



## Southside Housing Association Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy

Issued: August 2020  
Revised: November 2021  
Next Review: November 2024

# Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy



## **WELCOME**

As customers we want you to be an integral part of our service review, as your feedback and comment allows us to make sure that the services that we deliver remain relevant and effective in the communities in which we operate and support.

This strategy will set out **how** we will continue to offer and improve ways to engage, **why** we should do this, **where** you can add value and influence. Our Action Plan will tell you **when** we will do things so that you are aware of opportunities to talk to us. Finally, we will tell you **how** you can influence and drive forward change with us.

<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Vision and Values</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Strategy Objectives</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Legal and Regulatory Context</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Equalities and Human Rights Commitment</b>
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Context of Customer Involvement and Engagement</b>
<b>Section 7</b>	<b>Routes to Involvement and Engagement</b>
<b>Section 8</b>	<b>Communication and Information</b>
<b>Section 9</b>	<b>Areas for Development and improvement</b>
<b>Section 10</b>	<b>Support For Customer Involvement</b>
<b>Section 11</b>	<b>Monitoring and Review</b>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Strategy describes how Southside Housing Association (SHA) will promote and implement community involvement and engagement with customers and the wider community.
- 1.2 The Strategy uses the broad terms ‘involvement’ and ‘engagement’ to cover a wide range of activities and approaches that will be embedded within our new Business Improvement systems and ways of working, and replaces the previous limited terminology of ‘tenant participation’. The Strategy refers to our customers and the community. Our customers are all who receive a service from us and the community will vary, but likely include those living in the neighbourhoods we operate within, but who do not receive a service from us.
- 1.3 The Strategy is in two parts:
- **Part 1** describes what we hope to achieve and the various ways that people can become involved.
  - **Part 2** is our Action Plan setting out what we will do to put the various parts of the Strategy into practice over the next three years.
- 1.4 The Strategy is considered within the context of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act which was passed on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and the National Standards for Community Engagement (2016).
- 1.5 The Action Plan will sit with the cross departmental Community Involvement and Engagement Steering Group and will be reviewed annually.

## 2.0 OUR VISION AND VALUES

- 2.1 We have a **vision** to support thriving local communities. We want;
- All of our homes to be popular, affordable, well maintained and energy efficient;
  - Our customers to receive excellent services from approachable and knowledgeable staff;
  - To serve all communities equally, and;
  - To work with partners to build popular and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- 2.2 To support our vision we are active members of the **Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)**, Glasgow and West of Scotland forum of Housing Association (GWSF) and **Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)**.
- 2.3 We also strive to uphold and promote our **Values**:

### Professional

- We will act with integrity, we will be impartial in the advice we give and the actions we take, and we will be reliable and competent in our work.

### **Responsive**

- We will be focused on both the needs of the individual customer and the community.

### **Progressive**

- We will seek to empower individuals and communities in our work. We will be proactive in addressing problems and we will tackle inequalities where we find them.

## **3.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 As a community-controlled social landlord, the Association welcomes the involvement of customers in the management of their homes and the improvement of services. We believe that this empowers customers and benefits the wider community. It also helps the Association, in our efforts to continually improve our services and performance.
- 3.2 Equally, SHA is clear that customer involvement is a right, not a duty. It is up to each person to decide if and how they would like to get involved and for the Association to shape its Strategy accordingly and remove barriers to involvement.
- 3.3 The Association has set the following objectives for this Strategy:

1. Meet our agreed Customer Service Standards during all contact with customers.
2. Provide a range of opportunities for involvement and engagement, appropriate to individuals' preferences and our services and programmes.
3. Listen to and apply customer feedback to improve service delivery, ensure value for money and to help us meet our Business Plan.
4. Provide the opportunity for all sections of the community to have the opportunity to take part, in line with our values of inclusion and equality.

