



A SUMMARY OF OUR THREE-YEAR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



WHAT RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT BRINGS TO OUR SERVICE

- It improves services and our accountability. The Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman both regularly report on the link between service failures and poor resident engagement.
- It helps build a sense of trust and a better connection with the residents we serve.
- A stronger voice is good for community wellbeing.
- We set better strategies and make better decisions when we listen to the people who use our services. They are the experts on what works and why and what doesn't.
- Services that work means less money wasted on plans and initiatives that fail.
- As we get to know and better understand our residents and their homes they should be more likely to report any safety concerns to us.

We are small and locally-based making us uniquely placed to build an excellent relationship with our residents and the wider community. Other landlords might learn from our example.

WHY DOES RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT MATTER?

Involving residents is important to us, not just because we are expected to do it but because, as our core principles state, we want this to be a key part of how we work.

WE CONNECT...

with our residents, creating close connections and a listening ear where people feel heard and can thrive as we build a culture of listening to residents and acting on what they tell us

WE BUILD ...

great places to live and a trusted, customer-focused team that delivers on its promises to build a strong bond of trust with our residents

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We want to hear from all of our residents, but with them deciding how and when they want to share their views with us.

Involving residents is everyone's job at BHA and must underpin the way we work.

We will find ways to listen to all of our residents, regardless of how much time they can and want to give.

We will find ways to bring residents and neighbours together to help build a sense of community.

We will build stronger relationships with residents based on mutual trust.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all. We will make sure resident voices represent the needs of our diverse community.

We will use what residents tell us to improve our services so they know we are really listening and that their views matter.

We are an inclusive organisation where everyone feels comfortable celebrating difference, challenging ignorance and embracing learning.

We will always try to take residents' views into account in every decision we make.

For every paper put to our board for consideration, board members ask us to show how residents' views were taken into account.



After consulting tenants of the Barnsbury Mews homes that were hardest to heat, over half the estate's homes are now being made far more energy efficient.



We appointed a new grounds maintenance contractor in 2024 with tenants Diane, Franck and Janice helping us agree the best candidate for this important service.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Over the last year or so residents taking an active role in planning and reviewing our work, policies and priorities has resulted in:

- the 2024 appointment of a new contractor to do the grounds maintenance at most properties
- our first comprehensive set of service standards
- a smooth transition to new-style service charges
- a very successful summer garden party for our older people's housing service at Highbury View
- a fine turnout and positive feedback for our annual funday
- regular one-to-one chats on neighbourhood matters over tea and cake with our senior management team
- residents getting a say in cleaning and gardening schedules and the cyclical decorations programme
- a constructive approach to disposing of residents' bulky waste on our largest housing estate
- making all policies updated over the year more resident-friendly.

OUR APPROACH

Our approach to resident involvement follows the pyramid of involvement model recommended by TPAS.

The TPAS pyramid of involvement recognises that most people have neither the time nor the wish to get involved in our work.

By and large, they just want to be kept informed and to have their say on issues that matter most to them. Others may be sufficiently motivated or happy to give more of their time.

This mirrors our own experience so we designed a 'menu' approach. It lets residents get involved as much or as little as they want and how they want.

It also suits us. Both our resident and staff numbers are low. This means the number of residents wanting an active role will likewise be limited and there are also constraints on staff time.

We also need to take account of who our residents are. On the whole they are older, less comfortable working digitally and they value face-to-face contact.

We need to find ways that suit them while also catering for our younger residents and others, who may be more comfortable working online.

We ask all residents whether and how they want to get involved at our Staying Connected visits. These are the regular in-depth check-ins we do with all residents.

We are using this information to build up a pool of people we can call on throughout the year to have their say on a broad range of issues.



We use as our guide the pyramid of involvement devised by TPAS (formerly known as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service)

INVOLVEMENT MENU

TAKEAWAY

Ideal for even our busiest residents. From the comfort of your home why not share your thoughts with us on social media or by email.

LIGHT BITE

Perfect if you don't have a lot of spare time or find regular meetings a bit of a struggle.

MAIN MEAL

Sit down with us to enjoy a selection from the full menu, share with us your thoughts on quality, range and choice and make recommendations for our policy chefs and service staff.

ALL YOU CAN EAT

Dig in! Help us plan, design and test our big projects, influence key decisions and develop your skills.

INVOLVEMENT MENU

Our involvement menu gives options residents can pick and choose from to help us make our services better.

TAKEAWAY

If they don't have much time they can:

- read our newsletter, eNews and annual report to residents
- come to events like our annual funday at Barnsbury Mews and garden parties at Highbury View
- take part in independent surveys about our services or give feedback on repairs or cleaning
- offer suggestions via the suggestion boxes on our estates or by email or our website
- respond to our consultations, for example, on the service charge or estate issues
- give their views via our Staying Connected visits
- simply talk to one of our team.

LIGHT BITES

If they don't mind occasionally getting involved or are mainly interested in one or two services:

- come to consultation meetings on topics that interest them such as gardening
- join a group helping to organise events like the funday
- come to coffee mornings or *Meet the directors* sessions
- write an article or letter for our eNews or quarterly newsletter
- join the local estate walkabout to check we are picking up problems residents have spotted

MAIN MEAL

If they have a bit more time or really want to get stuck in locally:

- join an occasional in-person or online discussion on a specific topic such as planned works in the block or local community, funding initiatives, or changes to the (Barnsbury Mews) park or the shared garden area.
- join a panel set up to decide terms for a new contractor to cover, for example, shared cleaning or gardening services
- come to a more in-depth session looking, for example, at a service like repairs, lettings or antisocial behaviour, to check performance standards, identify shortcomings and discuss ways the service could be improved
- join, or even start, a residents' group to improve the area where they live, opting for a group already set up like those at Barnsbury Mews and Highbury View, or a less formal set up.



