

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

1. Introduction

Resident involvement can improve quality of life and build stronger communities. It can also empower individuals and improve skills and confidence. Residents should have the opportunity to improve neighbourhoods, the quality of existing services and how we deliver them. We aim to deliver more efficient and tailored services that meet the needs of our residents.

Keniston aims to follow our values of:

- **Respect:** we will be courteous and considerate, treat everyone as individuals and value diversity
- **Openness:** we will listen, be accessible and communicate clearly
- **Accountability:** we will take responsibility for our actions and decisions
- **Honesty:** we will say what we mean, accept our mistakes and learn from them
- **Excellence:** we take pride in what we do and go beyond what is expected.

Involvement is anything which enables residents to influence decisions and be involved in the actions which affects their lives. It is a two-way process involving sharing of information and ideas. We want to build trusting relationships with our residents by listening to and engaging with residents to help shape and improve the services we deliver.

We understand that comments, complaints and compliments from residents provide us with an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and successes and demonstrate accountability to our residents.

This policy sets out our commitment in relation to resident involvement on the basis of any type of tenure.

2. Background

This Resident Involvement Policy is influenced by the Social Housing White Paper, published in November 2020 by the Government, following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. It reinforced the need for us to actively listen to our residents to ensure their voice is heard.

We have also adopted the National Housing Federation's (NHF) Together with Tenants Charter, which was developed from the principles of the 2020 Code of Governance and is based around six themes:

- **Relationships** – Housing associations will treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions. Relationships between residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
- **Communication** – Residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.
- **Voice and influence** – Views from residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform decisions. Every individual resident

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

should feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear of repercussions

- **Accountability** – Collectively, residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services
- **Quality** – Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed
- **When things go wrong** – Residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

3. Regulatory Requirements

The Regulator of Social Housing publishes regulatory standards that registered social landlords must meet. One of these relates specifically to resident involvement and empowerment and says:

1.2.1 Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities
- the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards.
- the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved.
- the management of their homes, where applicable
- the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- agreeing local offers for service delivery

The regulatory environment means that we should be transparent and accountable and ensure that we offer residents greater opportunities for involvement.

4. Our aims and objectives

We will encourage residents to engage with us by whatever method they wish by offering a range of opportunities at different levels of time and commitment to involve a number of residents. This will provide opportunities for residents to get involved at the neighbourhood level including supporting community groups and estate improvement projects. We will consult with residents on documents, projects and service delivery; asking for comments and feedback to help us improve.

Resident involvement will be embedded throughout Keniston and we will ensure collaboration from staff to maximise service improvement. We will adapt our involvement and insight to changing circumstances.

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

We will organise events and activities with the aim of making them accessible and convenient for the largest number of residents. We will use information received from comments, complaints and compliments to influence future service.

We will demonstrate resident's impact to show where they have made a difference.

5. Keniston's Strategic Plan

We will ensure that Keniston's Strategic Plan include goals which relate to resident involvement, taking into account:

- Priorities identified through our Star surveys and through estate profiling
- Advice contained in the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter and the Social Housing Charter included in the Social Housing White Paper in 2020
- Ensuring high levels of resident satisfaction and excelling at customer service.

6. Board resident champion

A Board resident champion is a Board member with this designation, who would act as a bridge between the Board and the Resident Panel, enabling the resident voice to be heard at Board discussions, where there is no resident board member in attendance.

7. Asking how residents want to be involved

We aim to enable residents to be involved in plans and decisions that affect them. We respect the opinions of our residents and appreciate peoples time is in short supply and aim to ensure their time is well spent. This means each involvement event has a focus and purpose so that resident's needs are fully aired and considered. We will be transparent, honest and clear about the purpose, the limits of what can and cannot be changed.

Participation is voluntary. The Association encourages residents to be involved but residents must choose to be involved for it to be effective.

The Association aims to be inclusive and support and encourage all residents. No resident will be excluded because of a lack of physical access to meeting places and appropriate support will be given.

8. Provide a range of opportunities

There are many methods for involvement, but there is no one size fits all. Different levels of participation are appropriate in different circumstances.

