



Resident Engagement Policy

Date Approved by Management Committee:
Latest review date:

August 2022
August 2025

Resident engagement policy



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Association's approach to engaging with the community in which it operates and has been guided by feedback from residents.
- 1.2 The Association is committed to listening and acting upon the views of the community, the Management Committee and staff team wish to ensure that residents are involved in designing, delivering and monitoring services to ensure a cohesive community and work to continually improve and enhance services.
- 1.3 We are a resident led organisation and becoming a member of the Management Committee is an ideal way to get involved and participate in the decision-making process. However, this strategy is aimed at residents who wish to take a more independent or informal role in the review and development of the Association's services.
- 1.4 In the most recent large-scale satisfaction survey, more residents expressed that they would like to engage with the Association in an informal manner, using digital where possible. This revised policy takes account of these views, as well as solidifying the existing approach to engagement.

2. Policy aims

- 2.1 The key aims of the policy are:
 - To encourage residents to exercise their right to be involved in the decisions affecting their home environment and service at a level that works for them
 - To improve services to better meet the needs of the community
 - To improve the decision-making process by enabling residents to have an input to policy formulation
 - To protect the investment in the area by increasing the community's sense of ownership
 - To encourage and support wider involvement by putting mechanisms in place that enable residents to be effective partners, and to contribute to and influence the Association's work
 - To increase levels of resident satisfaction by maximising ways of engaging with residents to understand if and how we are meeting their needs

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3. Legal and regulatory framework

3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is the main Act that sets out the main requirements of this policy. The specific parts of this legislation that are most relevant to participation and engagement are Chapter 3, Sections 53 and 54 which outline the requirements to create an engagement strategy which includes consultation on key decisions.

3.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter in 2012. The Charter sets out outcomes which the Association's tenants can expect to receive among which are

- Outcome 1 - Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

“every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

- Outcome 2 - Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.”

- Outcome 3 - Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”

- Outcome 13 - Value for money

“tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay”

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4. Risk management

- 4.1 The Association has considered the potential risks facing the Association should the Resident Engagement Policy fail to be adhered to and or reviewed on a regular basis
- 4.2 Should the Association fail to consult with or include members of the community in its business, it faces losing credibility within the community.
- 4.3 To minimise this risk, the Association ensures the Resident Engagement Policy is reviewed on a regular basis, in conjunction with the Resident Engagement Strategy. Regular updates on progress against the Resident Engagement Strategy will be given to the Management Committee.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Association's approach to resident engagement will be led on a day-to-day basis by the Corporate Services Officer. They will have the support of the Corporate Services Team and ultimately will be managed by the Director and the Management Committee.

6. Equality and human rights

- 6.1 The Association's Equality and Human Rights policy, which was approved by the Committee in April 2021, outlines the commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics¹. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services, and, to this end, the Association can make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.
- 6.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights policy for more information).

¹ The Equality Act 2010 identifies the "protected characteristics" as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

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6.3 In line with section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights Policy, the Association carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on this policy and no remedial action was identified as necessary. The full assessment is appended at the end of this policy.

7. How we engage

7.1 Complaints

7.1.1 The Association adopted the SPSO model handling procedures which was produced in association with the SFHA in 2021. The Association is committed to providing a high-quality customer service however sometimes we do not get this right. In this instance, we refer to the Complaints Handling Procedure which can be found on the Association's website.

7.1.2 Handled well, complaints can give customers a form of redress when things go wrong and can also help us continuously improve services. We aim to learn lessons from complaints, report these to the Management Committee and publish these publicly. It is this aspect which interlinked with the wider resident engagement policy and strategy.

7.1.3 We are currently putting together a complaints satisfaction survey. This can be emailed, posted, or completed online. Residents will be asked to complete this based on their experience of the complaint handling procedure and not the outcome of the complaint.

7.2 Surveys

7.2.1 Every three years the Association carries out a resident satisfaction survey which feeds into the Association's Annual Return of the Charter. We complete this exercise to assess satisfaction amongst residents with the Association and the services it provides. Interviews are spread across the Association's stock and provides robust and representative data. The exercise is carried out by an independent company where a range of questions are asked regarding the services. It is impartial and allows us to update the Association's business plan and implement recommendations that will have a positive impact on residents.

7.2.2 After the completion of any repair carried out by the Association's contractors, a short satisfaction survey may be carried out. This could take several forms which include face-to-face, a phone call from staff, email, or text message.

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Normally around 10% of repairs carried out are surveyed. Results of these surveys will also form part of the Association's Annual Return on the Charter, as well as being analysed to identify any trends or consistent poor performance.

