



Southern Housing Resident Involvement Strategy



This document sets out our approach to involving residents in improving their communities and services. We believe involving residents makes sure we will deliver great services and helps to create places where residents are proud to live.



**CREATING
COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER**

Our vision for Resident Involvement

Statement from Billy Brown, Chair Residents Strategy Group and Paul Hackett, CEO

At Southern Housing, we believe in empowering residents to influence their services and the places they call home. It goes further than listening – it's about actively collaborating and codesigning with residents to make decisions that affect their lives. Whether it's shaping local services, improving communal spaces, or shaping policy and strategy, our residents are at the heart of decision-making.

This approach is more than just the right thing to do. By involving residents, we ensure services meet real needs, drives higher satisfaction, creates better, safer places to live, and improves value for money for residents.

Our approach to resident involvement is fundamental to who we are and how we work. We value transparency and will continue to build and maintain trust through our involvement offer. We're proud that our commitment to involving residents at every level of our organisation is recognised by TPAS (an independent national resident involvement body).

Our involved residents are passionate advocates and integral to our continuous improvement and success, and we are unique amongst large landlords in having four resident places on our Board. Additionally, the Chair and Vice Chair of our Resident Strategy Group attend Board meetings, meaning the Board never loses sight of the things that matter most to residents.

Their dedication extends beyond Southern Housing, with many taking on high-profile positions that are helping to shape the future of the housing sector. For example, the G15 Residents Group and the Housing Ombudsman Resident Panel.

At Southern Housing, we don't just work for our residents, we work with them. We'll continue to ensure residents are meaningfully involved in decision making at a local level, shaping the places in which they live and the services they receive. They're our most valuable partners in helping us to improve places, lives and services. Our Resident Involvement Strategy Statement ensures a commitment to these values at every level of our organisation and provides focus as we look to the future.



Our Resident Involvement objectives

OBJECTIVES	MEASURES
What we want to achieve	How we'll achieve these objectives
 <p>Ensure residents' views influence decisions and make a difference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Codesigning with residents ↳ Ensuring effective influence and scrutiny in our resident governance structures ↳ Adopting a range of involvement methods ↳ Training and equipping residents with the information, skills, tools, confidence to influence ↳ Using information from complaints, satisfaction surveys and other insight to prioritise areas that will benefit from resident involvement ↳ Helping residents to share experience and to find out about good practice – so residents can effectively challenge and input into solutions.
 <p>Build strong long-term relationships between residents and Southern Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Surfacing local issues and insight and using this to learn and improve ↳ Using co-design in communities to highlight where we need to improve, what we need to do, and making sure we act ↳ Holding events and workshops that get residents, colleagues, stakeholders - talking, connected and motivated to make a difference ↳ Promoting success – showing the difference working together makes, and giving residents a reason to get involved.
 <p>Ensure a diverse range of voices are heard and influence decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Identifying seldom heard voices and adopting methods of involvement that ensure their voices are heard and acted upon ↳ Codesigning to meet diverse needs ↳ Using data to reach the diverse range of services users.
 <p>Help residents to be advocates in their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Training and equipping residents with skills, tools, confidence to influence ↳ Connecting residents so they can share learning and experiences.
 <p>Promote a strong culture of resident involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Training and equipping residents with skills, tools, confidence to influence ↳ Training colleagues to effectively involve residents in decision making ↳ Promoting successes through story telling internally and through website – showing the difference we can make working with residents.

Principles for effective involvement

To ensure effective and consistent involvement, we've developed a set of key principles to guide our work. These include:

Always starting with the vision of the community. This means:

- ↳ Understanding the community's and residents' priorities through their diverse voices
- ↳ Involving residents' from beginning to end
- ↳ Creating inclusive spaces where residents feel confident and respected to influence openly and honestly
- ↳ Codesigning as equal partners with residents.



