a wide range of involvement opportunities (both formal and informal) ensuring customers are at the heart of everything that we do
- Information and methods of engagement are accessible and responsive to the diverse needs, interests, concerns and aspirations of our customers
- Customer engagement is seen as a driver for continuous improvement and service development across SCH
- Customer engagement and participation initiatives demonstrate tangible outcomes and reflect value for money
- Engagement activities are aligned to the Delivery Plan and functional service plans
- We remain accountable to customers, through routine engagement and in particular the Scrutiny Committee
- The impact of activities is monitored
- Customers receive feedback in the tenants newsletter about the difference they help to make
- Customers are provided with training, resources and support to engage with us
- Our Strategy meets the standards and expectations for customer engagement outlined in the updated Regulatory Framework for Social Housing (2015) which states landlords should work in close partnership with their tenants on a strategic level.



Our methods of engagement

Our involvement structure continues to be flexible and responsive to service and customer needs and preferences.

We understand that people want to give their views or be involved in different ways and at times that work best for them. We therefore offer a range of ways people can get involved and participate ranging from information sharing through to decision making.

In response to customer feedback we will develop new options to offer further choice and opportunities for people to participate.

Reaching wider audiences - We are reaching a wider audience with the varied methods of engagement available. We also have a core of involved customers. We will always work to encourage new people to get involved as they bring in new views, issues and perspectives. The Scrutiny Committee will monitor this strategy to ensure the aims and objectives are met and the action plan is delivered.

Keep an emphasis on scrutiny - We will continue to have a strong emphasis on the scrutiny function and ensure that the Scrutiny Committee provides a varied & complementary range of scrutiny options.

We will develop our Scrutiny Committee by capacity-building to increase their independence. We will provide training to our actively involved tenants, to provide them with the necessary skills and confidence.

Making best use of customer insight - We will use the data we collect through surveys, complaints and trends of contact to ensure we target engagement. This will help us to get to the heart of what our tenants think.

Working with our community - We will continue to be out in the community engaging with tenants where they visit and live.