7.2.3 New tenants' visits are completed by the housing management team. These are carried out approximately six weeks after tenants have moved into their new home. A set of questions are asked around the allocations experience and the outcomes are fed back to the housing management team or repairs and maintenance team.

7.2.4 We carry out post-completion surveys of new build developments just short of one year after the development has completed. This enables the resident to pinpoint any repairs or matters of concern whilst the property is within the defects liability period.

7.3 Residents panel

7.3.1 The aim of the Residents panel is to provide people with the opportunity to inform how we deliver services in a detailed way. This is a role where residents can help make a difference and get involved with giving feedback on all aspects of what we do, such as customer service, repairs, anti-social behaviour and the management of the environment. It is open to any of residents with an interest in service scrutiny. No specific skills are needed, just the experience of being a Cernach Housing Association resident.

7.3.2 The panel will assist staff who need residents' views on policies when they are due for review. They will influence the design of key organisational publications such as the Annual Report the Association provides to residents outlining how we perform against the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Annual Assurance Statement. They will also help plan and deliver community events such as away days, family events and festive celebrations.

7.4 Armchair critics

7.4.1 Armchair critics is a group of residents who we consult with on various aspects of the work we do, in a similar manner to the Residents Panel. This role differs as you can deliver feedback from the comfort of their own home and in their own time. This more relaxed format means we can reach different groups of residents from those in the resident panel, and will generally take less time to engage with than the formal panel structure.

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7.4.2 The Association can send out a list of questions or topics in advance for residents to consider and answer. This could be through a paper or digital format, and will cater to the needs of individual participants. The topics can be anything the Association wishes to consult on, but will generally follow similar topics to that of the Residents Panel.

7.5 Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)

7.5.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the right to participate for tenants. Part of this legislation is the requirement that all local authorities and other social landlords introduce a system for setting up and maintaining a register of tenant organisations.

7.5.2 Tenant groups need to apply to become registered and must meet certain criteria to qualify. The criteria for registration have been set out by the Scottish Government and cover several points.

7.5.3 Groups who do become RTOs are entitled to certain rights, and the landlord has a duty to inform and consult with them on housing matters. The Association will assist tenants who wish to set up a registered tenants organisation by providing support to the group and funds for training.

7.5.4 We do not have any active Registered Tenants Organisations within the Association's area of operation at present, however we have a procedure which outlines a full approach and relevant guidance should an active group present themselves.

8. Digital participation

8.1 Website

8.1.1 The Association's website was redesigned in October 2021, with more functionality to enable users to have easier access to services and information. As well as having access at any time to key pieces of information, residents can download forms to submit information or submit automated forms for service requests. There is also a link to a shared online application form. To improve accessibility, there is translation and speech to text facilities for all pages, and the website is easily viewed in an adapted mode from mobile web browsers.

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8.1.2 When we are carrying out consultations or surveys, we will publicise these on the website and feature these on the main pages so that feedback can be easily gathered.

8.2 Social media

8.2.1 The Association's approach to social media can be found in detail in the Social Media Policy. We will update the Association's social media platforms with informative articles, community information and events.

8.3 Texting and email service

8.3.1 The Association has the ability to text and/or email surveys for either satisfaction, policy review or to gauge the appetite for a new service. This process can be carried out directly from the Association's housing management system and recorded on to resident contact diaries.

8.3.2 We are also able to utilise these services in conjunction with Survey Monkey. This offers a further survey system which can be automatically collated and used to inform our services.

9. Community outreach

9.1 As a community-based housing association, the Association want to be seen in the community, raising the Cernach Housing Association's profile and reaching residents who don't interact with the Association frequently. We will strive to attend community events organised by partners in the area. This would enable the Association to increase visibility and take on feedback that may not have been gained otherwise.

9.2 The Association will invite community groups to attend events and gala days, where they can manage a stall to hand out leaflets, offer advice and engage with the community. This benefits residents as they are able to connect with other services.

9.3 We will engage with local groups to get their thoughts on services and pick up any issues presenting themselves. The Association's staff will offer to attend a range of local groups and events, such as Community Council, 'breakfast & a blether', Drumchapel Asian forum, parent and toddlers groups, and any other relevant local groups.

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- 9.4 We will also engage with groups for targeted consultation in their areas of expertise, for example engaging with Glasgow Centre for Including Living (GCIL) on the Association's approach to adaptations, or Drumchapel Asian Forum on the approach to interpreter provision.

10. How we publish information

10.1 Newsletters

- 10.1.1 The Association produces several newsletters each year with informative articles and reports on performance. We will also include project work that we are initiating and advise of cyclical work that is due to take place. We will also update residents with any changes to legislation that may affect them. We invite articles from community groups that we work in partnership with, to provide residents with means to assist them in their daily lives. The newsletters are seasonal and are an effective way of connecting with the community and raising awareness of events within the community.

