



# Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association

## Customer Engagement

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For further details please contact the office on 0141 647 4917 or by email at [info@randcha.co.uk](mailto:info@randcha.co.uk)

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Purpose	
<b>Regulatory Requirements</b>	<b>Standard 1:</b> The Governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users <b>Standard 2:</b> The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities. <b>Standard 4:</b> The Governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose. <b>Standard 5:</b> The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity
<b>Regulatory Guidance</b>	
	<b>Date Approved by Management Board:</b> March 2024 <b>Date of Next Review:</b> March 2027

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rutherglen and Cambuslang Housing Association is committed to putting its customers at the heart of what it does. Key to this is ensuring that they have opportunities to influence the decision-making process and shape the services to meet their needs and priorities.

Although our tenants' satisfaction surveys have consistently shown that our tenants are either very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities they have to engage with the Association, it is recognised that, historically, there has been a poor response to participation and consultation exercises.

The Customer Engagement Policy puts in place a framework that supports the development of robust, meaningful and ongoing engagement with service users and the Association's accountability.

## 2.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Act introduced a legal framework for tenant participation that requires social landlords to;

- Have in place a Tenant Participation Strategy and to review and monitor its effectiveness regularly
- Have a scheme for tenant organisations to become Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)
- Keep a publicly available register of RTOs
- Consult with tenants and RTOs on a range of housing and related services
- Provide a range of information to their tenants

### 2.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

Introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter that sets out the standards and outcomes landlords are expected to deliver to their tenants, specifically that social landlords manage their business so that;

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was reviewed in 2017.

### 2.3 The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement

Section 8 of the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (Information & Consultation) confirms the Association's contractual responsibilities to consult with its tenants on matters that affect them.

### 3.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

Although the legislation refers to Tenants Participation, the Association is committed to offering engagement and participation opportunities to all of its service users including, as appropriate, tenants, factored owners and applicants.

### 4.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Customer Engagement Policy is intended to put in place a framework that will;

- Put customers at the centre of its activities
- Maximise the opportunities for engagement, consultation and participation
- Take account of the views and opinions of customers
- Support customers to get actively involved in shaping services, driving improvements and influencing decisions
- Ensure customers are empowered to hold the Association accountable
- Provide a range of ways for customers to easily engage with the Association on issues that are important to them
- Ensure the Association fulfils all of its legal and regulatory obligations

### 5.0 DEFINITION OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

The Scottish Government's 'Guide to Successful Tenant Participation' (2019) describes engagement as being "about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing, conditions and related services".

For the purposes of this policy Customer Engagement will encompass a range of activities such as consultation, participation, scrutiny and communication.

Genuine and meaningful engagement is a two-way process and requires;

- Trust between the Association and its customers
- Understanding that it is continuous process of sharing information and power
- Adequate resources for training, support and servicing of customer groups and organisations
- An open, transparent and inclusive approach that recognises individual needs

### 6.0 BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

The Association will adhere to the National Standards for Community Engagement;

**Inclusion** – identify and involve the individuals, communities and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement

**Support** – identify and overcome any barriers to participation

**Communication** – communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement

**Methods** – use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose

**Planning** – have a clear purpose for the engagement which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and aspirations

**Working Together** – work effectively together to achieve the aims of the engagement

**Impact** – assess the impact of the engagement and use what is learned to improve future community engagement

## 7.0 BENEFITS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

The Association recognises that the benefits of customer engagement for both the customers and the Association.

### 7.1 Benefits for Customers

- Increased influence over the decision-making process and direction of the Association
- Better service delivery and improved outcomes for customers
- Services that are better targeted and offer better value for money
- Better understanding of the Association’s legal, regulatory and financial limitations
- New or enhanced skills and knowledge and access to training
- Direct avenues for informing the Association of their needs, priorities and aspirations
- Access to methods for holding the Association accountable

### 7.2 Benefits for the Association

- Better understanding of our customers needs, priorities and aspirations
- Improved services and higher levels of customer satisfaction
- Methods for identifying actions for service and performance improvement
- Effective and efficient process for delivering services that provide value for money
- Working with customers to achieve a common goal for its communities
- Better and mutually respectful relationships with its customers

## 8.0 FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

The Association seeks to offer a range of opportunities and avenues for customers to effectively engage with the Association that meet their own individuals interests, lifestyles, time commitments, preferences, skills and knowledge.