## **4.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONTEXT**

- 4.1 There are a number of statutory and regulatory provisions which guide and inform what the Association must do in terms of meeting tenant participation, community engagement, tenant scrutiny and consultation obligations. These are set out below at sections 4.3 to 4.6
- 4.2 There are also National Standards for Community Engagement which provide a code of good practice principles in relation to organisations and their approach to community engagement. These are set out below at section 4.7.

### **4.3 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001**

- 4.3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is the key piece of legislation in relation to social landlord's obligations with regard to Tenant Participation. This is set out in Chapter 3 sections 53 and 55 of the Act.
- 4.3.2 Section 53 of the Act provides that an RSL must prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy and that RSLs must maintain a register of Tenant Organisation and keep it open for inspection at all times.
- 4.3.3 Section 55 of the Act provides that every RSL must notify all Scottish Secure and Short Scottish Secure Tenant of any proposal concerning:
- Its policy in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance where the proposal if implemented, is likely to affect the tenant (this would include rent increases, changes to allocations systems etc.)
  - Standard of service in relation to housing management, repairs and maintenance which it intends to provide
  - Its Tenant Participation Strategy
  - A disposal which would result in a change of landlord.

### **4.4 Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement/Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement**

- 4.4.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 also introduced the Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST).
- 4.4.2 A revision of the model tenancy agreements introduced by the Housing Scotland Act 2014, came into effect in 2019. The Associations Management

Committee approved the Association's revised SST and SSST agreements in March 2019.

4.4.3 Section 8.4 of the SST and SSST set out the full provisions with respect to tenant consultation.

#### **4.5 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010**

4.5.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter which sets out sixteen outcomes (fourteen of which apply to RSLs) which social landlords must meet when performing their housing activities.

4.5.2 Outcome 3 sets the standards and outcomes RSLs must meet in relation to Tenant Participation:

“..Social landlords manage their business 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..”.

#### **4.6 The Regulatory Framework and Tenant Scrutiny**

4.6.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 also introduced the SHR's Regulatory Framework which set out how it regulates social landlords in Scotland. The Framework encompasses the Standards of Governance and Financial Management, Regulatory Requirements, legal duties and Constitutional requirements which RSL's must meet.

4.6.2 Tenant Scrutiny is a tenant centred approach to landlord activities which delivers benefits to tenants, landlords and communities alike.

4.6.3 Regulatory Standard 2.4 sets out the expectation that:

“The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The Governing Body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions.

4.6.4 Regulatory Requirement CH2 also sets out that

“Social landlords must involve tenants in the scrutiny of its performance”.

#### **4.7 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

4.7.1 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives new rights to community bodies and new duties to public service authorities

4.7.2 Part 3 of the Act (Participation Requests) is focused on extending and improving community participation in improving outcomes for communities. It

is the legislation that enables communities to request to participate in decisions and processes which are aimed at improving outcomes. Although not a designated public service authority within the Act, RSLs may have a role in assisting community groups to make a participation request to a designated public service authority.

## **4.8 National Standards for Community Engagement**

4.8.1 The Scottish Community Development Centre developed the National Standards for Community Engagement in 2016. The National Standards for Community Engagement are a set of good practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement.

4.8.2 The National Standards set out good practice expectations with regard to the following:

- Inclusion
- Support
- Communication
- Methods
- Planning
- Working Together, and;
- Impact

## **5.0 EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT**

5.1 The Association has obligations under the public sector equality duty – general duty

In line with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The Association has a duty to meet the following when making decisions and setting policies:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity, and;
- Foster good relations between different protected characteristic groups

5.2 SHA will promote involvement by people from all sections of the community:

- We will recognise that everyone is an individual and adjust our approach to meet individuals' needs, where this is feasible.
- We will carry out the robust collection of Equalities Data in relation to our customers.
- We will comply fully with our duties to prevent discrimination.
- We employ bilingual staff or external interpreters, to help remove barriers to communication.