10.2 Annual Report

- 10.2.1 The Association's Annual Report looks at performance over the last year in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and showcases some of the Association's priorities and achievements. It also displays to residents how performance compares against peers and the Scottish average and will highlight how we plan on improving services. We will consult with residents on the format of this report periodically and ensure we are delivering information clearly, understandably, and meaningfully.

10.3 Written statement of services

- 10.3.1 The written statement of services is produced by us and provided to every owner once they purchase a property where Cernach Housing Association is the registered factor. It is the key document for information in relation to the rights and responsibilities of the homeowner and those of the Association as a property manager. It also advises how to contact us and the Association's authority to act as a factor. It will include details of what services we provide to owners and how we carry these out.

10.4 Letters

- 10.4.1 Letters are an effective method of communicating with residents and remain a popular method of circulating information. However, this is an expensive and

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slow method of communication, and we will aim to minimise this as a form of engagement where there are other methods available.

10.5 Leaflets

10.5.1 Leaflets are produced by staff and external agencies in order to promote services. We will display a range of these within the office and on the website.

11. Resources and incentives

11.1 Resourcing

11.1.1 The Association will commit resources in order to support the aims and objectives of this policy. Within the budget, there is provision for all elements of this policy including

- Registered tenant organisations
- Residents Panel
- Digital participation
- Satisfaction surveys

11.1.2 The Association will also aim to support any resident who wishes to attend by offering to cover costs associated with consultation such as childcare, transport, access to digital services and refreshments. Any costs associated with providing consultation materials in alternative languages or formats will also be covered by the Association.

11.2 Incentives

11.2.1 The Association will also offer incentives to encourage participation, particularly for groups which are underrepresented in current participation methods. This may take the form of vouchers, prize draws and any other incentives which the Association deems appropriate.

12. Action plan

12.1 We will develop a comprehensive action plan to ensure the Association carries out proactive work to implement change as a result of feedback and participation. This will be monitored by the relevant staff teams and progress against this will be reported to the Management Committee.

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12.2 The Association will also develop a strategy in relation to maximising resident engagement. We will use this to continue development of new participation methods, new avenues of outreach and ensure we are getting maximum input from residents. This will be monitored by and reported to the Management Committee.

13. Policy Review

13.1 The resident engagement policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner as deemed necessary by legal, regulatory or best practice requirement or on the request of the Management Committee. The next review will take place by May 2025.

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<p>Cernach Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment Tool</p>	
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Name of the policy / proposal to be assessed	Resident Engagement Policy	Is this a new policy / proposal or a revision?	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Anne E Smith		
<p>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / proposal</p>	<p>Resident engagement is how we listen to and work with residents to improve and shape our services. The Association wants to make sure residents voices are heard throughout the organisation and that there is an opportunity to influence our services and policies.</p>		
<p>2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? (e.g. <i>applicants, tenants, staff, contractors</i>)</p>	<p>All residents, applicants, service users</p>		

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<p>3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy / proposal ? (e.g. <i>the benefits to customers</i>)</p>	<p>Increased engagement with our tenants, owners and service users in order to provide the services that will benefit their lives whilst being involved with us</p>
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<p>4. Which protected characteristics could be affected by the proposal? (<i>tick all that apply</i>)</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation </p>

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.**

After consideration, there are some protected characteristics which could be influenced by this policy.

<p>6. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4</p>	<p>Positive impact(s)</p>	<p>Negative impact(s)</p>
		<p>Age – there are barriers to accessing in-person meetings and events to working age participants compared to pension age participants</p> <p>Disability – there could be barriers to accessing physical services for</p>

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		<p>disabled people, or in reading or writing written communications.</p> <p>Pregnancy/Maternity – there could be barriers to accessing opportunities to participate based on childcare</p> <p>Race – there could be barriers to participation based on language formatting of consultations.</p>
<p>7. What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? <i>(This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).</i></p>	<p>To address age related barriers, this policy allows participation to be online and at any time to allow those in work or school to participate.</p> <p>To address disability related barriers, written materials can be provided in alternative formats and our venues (and any external venues booked/transport provided) will be accessible.</p> <p>To address pregnancy/maternity related barriers, this policy offers payment of childcare costs and related expenses when incurred in relation to activities outlined in this policy.</p> <p>To address race related barriers, written and oral materials can be provided in translated formats.</p>	

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Signed: _____ (Job title): _____ Corporate Services Officer _____

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: _____ 08/07/22 _____

Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report