

United Communities

Resident Engagement Policy

2018

1. Policy Statement

The Resident Engagement Policy supports our vision to provide “More Than Just a Roof” for our residents. We want our resident voices to be heard; residents to hold us to account and support the delivery of service improvements. We will co-design solutions that provide excellent customer service through listening to the needs and aspirations of residents, respecting their experience, knowledge and expertise.

We have created “United Voices”, a virtual group, to encourage residents to get involved in a way that suits them and contribute to the running of the organisation through focus groups, social media and surveys.

We aim to achieve greater flexibility, transparency and value for money through involvement of our residents, making engagement with residents an intrinsic part of everything we do.

This policy supports our strategic priority of “Valuing Residents and Communities”. It should be read in conjunction with our Customer Feedback Policy, Tenancy Impact Policy and Tenants Handbook.

We have an opportunity to develop a genuine partnership with our residents who live in and around our communities. We will work with United Voices to shape the future of, our services and their homes. We want to create a way of working together that is based on learning, sharing information and good performance.

2. Key Principles

We will:

- Meet the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard currently set by the Regulator of Social Housing by providing evidence of engagement.
- Offer a range of ways for residents to engage with us that are accessible, understandable and in an appropriate format, using digital communication and more traditional media.
- Strive to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to be heard, particularly those who may be traditionally be seen as more difficult to reach or overlooked, for example younger residents, BME and disabled residents.
- Provide opportunities for the Board to listen to residents and take into account their views in the development of the business strategy for United Communities.

- Demonstrate where we have acted on feedback from residents to improve the service or changed policies and procedures.
- Learn from our customer feedback where we can improve our service and make tenant involvement an integral part of our business by involving and consulting tenants to shape services to best meet their needs
- Ensure that we are fully inclusive and provide opportunities to widen engagement by offering a range of ways that tenants can get involved, at level and pace that is accessible to all
- Maximise accountability and value for money to ensure that tenants have confidence in our services.

3. Our approach

Our Resident Engagement Policy is built around three interconnected themes which link to our overall strategic priorities as follows:

1. **Building communities and encouraging resilience**
2. **Speaking out and being heard**
3. **Challenging performance and improving services**

Theme 1 – Building communities and encouraging resilience:

Community does not begin and end at the boundaries of our homes but reaches out into the neighbourhoods in which our residents live. Our approach is to support residents to be active citizens by doing more for themselves and to be better connected with their neighbours – “More Than Just a Roof”.

Theme 2: Speaking out and being heard:

We will continually review and improve opportunities for resident views to be expressed, heard and acted upon. This requires a range of methods and approaches for communicating, based on the preferences and needs of residents, using United Voices as a hub.

Theme 3: Challenging performance and improving services:

We will actively involve residents in the monitoring and scrutinising of services taking into account any proposals for any future change and continually look for ways to improve our service.

4. Delivery of the Policy

We will:

- Develop our United Voices group to give residents more opportunities to contribute in different ways and in the way that is suited to their individual requirements to ensure partnership working
- Give residents the appropriate level of support, mentoring and training needed to be involved in the work of the United Communities.

- Support residents to develop local groups and exercise their Right to Manage if requested
- Hold an annual residents conference and invite residents to the annual general meeting with a view to gaining resident's opinions, providing an opportunity for the Board to meet and discuss key issues with residents.
- Survey residents regularly on overall standards and transactional feedback on specific areas of our work such as repairs and publish the results and action plans
- Make sure all communication is accessible and meets individual tenant needs – for example:
 - Large print or audio
 - google translate on our website
 - Language Line for personal contact
- Keep residents informed in a variety of ways tailored to their needs using both technology and print, face to face and online.
- Make it as easy as possible for residents to understand, access and feedback on our services through:-
 - a phone line service
 - an out of hours emergency call line
 - an interactive website (one you can use on your mobile phone and access to text and emails) including an interactive chat line
 - personal visits to your home
 - information packs about local services and the community where we have homes
 - Social media
 - Regular newsletters on line and in print.
- Provide information on the services delivered to any communal areas and update residents on any changes to that service, offering them the chance to get involved in the selection of new contractors
- Take into account resident views on the range of local offers through local lettings plans on new sites and specific neighbourhoods (where appropriate).
- Provide an out of hour's emergency service for any Tenancy related emergency, in addition to our emergency repairs service.
- Provide access to the relevant performance data.
- Give residents the chance to be involved in decisions that affect residents such as starter tenancy reviews, complaints appeals etc.
- Involve residents in scheme appraisal reviews of potential new development sites

5. Monitoring

Our annual Resident Engagement Plan will include the following measures:

- The number and types of residents engaged through the range of initiatives;
- The number of residents who have not previously engaged with United Communities or United Voices before;
- Attendance at our AGM and resident conference to assist with the development and delivery of any action plans from these events;

- The impact of United Voices group has on service delivery – i.e. attending meetings, offering feedback, challenging services amending policies and through our annual satisfaction surveys;
- Report on the progress of our annual action plan arising out of our resident satisfaction survey;
- Providing an annual report on complaints and compliments received from residents and partners to demonstrate our focus on the learning and service improvements from these and the potential changes to services. This will be covered within the ‘what could be improved’ annual report as part service improvements.

These measures along with other qualitative outcomes, the return on social investment and value for money indicators of resident engagement will be reported to the Board via an annual report to residents, at the annual general meeting and the United Voices Resident Conference.

6. Review of Policy

The Policy will be reviewed by the Board and residents every three years or following changes to regulation, legislation or statutory guidelines.