

Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Halton Housing is committed to listening to our customers, to taking their views into account and to working together to continuously improve the homes and services that we deliver.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to improve the ways in which we engage with our customers, to ensure that customer's views are heard and used to drive decisions at all levels of the organisation. This policy commits to engaging with customers in a way that is convenient, meets their needs and focusses on the things that matter most to them.
- 1.3 When we say "customer engagement" we mean ***"working together with customers to shape the homes and communities that they live in and the services that they receive"***
- 1.4 We will use customer data and insight to develop a deep understanding of customers and ensure that the customer feedback that we receive is accurate and representative of the customers and communities that we serve.
- 1.5 We want to hear the views of the communities that we operate regardless of whether they are Halton Housing customers or not. We will use a range of methods for community engagement and work together with key local stakeholders such as Halton Borough Council.
- 1.6 This policy is in line with our legal responsibilities under the Consumer Standards specifically the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard.
- 1.7 This policy document sets out what we aim to achieve by engaging with customers and how this will be delivered.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Our Corporate Plan 2022/2025 sets out our commitment to ensuring that customers have the opportunity to have their voice heard, to engage with us in a way that is convenient to them and meets their needs.
- 2.2 We believe that customer engagement is key to improving our services and delivering on our vision to Improve People's lives, we can achieve this through;
 - Transparency of information regarding the services that we deliver, how we are performing, customer feedback that we receive and how we use this to improve what we do.

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- Data and insight on customers and communities driving targeted and tailored engagement opportunities.
 - A wide range of meaningful ways for customers to engage with us, to scrutinise and influence strategies, policies, and services.
 - Accessible support that meets the diverse needs of our customers, so that so that they can engage with us in a meaningful way.
 - Strong community presence, building relationships of trust with customers and communities.

2.3 The Policy is underpinned by the Consumer Standards, the National Housing Federation initiative “Together with Tenants” and Tpas National Tenant Engagement standards.

2.4 We will continue to develop our partnerships with Halton Borough Council (HBC), other Registered Providers, community stakeholders and local community groups to engage with the wider communities that we operate in as well as with Halton Housing customers.

2.5 The Policy will be implemented in line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2024 and will be delivered through 4 key areas of focus;

1. Transparency of information to customers
2. Understanding our customers through data and insight
3. Targeted and tailored customer engagement
4. Collaboration and co-creation

1. Transparency of information to customers

2.6 To build relationships of trust and to help customers scrutinise and influence our strategies, plans and policies, it is essential that we share information about how we are performing, what our performance measures are telling us and what we are doing as a result. We will achieve transparency by;

- Providing clear and easy to understand information about what services we provide, how to access them and the standards of service that customers can expect.
- Clear and easy to understand performance information published on our website including any actions that we are taking to improve.

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- Publishing our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) results alongside our complaint performance each year.
 - Clear and widely publicised ways that customers can engage with us, regular updates on how we are engaging with customers, what that is telling us and how we are improving our services as a result.
 - We will consult at least once every three years on how to engage and involve customers in how we manage and maintain their homes and communities.

2. Understanding our customers through data and insight

- 2.7 We want to ensure that the customer views that we hear are truly representative of the customers and communities that we serve. We will use data and insight to measure the representativeness of the customer voice, understand any barriers to customer engagement and continue to develop the ways in which our customers can engage with us.
- 2.8 We capture customer feedback in a number of ways, including but not limited to;
- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) surveys
 - Touch point satisfaction surveys after key customer interactions e.g., Onboarding, Complaints, ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) and Repairs
 - Complaint reporting and learning outcomes
 - Compliments
 - Social media sentiment tracking
 - Neighbourhood Surgeries
 - Neighbourhood Walkabouts
 - Customer Forum
- 2.9 We will continue to develop customer insight in order to understand the needs of our customers, improve the diversity of the customer feedback that we receive, continuously improve our services and develop new ways that customers can engage with us.

3. Targeted and Tailored customer engagement

- 2.10 We are committed to working with customers to ensure that the customer views that we receive are representative of our customers and communities. We will ensure that customer feedback is used to continuously improve the services that we deliver.
- 2.11 We will provide a range of opportunities for customers to have their voices heard and where appropriate, support them to develop the skills needed to

help them to effectively scrutinise our strategies, plans and policies and shape the homes and services that we deliver.