Thinking long term and focusing on strong local relationships. This means:

- ↳ Ensuring we act on feedback and deliver promises
- ↳ Keeping residents informed about progress and communicating how and when their views have made a difference
- ↳ Helping to build strong community networks so we promote long lasting independence
- ↳ Providing the tools and training to develop residents /community leadership skills, confidence, and independence
- ↳ Building productive relationships with all stakeholders and third sector organisations
- ↳ Widely promoting the difference that working with residents makes.



Giving residents meaningful influence in decision making. This means:

- ↳ Being clear about what residents can meaningfully influence at the outset
- ↳ Focusing on the things residents can see and feel
- ↳ Ensuring a diverse range of opinions shape decisions, and using a wide range of methods to achieve this
- ↳ Being open, transparent, honest and sharing information in a clear and understandable way, using resident focused language
- ↳ Providing clear communication, timescales, and action plans
- ↳ Ensuring residents have the skills and confidence to effectively influence decisions and become community leaders.



A tailored approach in our communities

Each community we serve is unique, which means our approach will be tailored to the needs of the residents who live there. Our teams will work with residents, local service delivery teams, and community stakeholders to deliver tailored approaches to improve local services and places. We'll help residents with the tools, experience and confidence to influence decisions effectively.

Residents say they have varying levels of time available to be involved and have different expectations for how we work with them. This means the activities we offer must be varied, so that our approach is inclusive and accessible.

The methods we use to involve residents vary depending on the needs of the community, though most will consist of a group of residents that come together to influence change. These groups can range from formal Residents Associations, through to less formal action groups, or even very informal groups with fluid membership. We've set out the process for forming these groups, and the support we'll provide, in our Resident Groups guide.

Codesign is the bedrock of our approach. Our co-creation framework sets out how we work with residents, colleagues, and stakeholders to co-design great services, and we'll bring this approach into our local community work to ensure residents get the best outcomes.

The experiences of residents who help us improve services at a local level are invaluable to the organisation more widely. By effectively recording and managing the information from our local level



projects, we'll ensure resident perspectives feed into organisation wide learning and service improvement. By working with residents and codesigning services we'll make sure that improvements meet the needs of residents and drive great experiences. We'll use resident feedback from formal (regional panels) and informal groups, and complaints/satisfaction survey information to decide where and when we deploy resident involvement resources. We'll prioritise areas where we can make the most difference.

We'll bring together the learning we take from our local involvement into a bigger picture of residents' experiences across the organisation. This will inform and influence high-level decisions by feeding into Southern Housing's strategic planning.

Through our Resident Governance arrangements residents can scrutinise performance, hold us to account, and influence, strategy and policy. Our Resident Governance framework outlines our approach.

The regulator of Social Housing sets out standards for Transparency, Influence and Accountability. The way in which we work and the opportunities we offer ensure we meet these standards. The standards can be found on the Regulator of Social Housing's website.



Seldom heard voices

Every voice needs to be heard and we are aware that some groups of residents are rarely heard. We'll reach a diverse range of residents and help to make their voices heard. This gives us diversity of opinion and views which are fundamental to delivering great resident experiences and creating places where people are proud to live. We'll employ a range of methods and use our data to make sure 'seldom heard voices' help to drive better outcomes for residents.



Empowering colleagues and promoting a culture of involvement

Involving residents is everyone's responsibility, but not everyone will have the skills and knowledge to do this. The resident involvement team will work with colleagues to promote the importance of involving residents in decision making, and to equip them with the skills to involve residents to achieve positive outcomes.

We'll provide advice and guidance to ensure quality involvement across the organisation. Our 'Consultation Guide' will inform colleagues of best practice when delivering their own consultations.

Our Resident Groups Guide informs colleagues of our approach to setting up groups and support them to run their own. Our resident involvement training package will give colleagues both the practical skills to work with residents and drive a culture that values residents' input, leading to resident influenced outcomes. In addition, to practical guidance on involving residents in decision making, we'll embed a culture that values the lived experience of the people that live in our communities.



Conclusion

By delivering this statement, we're ensuring residents are at the heart of the organisation. This statement sets out our approach and objectives for a service that gives residents meaningful influence in the things that matter most to them. This will lead to a great resident experiences and places that they are proud to live.