- We use our membership of Happy to Translate to promote our organisation as a welcoming and open place for everyone.
  - We will provide training for staff and committee members to ensure equality and inclusion are part of the Association's culture.
  - We will look to explore innovative ways to engage with different sections of our communities.
  - When organising meetings or events, we will be sensitive, where practical to, the needs of people with young children, people with disabilities and people who care for a dependent relative, as well as religious and cultural requirements.
- 5.3 SHA may also support initiatives within the community that will help address barriers to involvement. For example, we currently provide the Govan Community Project with a flat at Moss Heights to support outreach activities with asylum seekers and refugees.
- 5.4 In meeting our statutory and regulatory obligations in relation to community involvement and engagement set out at section 3 and 4 of this strategy we will ensure we act in ways which meet our legal requirements, including:

- Consult with individual customers on changes to their rents and service charges and all housing service policies that will significantly affect them
- Provide tenants with information upon request as set out in the Tenancy Agreement
- Make sure we do not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of the nine "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010.
- Achieve the outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter when we are providing housing services to our tenants and other customers.

## 6.0 CONTEXT FOR CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

### Governance Structures

- 6.1 The Management Committee recently approved the revised remit of the Neighbourhood Committees, removing them from the formal governance structure of the Association. The Management Committee has approved the establishment of Neighbourhood Committees for each of its two main housing stock management areas: Cardonald/Halfway and Pollokshields/ Shawlands.
- 6.2 In constitutional terms, the Neighbourhood Committees are not part of the Governing Body or the Governance arrangements. Instead they are part of a network of groups and forums that promote tenant and resident involvement in the Association, promoting opportunities for participation in the affairs of the Association and ensuring opportunities for tenants and service users to scrutinise the services provided.

6.3 The overall objectives of the Neighbourhood Committees are:

- To support the Management Committee deliver local community control by providing opportunities to influence decision making;
- To promote high levels of local community participation in the Association;
- To scrutinise the Association's landlord services to make sure they deliver the best outcome for tenants and are value for money.
- To use local expertise and lived experience to shape and inform the development and delivery of local neighbourhood services.
- To support the Association and residents to shape and influence the activities of partners.

6.4 Each Neighbourhood Committee will have specific responsibilities around management of housing stock, our annual development and investment programme, customer/tenant consultation and community development.

6.5 While information is sought from a number of sources, the local committees meet will meet on a bi-monthly basis. Both local committees have a membership of up to 10 people.

### **Tenants Groups**

6.6 There are established customer groups active in our area, at Herriet Court and within Nithsdale/Newark Drive independent living accommodation. There are no Registered Tenants Organisations, however the two Neighbourhood Committees in Cardonald /Halfway and Pollokshields/Shawlands deliver a similar function for the tenants of the Association.

6.7 An active and committed Friends of Halfway Community Park group have supported the redevelopment of green space.

### **Community Development Activities**

6.8 SHA have an established Community Initiatives Team with a growing role in community development activities. SHA deliver a programme of activities from our community hubs and also support the involvement of other organisations to deliver activities and services from our bases. Our bases are as follows:

- 150 Berryknowes Avenue
- 15 Queensland Gardens
- 40 Moss Heights Avenue
- Independent Living complexes at Herriet Court and Nithsdale/Newark
- 423 Shields Road

6.9 SHA has also built up successful relationships working with a range of community based, third sector organisations. These relationships enable us to have both a strategic as well as a community anchor role in delivering community involvement and engagement within our neighbourhoods.

6.10 Building on existing relationships with other organisations SHA continues to explore joint working and partnership opportunities.

## 7.0 Routes to Involvement and Engagement

7.1 There are many ways in which customers can become involved in SHA's work. The choices currently on offer include:

### **Consultation (examples include):**

- Attending a roadshow event or public meeting organised by the Association in local area.
- Joining the Consultation Register, to receive information on specific topics or to give views on service policies and standards when they are being reviewed.
- Commenting on social media and our website.