2.12 These include but are not limited to:

- **Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP)** – Reporting directly to our Board, this group of customers review key areas of service delivery and make recommendations directly to the Board. We provide extensive training and the necessary skills to actively investigate, challenge, and make recommendations for improvement. CSP conduct a further review of the services the following year, to ensure that the recommendations have been implemented and all actions are monitored and managed via the Audit and Risk Committee.
- **Customer Forum** - A panel of customers that meets six times a year. The Forum provides an opportunity for customers to scrutinise performance, influence policy and procedure and make recommendations for improvement to services.
- **Customer Focus Groups** – Spotlight conversations with customers to review services we deliver e.g., Repairs Focus group.
- **Digital Engagement - Email** , social media, electronic surveys, and customer portal.
- **Local Engagement** – Engagement with Halton Housing customers through neighbourhood surgeries, neighbourhood walkabouts and local engagement with the Neighbourhood Officers.
- **Community Engagement** – Broader engagement with all Halton Borough residents (not just HH (Halton Housing) customers) local community groups, local MP's, Councillors, and charities.
- **TSM Surveys** – Annual Customer Satisfaction survey (at least 600 surveys per year, with responses representative of our customer base)
- **Transactional Customer Satisfaction Surveys** – Touchpoint surveys completed after key customer interactions e.g., Onboarding, Complaints, Repairs, Reporting of ASB.
- **Customer Inspectors** - Carry out mystery shopping of key service areas e.g., call wait times, live chat functionality, cleanliness of communal areas
- **Customer Champions** - a spokesperson nominated to represent customers living in their neighbourhood, who will engage with HH to provide collective views on policy issues and services.

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- **Customer Editorial Panel** – review and make suggestions on the content of customer communications.
 - **Community Events** – Events may be held to promote a service, raise awareness, provide information, consult on a major issue or for social/community reasons. We also attend events held by other organisations such as community awards, service launch events and public information events. This allows face to face contact with customers to comment on any current housing issues and to enable HH to give information on any future changes in service delivery that may affect them. It is also an opportunity for customers to find out more about engagement activities and to sign up to take part.

4. Collaboration

2.13 We will involve customers as early as possible in shaping strategy, policy, and service design. We will ensure that customers are provided with clear and easy to understand information about the type and standards of service that we offer, we will achieve these through;

- Neighbourhood walkabouts
- Face to Face conversations in customer's homes and communities
- Information sheets
- Training events
- Website
- Social Media
- Customer Forum meetings
- Press Releases

2.14 We will offer customers different ways to engage with us, in a way that suits them. In all engagement with customers, we will:

- Provide easy to understand, easy to digest, accessible information.
- Allow enough time for customers to consider information and respond.
- Summarise and communicate customer feedback and how it was used.
- Treat customers with respect and look to build positive relationships based on openness, honesty, and transparency.
- Ensure that consideration is given to engaging all customers including those who are vulnerable and/or lonely/isolated.

3. Regulatory and/or Legal Compliance

- 3.1 This policy is underpinned by the Consumer Standards, more specifically The Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard.
- 3.2 We will look to meet these regulatory requirements by the effective implementation of this Policy.
- 3.3 We have signed up the Together with Tenants Charter and we will ensure that our approach to engagement meets and/or exceeds the requirements of this commitment. We will review our approach annually against this Charter to ensure that we remain compliant.
- 3.4 Tenant Satisfaction Measures became a regulatory requirement in April 2023 providing visibility to tenants and the regulator on how landlords are performing and enabling tenants to hold their landlord to account. We started to record performance against the TSM's in April 23, we will report our performance annually to Board and the ROSH as well as publish our performance on our website.

4. Diversity Considerations

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Screening Assessment was undertaken in 2023. It concluded the following:
 - The Policy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

5. Links to Strategies, Policies and Associated Documents

- Customer Experience Strategy
- EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) Strategy
- Customer Involvement leaflet
- Leaseholder Handbook
- 'Talk to Us' Policy
- Customer Code of Conduct
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy



Translations are available on request, by calling 0303 333 0101.

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