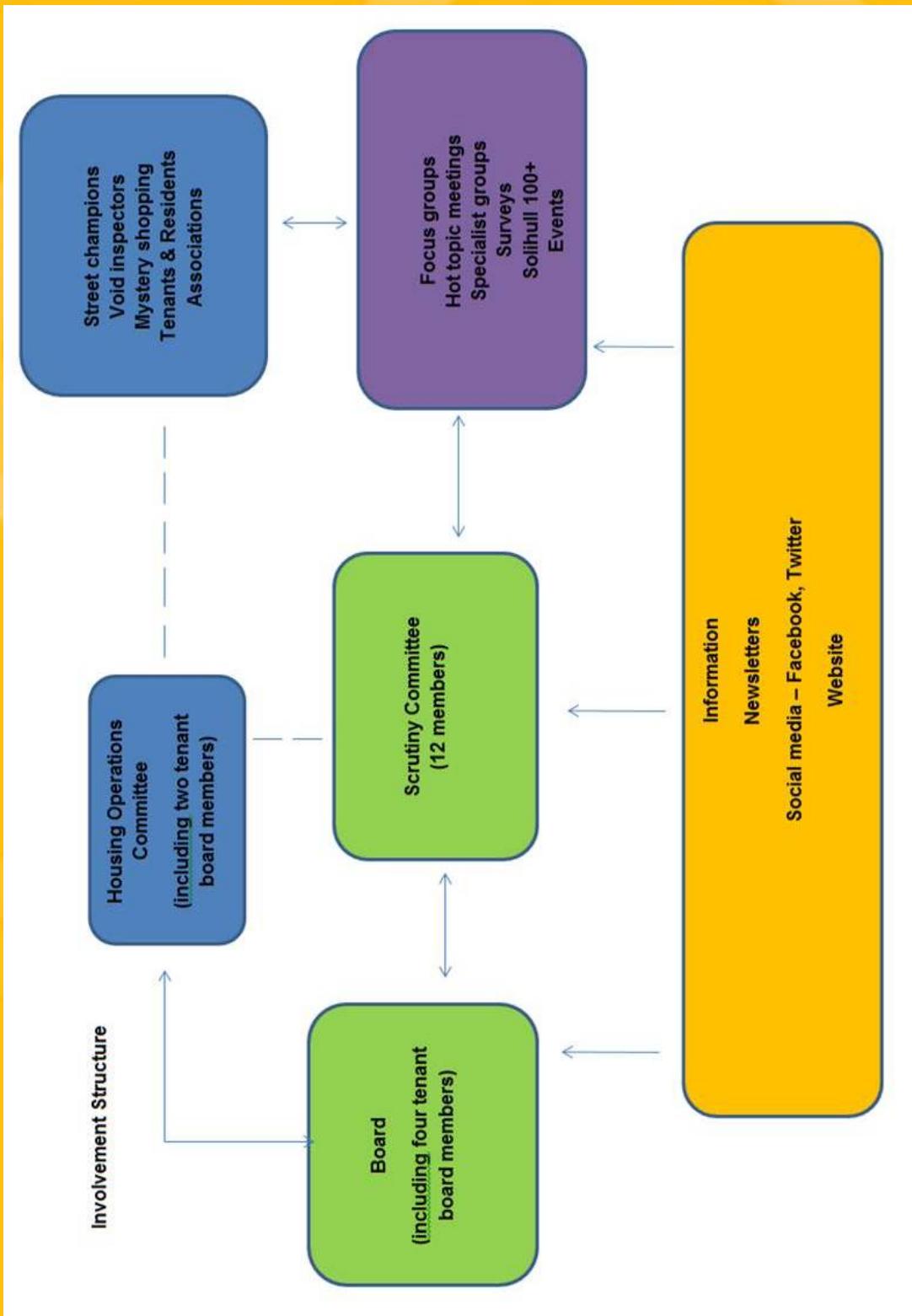
The Engagement Structure

We have lots of opportunities for people to be involved and shape our services. Customers are encouraged to get involved in a way that suits them and to feedback ideas and suggestions about how we can change or make our services better.

Our structure is designed to help us to:

- Listen
- Consult
- Provide information
- Encourage participation in decision making
- Empower and develop customer's skills to enable them to influence policies, procedures, strategies and service delivery
- Ensure everyone is given the same opportunity to participate taking into account the diverse range of customers' needs





Engagement – Decision makers	
Tenant Board Member Time: 2 – 3 hours, monthly	Tenants hold an equal seat on the Board with independent members and local Councillors. The Board makes decisions for the organisation, approves policies and provides direction.
Scrutiny Committee Member Time: 2 – 3 hours, monthly	The Scrutiny Committee monitors the performance of the organisation and reports to Board. They identify the need for and request engagement projects. They monitor the strategy and review progress.

Involvement – Working together	
Street Champions Time: 2 – 3 hours, for each walkabout	Customers and SCH work together to identify issues that could be improved, for example graffiti, litter etc. or to monitor our cleaning contracts with the aim of making improvements.
Void Inspectors Time: 2 – 3 hours, for each set of inspection	Customers and SCH work together to identify issues that could be improved in our empty properties with the aim of improving standards.
Mystery Shopping Time: 5 – 7 hours per shop.	Mystery shoppers help us measure our performance against service standards. They help provide a true picture of services from a customer's point of view.
Tenants and Residents Associations As required	Local groups run by local people. They work to improve their estate, community and local services through meetings with SCH and other service providers.



Consultation – discuss and influence	
Focus Groups Time: as and when held, 2 - 3 hours	Small informal discussions open to all tenants & leaseholders. They are usually about a specific subject and help SCH to find out what they think about a service or how they would view any proposals for change.
Hot topic meetings Time: as and when held, 2 - 3 hours	Lively discussion in a workshop environment that discusses issues in detail and makes recommendations for improvements.
Specialist Groups Time: 2 - 3 hours	Similar to focus groups but focuses on engaging with specific groups of people. For example tenants aged 16 to 25 years, leaseholders and supported housing residents.
Surveys Time: Up to a max of ten minutes	Face to face or online surveys are an opportunity for tenants to give their views about our services and performance, and to influence future planning and service delivery.
Solihull 100+ Time: 5 minutes up to 4 times a year	Solihull 100 + is a group of customers who have signed up to give us their views and comment on the services they receive using online or postal surveys. They provide a snapshot of residents' views with the aim of improving and shaping the services we provide.
Events Time: half to full day	Events are theme based. They provide information and seek the views of residents. They help keep our involved customers up to date, outline future proposals and seek views about them.