### **Providing Feedback (examples include):**

- Responding to a survey about a service they have used, or about the Association's services as a whole.
- Taking part in a focus group meeting, where a small number of participants discuss the Association's services.
- Taking part in a working group to develop proposals or find solutions to a particular issue.
- Taking part in practical activities that examine how well services are working, for example estate walkabouts with staff and Committee members.
- Attending informal social gatherings which also provide information or discussion about housing matters.
- Liking/disliking comments on social media.
- Responding to campaigns on our website and other social media platforms.

### **More formal types of involvement (examples include):**

- Becoming a shareholder and member of the Association.
- Joining one of the Association's Neighbourhood Committees.

- Standing for election to the Association's Management Committee.

7.2 Our Community Involvement and Engagement Action Plan provides further information on our planned areas of involvement.

7.3 SHA will make sure that our involvement and engagement approaches are proportionate and represent a good use of resources. For example:

- We will use the Consultation Register to identify customers who have expressed an interest in being consulted.
- We may supplement this if the matter at hand has significant implications for customers as a whole, for example by holding local consultation meetings or conducting customer surveys.
- We will allow greater time for consultation on issues that will have the greatest impact on tenants (for example, annual rent review proposals; rent restructuring; changes to the repairs service).
- We will use technology to our advantage to reach a wider range of people.

7.4 The Association will always provide customers with feedback about the range of views they have contributed during consultation exercises. We will do this by:

- Publishing information in our Newsletter
- Issuing consultation reports or individual letters

## 8.0 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

8.1 Customers and members of the community can communicate with the Association in person at our offices in Cardonald and Pollokshields, in writing, and by telephone or email.

8.2 The Association will provide customers and the community with information about our services and policies that is clear, easy to read and in plain, easy to read language. In doing so:

- We will consider any requests for information in a format that meets an individual's needs.
- We will comply fully with the obligations stated in the tenancy agreement to provide a range of information, upon request.

The Association will make information available through:

- The Association's newsletter, published 4 times a year
- The Association's annual self-assessment report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter in October.
- The Association's Annual Report

- Regular mailshots on specific topics
- The Tenants Handbook and related leaflets
- The Association’s website and Facebook page
- Meetings organised by the Association, such as neighbourhood-based roadshows
- Other community based events such as gala days and pensioners’ party
- Through our notice boards within our community hubs and foyer areas.
- Personal contact

## **9.0 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

9.1 In implementing the Strategy and Action Plan, SHA intends to make a number of improvements to our communication methods including:

- Implementing the Business Improvement changes and in particular our agreed Customer Service Standards.
- The development of a Digital Strategy to involve and empower customers with the Association’s future digital activities.
- The Association’s website, Facebook page and customer information leaflets

## **10.0 SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT**

10.1 SHA’s Management Committee considers and approves an annual budget to support the implementation of our community involvement and engagement work as outlined in this Strategy and the associated Action Plan.

10.2 SHA provides practical support to existing or new groups within the locality by:

- Providing information about the SHA’s operating structures and policies
- Staff attendance where appropriate
- Financial and administrative assistance such as providing stationery, photocopying, places to meet and help with distributing newsletters or flyers
- Small grants to constituted groups undertaking projects or activities that are relevant to the Association’s work

10.3 The level of any financial assistance or support in kind will be decided by the Management Committee or as delegated to the Neighbourhood Committees.

## **11.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 11.1 SHA's Management Committee has overall responsibility for approving and reviewing this Strategy and Action Plan.
- 11.2 The Community Involvement and Engagement Steering Group will be re-established and led by the Community Programmes Manager. The Group will have cross-departmental representation will have responsibility to oversee the delivery of the Plan and provide a report to the Management Committee on an annual basis.
- 11.3 The Strategy and Action Plan will be formally reviewed every three years, although adjustments to the Action Plan may be made and approved by the Management Committee on an annual basis.



## Southside Housing Association

T: 0141 422 1112

F: 0141 424 3327

E: [enquiries@southside-ha.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@southside-ha.co.uk)

A: Southside House, 135 Fifty Pitches Road, G51 4EB