

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

POLICY STATEMENT

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

1. Statement of Intent

The Association is committed to the rights of residents to be involved in the management of their homes. Opportunities will be promoted to encourage involvement in all aspects of service delivery to a level that is appropriate to the wishes of both individuals and residents' groups.

The Association needs the support and involvement of residents in order to deliver the objectives of the business plan to –

- provide a housing and resident service which is resident focused, is continuously improving and contributes to sustainable communities. All in an inclusive way which values diversity and the aspirations of current and future residents; and to
- have properties that remain fit for purpose, exceed current standards and meet the requirements and expectations of current and future residents within a value for money context.

The Association recognises that the involvement of residents can lead to more effective services that result in higher levels of resident satisfaction and greater value for money; the development of policies that reflect the views and aspirations of residents; better informed decision making by staff and the Board; and improved communication with residents.

The Association aims to improve services and accountability through resident involvement. We want to give all residents an opportunity to make a valued contribution to improving service delivery and to influence the future direction of the Association.

We will consult on issues where there is a reasonable and genuine opportunity for residents to influence the outcome. Where consultation is not appropriate we will ensure that we inform individuals and groups about decisions that affect them.

We recognise that residents are more likely to become involved if they feel that their views are valued, can see how they are making a difference and have appropriate resources available to them.

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2. Implementation of the Policy

We aim to –

- inform, consult and involve our residents in making decisions about, and setting standards for, services.
- ensure equality of access for all residents to become involved, and widen participation from under represented groups.
- offer a wide range of involvement activities to maximise the potential for engagement with all residents
- give feedback to residents about the results of their involvement, the performance of the Association, and the response to complaints and any changes made as a result.
- monitor satisfaction levels and listen to the views of residents.

3. Resources

We will: -

- Provide an annual budget of £25,000 for funding of resident involvement activities
- Provide an annual budget of £5,000 for community involvement projects
- Provide a grant of £25 towards start up costs for new and properly constituted Residents Associations
- Provide support and training for staff and residents to develop their knowledge, skills, capability and confidence so that everyone involved is able to work successfully together.
- Help with reasonable costs such as a carer's expenses, translation and interpretation services, hearing loops, large print, Braille and audio, childcare, travelling expenses, training and stationery.

4. Opportunities for Involvement

We appreciate that not all residents will want to become involved in the management of their home. However, we are committed to ensuring that we offer sufficient choice to enable all residents to participate at a time and level that suits them. The Association currently offers the following opportunities for residents to become involved –

- Individuals and groups of residents are consulted on matters that affect their home and the services that they receive from the Association. This includes consultation about the quality of the day to day repairs service, planned maintenance, changes to rent and service charges, as well as the Tenant Satisfaction survey that is carried out every two years.

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4. Opportunities for Involvement continued

- Contract monitoring – residents' views are taken into account when monitoring contractors performance whether a day to day repair, the regular landscape maintenance or one off planned maintenance works. These help to decide whether to continue using a particular contractor.
- Publications – we use plain language in publications to make it easier for residents to understand and respond. These can also be provided on audio tape, in large print, Braille or in other languages.
- Newsletter – the newsletter is published at least three times a year and overseen by a small editorial group of residents.
- Annual report – a copy of the annual report is sent to every resident. It includes information about the Association's performance and the results of resident involvement.
- Compliments and complaints help us by letting us know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. We will fully investigate all complaints in accordance with the agreed policy and procedure. Residents will be informed via the newsletter and annual report about the compliments and complaints we receive and any changes that have been made as a result.
- Annual meetings are held with leaseholders, who are consulted in accordance with the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.
- Twice yearly meetings are held at each sheltered scheme to consult with residents and discuss issues that affect their homes and the services provided at the scheme.
- Twice yearly home visits are offered to all other residents giving them an opportunity to discuss any aspect of their dealings with the Association and express their views.
- The Annual Residents' Conference provides an opportunity to discuss specific issues and share information.
- 'Armchair Monitors' enables residents to have their say from the comfort of their own home by participating by telephone, email or post.
- Residents Associations – residents are encouraged and helped to set up associations that can provide a voice for people who are interested in local concerns (not just housing issues). Properly managed Residents Associations that act for the benefit of all residents in a scheme or area are encouraged and supported.
- Focus groups offer the opportunity for residents to meet with staff, discuss and influence service standards, policies and performance. There are four geographically based groups and meetings are held up to four times each year.

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4. Opportunities for Involvement continued

- Board Members – at least two places on the Board are open to residents of the Association. All members of the Board are volunteers and decide on key issues of the Association's policy, strategy and areas of business.

5. Responsibility

The Director of Housing Services is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy

6. Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by quarterly reports to the Housing Services Committee using impact assessments to show how cost effective each activity has been and what difference has been made through resident involvement activities.

The results of an annual impact assessment by service area will be reported to the Board and publicised to residents.

The policy will be reviewed annually, in consultation with residents.

This policy applies to the beneficiaries of Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses

October 2009

**This policy can be made available on request in other languages,
large type, Braille or in audio form**