

# **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 high quality well maintained accommodation that meets the demands of our residents; and to
- provide an improved and more responsive service to ensure the best service at a reasonable cost.

Through resident involvement the Association aims to improve accountability, improve the quality and effectiveness of resident involvement, and ensure that service standards and performance are reviewed at regular intervals.

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.

#### **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.
- 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 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.

We will help with things like reasonable childcare costs, travelling expenses, training and stationery.

### **4. Opportunities for Involvement**

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 Resident Satisfaction survey that is carried out every two years.

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.

Suggestion scheme – residents can make their suggestions for service improvements by filling in a simple form. Each suggestion is considered, the resident is informed of the outcome, and it is reported to the Board for information.

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.

#### **4. Opportunities for Involvement continued**

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 '**Armchair Monitors**' gives the opportunity for 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/committees and the meetings are chaired by a resident who is elected by the group. Meetings are held up to four times each year.

Board Members – one place on the Board is 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 Head 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 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 policy will be reviewed annually, in consultation with residents, using the results of the quarterly impact assessments.

This policy applies to the beneficiaries of The Sir James Reckitt Village Haven  
and Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses

**February 2008**

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