The methods of engagement range from the formal strategic, decision-making level to the informal submission of comments and suggestions;

DECISION-MAKING	Management Committee Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) Customer Panels
SCRUTINY	Scrutiny Panel Focus Group Short Life Working Groups
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT	Staff & Tenant Estate Inspections Mystery Shoppers

CONSULTATION EXERCISES	Policy Reviews Rent Increase Business Plan 'Readers' Panel'
VIEWS & OPINIONS	Satisfaction Surveys Comments, Complaints & Compliments Questionnaires Public Meetings
SUPPORT	Membership

## 8 BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

The Association will proactively seek to remove barriers to effective engagement for individuals or social group. Where possible, reasonable and/or appropriate the Association will;

- Ensure locations and venues for meetings are local and accessible
- Offer interpretation and translation services
- Pay reasonable travelling expenses
- Provide communication aids
- Assist with transport to venues
- Provide IT equipment to allow remote attendance
- Pay childcare/dependents care costs
- Provide documents in other formats such as larger font, audio or braille
- Hold meetings at convenient times

## 9 RESOURCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

The Association accepts that there is a financial cost in delivering effective and meaningful customer engagement. As part of the annual budget setting process, funds will be allocated for customer engagement activities including;

- Consultants and advisers fees & affiliations
- Booking fees for venues for events and meetings
- Catering for community events and meetings
- Costs for attendance at relevant conference, training etc
- Printing, stationary and postage
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Prize draw/incentives
- Travelling and other out of pocket expenses

The Association will also provide other resources such as administrative services, staff time and external advisers to support the development of new resident representative groups, scrutiny panel and/or Registered Tenant organisations (RTO).

## 10 STRATEGIC AIMS

The Association is committed to having active, meaningful and sustainable engagement with its customers and communities that will meet and, where possible exceed, the legal and regulatory requirements.

The overarching aim of the Association is to increase customer involvement in the decision-making process and shaping services, service delivery and the future direction of the Association.

To achieve this ambition, it has set 6 strategic aims;

**Aim 1** – Build a sound understanding of our customers’ needs, priorities and aspirations with regards the services they receive from the Association

**Aim 2** – Provide and promote a range of opportunities and methods for customers to easily and effectively engage with the Association in a way and at a level that suits them, ensuring that any barriers to effective engagement are minimised or, where possible, removed

**Aim 3** – Develop effective mechanisms for ensuring customer feedback and input influences the decision-making process, drives improvements and shapes service and service delivery

**Aim 4** – Have effective methods for communicating with customers to provide the information they require and want and for giving feedback on engagement and consultation activities

**Aim 5** – Develop mechanism for connecting, communicating and engaging with traditionally hard to reach or under-represented customers within our communities

**Aim 6** – Embed a culture of customer engagement within the Association and establish it as a core activity

## 11 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Association shall agree and implement an initial 3-year plan that will;

- Outline the steps that Association will take towards achieving its strategic aims
- Set targets against which progress can be measured
- Where, appropriate, identify the resources that will be required to successfully deliver the activities within the set targets

As the Association is at the start of the journey to achieving its overarching objective for good customer engagement, the action plan will be an evolving document and will be reviewed and updated to ensure it remains relevant.

## 12 TRAINING

Successfully achieving the Association’s Customer Engagement strategic aims will involve a cultural and behavioural change within the organisation.

Training will therefore be fundamental to ensuring that staff and Committee have the appropriate skills and knowledge required to effectively support Customer Engagement.

As part of its commitment to Customer Engagement, customers interested in working and participating with the Association, will be offered opportunities to attend appropriate training and networking events.

### **13 MONITORING & EVALUATING POLICY**

Progress with the strategic action plan and towards achieving the strategic aims will be monitored by the Management Committee at least twice a year. A review of the action plan will be carried out annually to ensure it;

- Reflects the changing needs and priorities of the Association's customers
- Reflects the changing environment such as technology, social media etc
- Is meeting its objectives
- Complies with legislation, regulatory requirements and good practice
- Is delivering value for money

### **14 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Association is committed to ensuring that all of its customers have equal access to the opportunities to engage with it.

It shall ensure that in implementing the Customer Engagement Policy and in all of its engagement activities, it will not discriminate against individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex or sexual orientation.

### **15 POLICY REVIEW**

The Customer Engagement Policy will be reviewed in full by the Management Committee every 3 years. Elements may be reviewed within that period to reflect changes in relative legislation, regulatory requirements and/or good practice.