



PORT OF LEITH
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2019

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Communication & Training Methods	Distributed to OMT for roll out to teams.
Date Last Reviewed	June 2019
Approved By	Leadership Team
Review Cycle	Three years
Next Review Date	July 2022
The Policy has a direct link to the following PoLHA policies and procedures	Customer Charter Complaints Procedures Equalities and Diversity Policy Data Management Policy
This policy complies with the requirements of these legal and/or regulatory documents	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
Equality & Diversity Impact (EI) Assessment Status	This document was EDI Assessed by Charlotte Gray using the organisation's set procedure in May 2019 and is considered to be free of anything which may lead to any unfair discrimination in its application. EI Assessment records are held by the Chief Executive's Office and can be accessed on request to the Corporate Services Manager.

REVISION TRACKING (for minor changes which are made between full reviews because of new ideas or changes)

Revision Date	Part of doc revised	Reason for revision	Approved by

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on all housing associations to develop mechanisms to facilitate tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing services. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 created two new fundamental influences in the social housing sector in Scotland. These are:

- Scottish Housing Charter
- Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

Two of the Scottish Housing Charter's specific requirements relate to customer engagement:

- 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.

- 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.

1.2 We have consulted with customers in the development of this policy and the associated action plan.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Port of Leith Housing Association places a significant emphasis on involving customers in all relevant functions of the organisation. We believe it is important that we have a robust, coherent, Association-wide view and approach to help us achieve this. In working with our customers and ensuring that we hold relevant demographic and support needs information through our engagement with them, we strive to ensure that they are able to influence the decisions we make to deliver better services and achieve positive outcomes for all who use our service.

2.2 The Association is an active member of national and regional tenant participation networks and forums and seeks to retain external accreditation for its customer engagement approach.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY

3.1 Customer engagement at its various levels is the responsibility of all members of staff and will vary depending on their role.

3.2 Managing, developing and implementing the annual customer engagement delivery plan is the responsibility of the Communications and Customer Engagement Manager.

4 POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Our aims are to:

- ensure that customers understand their right to have influence over the management of their home
- involve, empower and include more customers in the management of their homes and to identify ways to further increase involvement from our customers
- work in partnership with customers to improve the services we offer
- offer a range of opportunities for engagement in ways that suits our customers
- ensure that customer engagement is an organisation-wide activity
- provide support, training and resources to enable effective customer engagement
- ensure we gather and hold relevant demographic and support needs information through our engagement with customers

4.2 With effective customer engagement we can:

- gain a clearer understanding of the needs and expectations of customers
- improve communication between staff and customers
- create opportunities for making positive changes and improvements to service delivery
- take a more targeted approach with resources
- deliver a more effective and valued service
- deliver services to customers where they feel they are getting value for money
- gain greater customer satisfaction with our service

5 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

5.1 The Association understands the importance providing accurate and accessible information to our customers so that they are able to make informed choices. We are committed to ensuring equal access to our services and will not unfairly discriminate against our customers.

5.2 We regularly ask for feedback on the services we provide. We encourage feedback from our customers to help us monitor the quality of service we are providing so that we can continually make improvements. Where significant changes to a service or policy are proposed, and where it is appropriate, we will seek feedback from

customers before decisions are made. We ensure that there is a range of appropriate methods in place to gain feedback.

5.3 We understand the importance of providing feedback to tenants in a clear and honest way on how they have influenced the way we have taken decisions. We ensure that we have a range of mechanisms in place for giving timely, meaningful feedback to customers.

5.4 We are committed to ensuring that the provision of information best suits the needs of the customer wherever possible. We provide written communication in Plain English and customers can request to have information provided in other formats such as Braille, large print and other languages. We assist customers by providing signers and interpreters for meetings and ensure that our office is fully accessible.

5.5 When consulting with customers we:

- Clearly explain the thinking behind the proposed changes, offer various options and outline how each proposed change would impact on customers
- Provide appropriate timescales for comments from customers
- Host meetings and events at a range of different times to facilitate attendance
- Offer a range of ways for customers to have their say eg face-to-face, in writing or over the phone
- Provide notes of any meetings as a record
- Give contact details of the staff member who is dealing with the consultation
- Give details of how, when and by whom final decisions will be taken

5.6 We have developed a toolkit for staff to use to ensure that we can collect, store and retrieve appropriate demographic information about our customers, along with their support needs and communication preferences where applicable.

5.7 We have developed a menu of options to ensure that our customers have a range of opportunities to engage with us at levels that suit them. This enables customers to get involved either as individuals or as part of a group, with differing levels of influence in the decision-making process. We ensure that customers are aware of these options.

6 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years unless any amendment is required by a change in legislation or if monitoring reveals that a change in policy is required sooner. We review the progress and agree the customer engagement action plan with tenants annually and report on our progress to our customers in our newsletter.