



Customer Engagement Strategy

2021 - 2023

Date of approval	27 September 2021
Responsible director	Paul Seymour, Executive Director of Housing & Community Investment
Strategy monitoring body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Committee (to Dec 2021) • Customer Experience Committee (from Jan 2022)
Resident input into strategy	<p>Tenant Committee - October 2020, December 2020</p> <p>Customer Panels - Smarter Business Panel - August 2021</p> <p>Focus Groups - September 2020</p> <p>Tenant Chairs' Group - May 2021</p>
Date for strategy review	September 2023
Linked strategies/policies	<p>Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>Value for Money Strategy</p> <p>Communication Strategy</p> <p>Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy</p> <p>Involvement Expenses Policy</p>
Statutory and Legal Framework	<p><u>Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard</u></p> <p><u>Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper</u></p> <p><u>Together with Tenants</u></p>
Version/date	V1 – 17 August 2021



The aim of this strategy is to create an approach to resident involvement where residents' voice has meaningful impact into all our operational and strategic decision-making.

Our commitment to our residents is:
"We won't make a decision about you, without you"

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) is the largest Manchester based housing association responsible for 13,700 properties providing a home to almost 30,000 people – some 37% of the Wythenshawe community.
- 1.2 Our purpose is to provide good quality homes and services to our tenants and leaseholders and to play a leading role in creating safer, healthier communities.

Regulatory context

- 1.3 As a registered provider of social housing, we are committed to delivering against the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, including the [Consumer Standards](#).
- 1.4 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (MHCLG) [Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper](#) published in November 2020 and the National Housing Federation's (NHF) [Together with Tenants](#) both set out the case for landlords to further strengthen their relationship between residents and landlords.
- 1.5 This strategy aims to position WCHG to be able to meet the evolving requirements of the regulatory environment.

Engagement & influence review

- 1.6 In Autumn 2020, WCHG tenants and officers commissioned England's leading tenant engagement specialists, [Tpas](#), to conduct a review our approach to customer



engagement. The findings of the report were endorsed by the Tenant Committee and its recommendations form the basis of this strategy.

COVID-19 pandemic

- 1.7 Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, WCHG has adopted new ways of engaging residents beyond traditional face-to-face meetings. These initial changes and their success in engaging residents in a more flexible way have inspired the 'digital first' approach outlined in this strategy.

2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1 The strategy will set out how customers can be involved to influence service improvements and what outcomes will be achieved as a result.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this strategy we define 'customer' as a tenant, leaseholder or other user of our services.
- 2.3 The body responsible for co-creating, approving and monitoring this strategy to December 2021 is the Tenant Committee. Responsibility will then transfer to a new Customer Experience Committee from January 2022.

3. How we will engage customers

- 3.1 Our approach to customer engagement - outlined below - is structured in line with the National Engagement Standards (2020) developed by [Tpas](#) and based on the in-depth engagement and influence review conducted with customers and Tpas in Autumn 2020.

Governance and Scrutiny

- 3.2 We will implement a new Customer Experience Committee from January 2022. This committee will replace the current Tenant Committee and be a sub-committee of our Board, made up of customers and Board members, and will have further powers to:
- champion consumer regulation at WCHG



- amplify customer voice at the Board to drive strategic decision-making
 - oversee performance of customer-facing services
- 3.3 The Service Review Group (SRG), composed entirely of tenants, will continue to conduct service reviews and scrutiny work. It will report to both the new Customer Experience Committee and the Group Audit & Risk Committee. The SRG may be commissioned to carry out work to inform Customer Experience Committee decisions.
- 3.4 Recruitment to the formal governance structure will be widely publicised from September 2021.
- 3.5 There continues to be consistent and honest sharing of information with residents about the risks the organisation faces, how it is meeting key organisational targets and how it plans to deal with areas of concern.

Business & Strategy

- 3.6 Four new customer panels have been introduced, aligned to the [corporate plan](#) themes that inform organisation's business strategy:
- More Homes
 - Living Well
 - Great Places
 - Smarter Business



3.7 We have developed seven principles that we use as a guide to how we engage with our customers. These principles are illustrated in the graphic below:





3.8 The following areas for development have been identified in partnership with customers for specific focus over the lifetime of this strategy 2021 -2023:

