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Resident Engagement Policy

Introduction

This (resident engagement) policy supports our aim of working with residents to influence and shape the services they receive. It also enables us to hear their views on key areas of the business together with being meaningfully involved with decision making.

This policy supports the delivery of our resident engagement strategy and compliance of the regulatory standards, with specific reference to the tenant satisfaction measures and the consumer standard: *transparency, influence, and accountability*.

Residents' voice

Resident engagement is part of every team member's role, which supports our value of being *accountable*; all individuals take responsibility for getting things done well and seeing things through to a successful conclusion.

Resident engagement at Sutton Housing Society will take place in many forms and can be delivered in several ways, including hybrid, in-person, postal, digitally and remotely. Online engagement is an area that we wish to grow, particularly for those residents who may have less spare time.

Demonstrating how effective our resident engagement work is and how residents have influenced decision making is a requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing.

Residents understand that we cannot always take on suggestions put forward; where this is the case, we ensure that residents are aware of the reasons.

For residents to participate, we offer reimbursement of any public transport costs and can arrange taxis to and from meetings. We also hold meetings at various times to ensure residents have an opportunity to participate.

The only exception to residents' participating, is that where we are taking legal action against a resident - they cannot be part of any decision-making groups whilst this action is 'live' - they can, however, participate in other ways.

Ways to get involved

Below are some of the ways residents can get involved:

Surveys: whether it is responding to a repairs survey following work carried out at your home, completing a new home survey, or completing the TSM (tenant satisfaction measures) survey every two years, there are a variety of opportunities for residents to share their views.

Residents' charter group: we have several residents from across our homes who work with us to review and help to improve services delivered to residents. This group meets four times a year and is chaired by the Operations Director.

Board: there is a Board of between 6 and 9, with one place specifically for a Resident Board Member. The Board has the governance role for the business and sets the standards and direction for the organisation. The Board has four meetings each year together with the annual general meeting.

Housing Operations Committee (HOC): this is a sub-committee of our Board and meets quarterly to review performance of the organisation, to consider operational matters and to input, review and / or approve resident-related policies. Residents are in the majority at this committee.

Residents' associations: there are no formal residents' associations at Sutton Housing Society, however, we are happy to support these being set up should residents of individual blocks / a locality wish to form a residents' group. This can be discussed with the Housing Manager responsible for the area.

Resident focus groups: focus groups meet and discuss a specific topic or new idea. We can offer hybrid meetings to enable attendance by more residents, if they are unable to attend in person. A focus group is usually time limited.

Estate services monitoring group: when a focus group has completed its work, residents have the option of joining the relevant monitoring group. For estate services, residents, the wider team and the relevant contractor meet on a quarterly basis to review the contracts, work standards and any relevant operational matters.

Resident insight

It is important to us that residents are listened to and heard. The residents' voice is central to the services provided.

As a small organisation, we know many of our residents, especially those living in our homes for older people. However, we do need to ensure that our resident data is as up to date as possible, as this helps us to ensure that the ways resident engagement is available is suitable for the resident makeup.

We are working to ensure that the data we hold remains up to date; we do this in several ways including tenancy audits, survey forms and specific requests for information where we have gaps in the data.

There is some personal information that we must record to meet regulatory requirements and to provide our housing management / landlord services. We will only request other information from residents if we have a legitimate reason for doing so; we will not request personal information unnecessarily.

To improve our customer insight, we monitor feedback, complaints and compliments from our residents. We can profile resident feedback, complaints and compliments and can take action to encourage involvement / interactions where there are gaps from those not involved.

We contact all residents at least once a year through our birthday card initiative (except where we are specifically requested not to send a card), ensuring all residents have a positive contact with us.

We also monitor on a rolling annual basis, where a resident has not had contact with us in the past 12 months. Where this occurs, welfare calls (via visits, phone calls or the telecare service if available), are made to the resident involved to ensure all is well.

The Board receives regular reports regarding our various resident engagement activities and reports relating to complaints and compliments. They also receive regular reports regarding any surveys and reviews carried out internally and externally, which all impact on the quality of our resident engagement.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate resident engagement activities through:

- Tracking participation and feeding back outcomes
- Reporting on tenant satisfaction measures
- Regular (five-yearly) review of the resident engagement policy (or sooner if there is a change in legislation)
- Continuous improvement based on resident input.

This policy will be reviewed on a 5-year cycle, or earlier, where there are regulatory changes introduced that impact this policy.