We recognise that our residents live complex and busy lives and may not want to take such an active role. This is why we offer a 'menu of involvement' and will engage with residents using different methods, both formal and informal, including through consultation, online and postal surveys and face to face interactions.

We will ensure that all expenses are paid to residents when incurred due to their involvement activities.

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

9. Menu of involvement

We offer a menu of involvement so that residents can get involved as little or as much as they wish.

Resident Board members

We aim to involve residents at the highest level of Keniston's governance. Residents involved in this way will receive support if needed and are expected to act as expert service-users.

Resident panel

Keniston's resident panel assist us and hold us to account for service delivery and has an important role to play, helping us deliver the right service at the right time.

The resident panel is made up of representatives from across Keniston's stock.

We work with our resident panel in a variety of ways, which may include; reviewing policies, procedures and performance data, interviewing staff, job shadowing and carrying out surveys to find out more about the services that our tenants receive.

The panel will provide feedback, including what's working well and make recommendations for improvement.

This helps us to keep in touch with resident's experiences and needs which will be used to continually inform the work Keniston does. We will inform the panel how their views impact on decisions and service delivery.

Digital engagement

Keniston also has a private Facebook group, 'Keniston Gossip' which also acts as a means for quick and easy responses to short questionnaires and polls. We can use our on line platform to hold virtual meetings, where it may be more difficult for some residents to attend in person or at a particular time.

Focus groups

Focus groups discuss general subjects or particular "hot topics" as appropriate. Feedback from focus groups is used to inform new services or changes to the Association's processes.

Resident Inspectors

We will involve residents in testing our services, attending our events, monitoring our estate services or participating in our projects.

Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods – Estate Improvements

The Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods initiative exists to fund estate improvements. Residents via meetings and management team walkabouts make recommendations for improvements. Staff who attend can also make recommendations for improvements.

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

Informal discussions

We welcome comments from any of our residents, in whatever format they choose. This can be in person when we are on the estate, by email or letter, via our website or simply by calling us to let us know what's on their mind.

Residents Meetings

We aim to support residents by discussing local estate concerns and provide residents the chance to represent the views of their communities. We will carry these out at least once a year to give residents the opportunity to speak to staff in person. Residents will also receive information about our services and housing related issues.

Surgeries will be carried out on the estate if there are important issues that need to be dealt with in a timelier manner.

Local Offers

These are a range of standards and commitments for key service areas, that are identified at resident meetings, through our regular resident surveys or through management team walkabouts.

Editorial Panel

Members of the editorial panel help us improve the way we communicate with residents. Members proof read our public documents such as our information sheets, residents newsletters and annual reports.

Meet the staff day / resident conference

On occasion, Keniston will host a meet the staff day or a resident conference. This is an opportunity for Keniston to thank residents on the panel for their feedback and involvement and to provide residents an opportunity to meet Keniston staff and find out more about how the Association is run.

Level of involvement		
Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Resident Panel ⇒ Digital engagement ⇒ Editorial Panel ⇒ Completing Surveys ⇒ Community events ⇒ Attending Management Team Walkabouts ⇒ Attending general residents' meetings ⇒ Attending training courses ⇒ Focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Joining or starting a residents' group ⇒ Working on projects for improving your local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Resident Board Member ⇒ Becoming a Resident Inspector ⇒ Reviewing our service areas in detail

Resident Involvement

Housing Management Policy 5

Keniston

10. What we offer

Training

We are committed to giving residents training and opportunities to make decisions about the way we deliver our services, challenging our performance and driving forward service improvement. Training is offered to members of the resident panel.

Incentives

Incentives will be provided in the form of vouchers. The value of the vouchers is dependent on the commitment given. Incentives are intended to encourage intensive involvement such as focus groups or to thank residents for more complicated tasks. Incentives are not provided for casual events.

11. Feedback

Resident Involvement Impact assessment

Each year we will produce an impact statement which shows each activity held during the year and what impact it has had on our services. This is presented and discussed with our Board and published on our website.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to fairness and equality for all. Our aim is to ensure that this policy does not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly. We aim to ensure that all our residents are treated with dignity and respect and that we provide a safe, supportive environment.

Agreed by Board on 26 January 2023. Next review is due January 2026.