Takeaway: residents could come to events like our funday or, *pictured*, the late Queen's platinum jubilee party



Light bite: why not join staff and board members on the local estate walkabout to offer a suggestion or point out issues we might miss?



Main meal: join or start a residents' group to improve the neighbourhood. It could be a formal group or meet only when all agree there's something to talk about.

ALL YOU CAN EAT

If they have the time and motivation and can commit for the longer term:

- join our Resident Voice panel, meeting us once every three months to study our performance and help shape policies that affect all residents
- join our board of management, helping inform and debate our biggest decisions. There are three places on our board for residents.

EXTENDING THE MENU

We will broaden our menu of options over the coming year by:

- looking at what residents have said might appeal on Staying Connected visits, including helping us do a better job of making our information for them relevant and accessible
- looking at ways to use social media to make being actively involved easier and more appealing
- finding more and better ways for younger residents to tell us what they think about living in one of our homes and/or on an estate
- offering one-off sessions on local services of interest to a select group of residents
- organising visits from the London Fire Brigade or local police to talk with residents about neighbourhood concerns
- giving residents a bigger say in how we spend money on estate improvements
- giving residents more opportunities to meet and question board members about the way we are run
- holding more regular face-to-face sessions with staff from our repairs and housing teams.

THE REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING'S BENCHMARKS THAT APPLY HERE

TENANT SATISFACTION

The proportion of residents:

satisfied we listen to their
views and act upon them

feel they are kept informed

believe they are treated
fairly and with respect

satisfied we make a
positive contribution
to the neighbourhood.

CONSUMER STANDARDS

Transparency, influence
and accountability

What we have to do to show
we are being open with residents
and treating them fairly and with
respect so they are able to:

use our services

raise complaints

influence our decisions

hold us to account.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD

Goals we have to meet by
working with other people
and specialists to make sure:

residents live in a safe,
well-maintained neighbourhood

residents feel safe at home.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THIS APPROACH IS WORKING?

ACTION PLAN

- We will deliver our year one action plan designed to better meet the Regulator of Social Housing's expectations of us, including 'listening to residents and acting on their views', 'treating you fairly and with respect', and 'keeping you informed about things that matter to you'.
- Our managers will ask each team for reports and anecdotal feedback on work they are doing with residents to change and improve services and standards.
- We record and regularly discuss all written, verbal and reported feedback from residents to identify aspects of our service they rate well and those we need to improve, and why.
- We will actively look for new ways to encourage residents to join group activities and discussions or give feedback through surveys and questionnaires.
- We will at all times aim to improve resident satisfaction with our services and with their homes.

MEASURING SUCCESS

We will use these and other tools to measure how our strategy is working:

- The biannual survey of all residents' views will tell us of any change in the ratings they gave to the same questions in 2023.
- Year-round we collect, analyse and compare data on complaints, antisocial behaviour, hate crime, home standards, building safety, emergency repairs and more. These give us a measure of how well we are meeting the relevant consumer standards (see *left*).
- We compare these with other social housing landlords including those similar to us in size, service and location.
- We will count and analyse the number of residents using our 'menu' to check we are hearing from a diverse range of tenants.
- We will list all policies, rules and standards we changed during the year, wholly or partly because of resident feedback.
- We will count residents turning up to events held to discuss or debate an issue or one where we hope they will enjoy themselves but also chat and mix with staff.
- At staff meetings we will listen to and question each team on what they are doing to actively engage with residents they have met and what we can learn from this.
- We will listen to resident feedback, however submitted (surveys, suggestion box etc) to assess whether a service or policy is working for them, they agree or disagree with a decision or our direction of travel, and why, and how we need to respond.

THE SUCCESS CHECKLIST



Did more residents get involved in opportunities to share their opinions or ideas over the year?



Did more residents turn up for events or activities we planned with and for them?



Are more of our younger residents speaking up?



Did at least half of our residents opt in to one of our 'menu' of tenant engagement choices?



Did our board take residents' views into account when making their decisions this year?



Do we have clear proof of what we changed over the year because of resident feedback.



Did more residents come along to events or activities or get involved in other opportunities to share their opinions and ideas over the year?



Are more of our younger tenants speaking up?



Did a reasonable and varied number of residents help to review our services over the year?



Does the Resident Voice panel now have a good number of active members?



Did we have two tenants regularly turning up to board meetings to take part in discussions?

REPORTING OUR PROGRESS

- At each meeting with the Resident Voice, we will report on the progress of our resident engagement strategy action plan.
- Our board members will get updates on the progress of our strategy at each of the four meetings held over the year.
- We will report on progress and significant results to residents using our regular newsletters, with case studies where appropriate.
- Survey results, milestones and other progress will be reported in our annual report to all residents.

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DO YOU NEED HELP TO READ OR SPEAK ENGLISH?



We can use a **translator** or can get this booklet translated if English is not your first language.