 <p>More Homes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Use a digital first approach to consult on all new build programmes 2 Train our strategically involved residents in the end-to-end process of development to allow resident influence of our Development Strategy 3 Involve residents in the design of our new homes and developments 4 Provide new opportunities for leaseholders and shared owners to get involved in their services 5 Create involvement mechanisms for future customers and applicants to have influence on their area
 <p>Living Well</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 WCHG will seek out new opportunities for residents to get involved, with particular emphasis on new and emerging communities in Wythenshawe 2 Engage with residents in the process of rebuilding people-based community services after the pandemic 3 Use data and insight to engage with service users as we review our approach to employment services, Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety, Tenancy Support and Community Centres 4 Recognising our role as custodians of Wythenshawe for our future residents, involve young people in our decision-making 5 Create involvement mechanisms for our Older Persons and Extra Care service offers 6 Actively seek out opportunities to engage with under-represented groups with the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act to hear their voices
 <p>Great Places</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Develop a bespoke involvement offer for residents in High-Rise blocks to meet the regulatory requirements under the Building Safety Bill 2 Involve residents in procurement decisions to deliver our investment programme to maintain the safety and amenity of their home 3 Engage residents in the conversation to deliver the Sustainability Strategy and start the conversation to reduce emissions year-on-year to deliver the shared aspiration of a Zero Carbon Manchester by 2038. 4 As a community-based organisation, provide more opportunities to engage face-to-face in our community centres and settings 5 Build Neighbourhood Plans alongside residents to develop and deliver place-based improvements against locally agreed targets



- 1 Use digital channels to deliver a Digital First approach to involvement
- 2 Improve our website to better include the impact made from customer engagement activities
- 3 Develop a culture where customer engagement is central to our decision-making
- 4 Expand resident voice into new areas of our business, for example, involving residents in recruitment decisions to deliver our People Strategy
- 5 Create an environment where residents have the opportunity, motivation and confidence to question how we do things and hold us to account
- 6 Develop ways for customers to be meaningfully engaged in the procurement of services where appropriate
- 7 Better engage customers in the development of our approach to ensuring value for money
- 8 Proactively seek out opportunities to engage with residents with protected characteristics of the Equality Act

Complaints

3.9 Complaints will continue to be regularly reviewed by the customer-led Service Review Group to inform:

- continuous learning and development from complaints
- the development of complaints handling policy and process.

3.10 The Tenant Committee and Customer Experience Committee review compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Code on an annual basis.

Information & Communication

3.11 Relevant information is provided to all recognised panels and involved residents in an agreed time frame to allow them to monitor how key organisational objectives are being met.



- 3.12 Information provided is clear and understandable with key points summarised, using an inclusive range of methods and in a format to suit the intended recipient.

Resources for Engagement

- 3.13 The organisation will continue to provide sufficient resources to deliver effective engagement. Involved customers are offered timely advice and relevant training as well as opportunities to independently network and gain wider housing sector and policy information.

Community & Wider Engagement

- 3.14 During the lifetime of this strategy we will focus on broadening the menu of opportunities to engage with our organisation. Specifically, we will:
- Develop more digital opportunities to engage and make it easier and quicker for customers to have their voice heard at a time and in a place that suits them
 - Proactively seek out opportunities to engage with residents from under-represented groups, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act
- 3.15 We will integrate our volunteering service and resident involvement service to allow:
- Staff volunteering opportunities to be designed to enable informal and natural conversations with customers about their experiences of our services
 - Customers to volunteer and provide their feedback without attending formal meetings
 - Stronger relationships with local community groups and voluntary organisations, listening to people where they are rather than only bringing them into our spaces



4 Performance

- 4.1 Whilst recognising that customer experience often declines during periods of change, the long term aim of this strategy is to contribute to improved customer experience across all the Group's services.
- 4.2 Performance will be overseen by the Tenant Committee and Customer Experience Committee.
- 4.3 The Customer Engagement Strategy aims to deliver the following outcomes by September 2023:
- A formal sub-committee of the Board is dedicated to being the central hub for oversight of consumer regulation
 - Business leaders and managers have an empathetic and strong understanding of the customer experience of our services, creating a 'real conversations' culture
 - A customer experience baseline is established in Year 1, against which we monitor the impact of strategic business investments in the next 5 years
 - We hear more diverse customer voices by offering a more blended approach with digital options for engagement
 - Customer voice and data insights have begun to drive all key business decisions, these are reported to customers showing the difference made
 - We comply with regulatory requirements emerging from the [Social Housing White Paper](#) and the draft [Building Safety Bill](#)
- 4.4 We will achieve this by:
- Recruiting to and establishing a new Customer Engagement Committee sub-committee of Board to provide enhanced governance by January 2022