Information	
Newsletters Time: 2-3 hours, quarterly	The newsletter is produced and distributed four times a year. It provides updates about services, performance and the local area. Tenants and leaseholders can be involved as part of the Editorial Panel.



Social media As often as people wish	Social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are great ways of engaging with tenants, leaseholders and wider members of the community. It enables users to view information and pictures, leave comments and give and their views as well as promoting events that are happening in the community.
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Equality and Diversity

Our Equality and Diversity Policy requires us to treat all customers fairly and promote inclusion. We require Board, staff, customers and other stakeholders not to discriminate on any grounds such as age, disability, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity status or any other irrelevant characteristics.

Supporting people to get involved

We have lots of opportunities for customers to be involved so that they can shape our services to meet their needs. We give support to customers to get involved, including;

- Paying for transport to meetings where necessary
- Help with expenses such as childcare and carer costs
- Holding meetings in places that are easy to get to and accessible for wheelchair users and people with mobility problems
- Being flexible about times of meetings
- Providing information in alternative formats and languages

Keeping engagement accessible - We will continue to review our structure and develop it in line with tenants' needs and preferences. We will recruit through regular advertising and by using our neighbourhood activities and community consultations to identify customers who are keen to be more actively involved.

Implementing the strategy

The Scrutiny Committee will monitor progress of the strategy and action plan. They will report any outcomes or successes in the tenants newsletter.

We will review our involvement activities on an annual basis, to assess whether they have been effective.



What we want to achieve between 2016 / 2020

We want to achieve the following five key objectives:

Our aims are to:

- Ensure engagement is embedded across SCH and is accessible to all our customers
- Empower customers to have a real influence over the services that they receive through scrutiny and challenge
- Improve satisfaction levels and develop our communication and feedback to our customers
- Improve neighbourhoods and the lives of our customers
- Achieve value for money through the delivery of this strategy

Action Plan

Ensure engagement is embedded across SCH and is accessible

- Ensure engagement activity is built into the Delivery Plan and Service plans, including a programme of hot topics and other engagement activities and that progress is monitored
- Ensure all staff know about this strategy and the achievements it delivers
- Review methods for sharing outcomes from customer engagement initiatives with SCH staff
- Identify under-represented groups and develop appropriate methods to engage with them
- Increase the level of profiling information and preferences in how customers wish to engage with us and develop appropriate methods to increase the level of engagement
- Use the extensive amount of information collected through surveys, complaints and routine contact with customers to identify trends to support service improvement and new initiatives
- Support teams in understanding the need and benefit of engagement through regular review and planning meetings
- Support teams in carrying out mystery shopping, reality checking and other engagement to help deliver improvements and efficiencies



Empower customers to have a real influence over the services that they receive through scrutiny and challenge.

- Ensure that customer engagement drives improvements in services
- Ensure customers are involved early on in the development of strategies and policies
- Support residents through training and mentoring to enable them to more actively engage
- Develop and promote a programme of tenant scrutiny topics
- Involve residents in routinely assessing outcomes from engagement initiatives and regularly publicise these
- All board and committee reports to include details of customer engagement
- Work with Heads of Service to identify joint engagement initiatives

Improve satisfaction levels and develop communication and feedback to our customers

- Work with the Scrutiny Committee to complete projects and improve service satisfaction levels
- Regularly publicise customer engagement opportunities and community based events
- Review how we analyse and report back to customers about outcomes or actions following completed engagement
- Further develop electronic channels and social media
- Provide evidence on how engagement has shaped services
- Clarify with staff and inform customers whether proposed engagement is about giving information, consultation or service improvement and use appropriate approaches to achieve results
- Develop more effective methods of communicating with a diverse range of customers

Improve neighbourhoods and the lives of our customers

- Encourage participation in the annual garden competition and other area based schemes
- Re launch the street champion scheme providing training and support to involved customers
- Hold events about initiatives or changes in legislation that affect people for example welfare reform, energy saving
- Ensure engagement is included in the planning of major projects and contracts
- Encourage the setup of residents groups across local areas

To achieve value for money through the delivery of this strategy

- Review and develop methods of engagement that are cost effective and based on the preferences of customers
- Discuss with customers cost effective methods of engagement, such as online, electronic engagement and virtual groups
- Share resources with other landlords to deliver joint training
- Consider opportunities for external funding to support youth work, information technology training and other initiatives