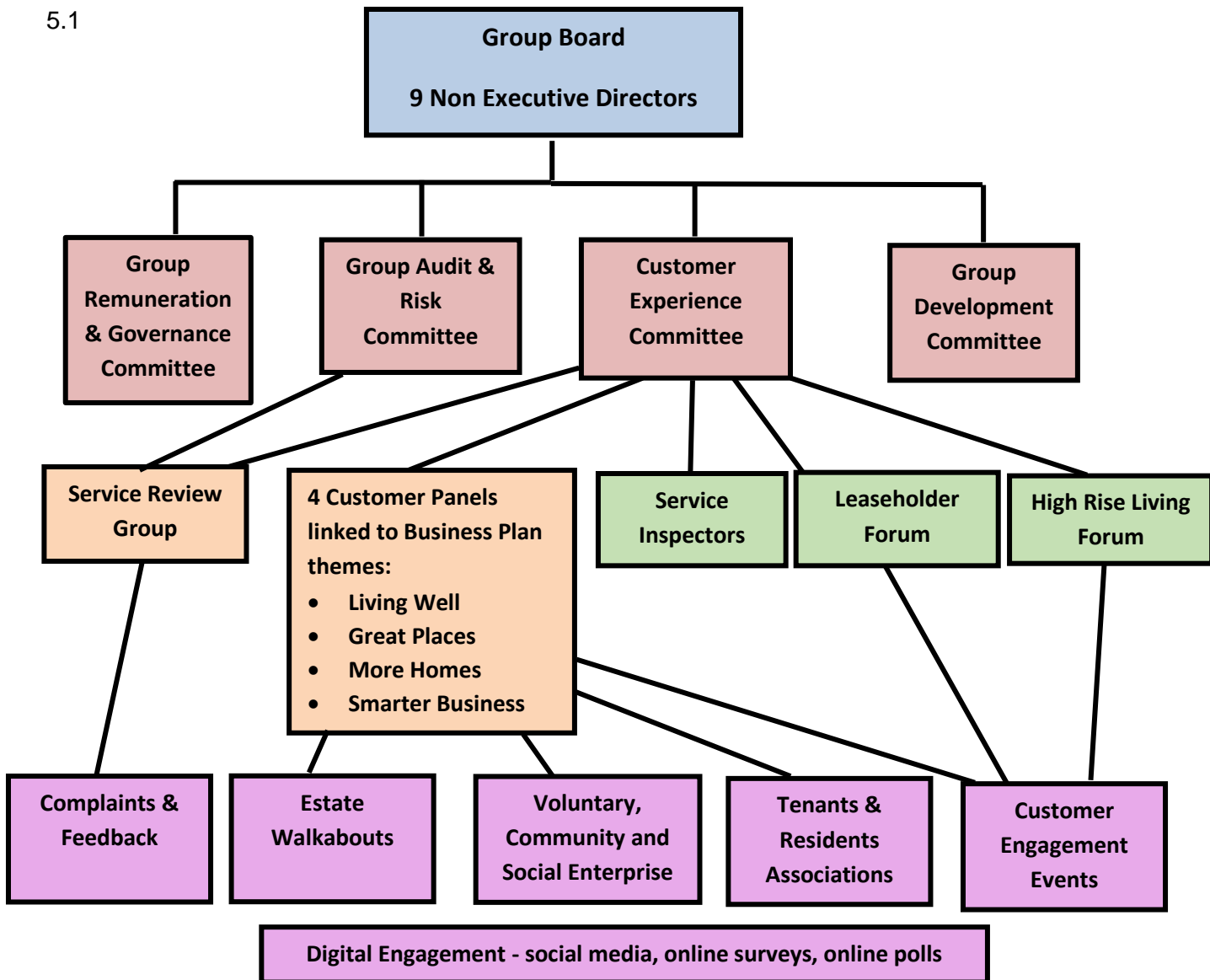


- Commissioning an audit of the organisation's compliance against the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing by December 2021
- Conducting a baseline survey of customer satisfaction and customer likelihood to recommend (net promoter score) by September 2021
- Creating of a range of #GetTogetherWyth opportunities for face-to-face informal interaction between customers and decision-makers out and about on the estate
- Developing an approach to customer segmentation to inform communications and our future customer engagement approach by March 2022
- Using customer journey mapping techniques to ensure that customer experience informs proposals for investment in systems being considered by Board in March 2022
- Investing in digital options for engagement by March 2022
- Integrating our customer and employee volunteering service into the wider customer engagement function by December 2021
- Achieving 95% take-up of the tenant-approved tick for organisational changes
- Achieving 90% satisfaction with customers having contact with the Customer Engagement team and service
- Achieving full take up of customer memberships on Customer Experience Committee, Service Review Group and four Customer Panels by January 2022
- All Customer Experience Committee and Service Review Group members have an annual appraisal and an agreed and funded personal development plan
- Significant progress made in the areas of development highlighted in section 3.8 of this strategy by September 2023



5 Customer engagement structure

5.1





6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 An Implementation Plan running to September 2023 will be developed to support the delivery of this strategy. The Implementation Plan will be monitored by the Assistant Director of Customer Experience.
- 6.2 The Customer Engagement Manager will be responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the Implementation Plan.

7 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The delivery of the strategy against its targets and outcomes will be reviewed annually by Customer Experience Committee.
- 7.2 The impact of customer engagement will be communicated to customers through our social media and annual report.