



Customer Engagement Strategy 2022-25

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Introduction, Legislation, and Regulatory Standards

Introduction

Yorkhill Housing Association's **Tenant Engagement Strategy** was approved by the Management Committee in 2019 and reflected the Association's position in terms of communicating with tenants and customers. This strategy was due to be reviewed in October 2022 however this has been brought forward in order to commence from the start of the financial year 2022/23. This has also been renamed as a **Customer Engagement Strategy** in recognition that the Association wishes to engage with its full customer base, not just tenants.

Yorkhill Housing Association believes that excellent customer service is key to its success and encourages customers to get involved in the association's decision making process, and to contribute to, and scrutinise, its work.

Additionally there is a legislative responsibility under The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which requires each Registered Social Landlord (RSL) in Scotland to prepare a Tenant Engagement Strategy for *"promoting the participation of tenants under a Scottish secure tenancy or a short Scottish secure tenancy in the formulation by the landlord of proposals in relation to the management of housing accommodation and the provision of related services by it, so far as such proposals are likely to affect such tenants."*

This strategy lists several options for customers to become involved in the Association's work. The Association recognises there may be barriers which prevent customers engaging with the association – these may be due to customers work or personal commitments, timing of meetings, disability, or even inexperience or unfamiliarity with jargon or technical processes. The association has therefore produced a 'Menu of Engagement' (*Appendix 1*) to mitigate these barriers in order to allow a wider range of customers to become involved through a variety of methods.

These include 'formal' methods of engagement such as becoming a member of the Management Committee or Scrutiny Panel, and 'informal' methods such as quick text message surveys, or coffee mornings. The Association will also provide information in a clear and concise manner, providing training or induction where necessary.

Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management

Several of the Regulatory Standards are relevant to Customer Engagement:

Standard 1	The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
Standard 2	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. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.
Standard 4	The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
Standard 5	The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

Standard 7	The RSL ensures that any organisational changes or disposals it makes safeguard the interests of, and benefit, current and future tenants.
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Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets standards that the Association should meet and the following are specifically relevant to tenant (and customer) participation, however all aspects of the association’s business is open to customer involvement and scrutiny:

Outcome 1 (Equalities): “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

Outcome 2 (Communication): “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.”

Outcome 3 (Participation): “tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”

Outcomes 14 & 15 (Rents and services charges): “tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.”

Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 sets out protected characteristics and all customers, regardless of any of these protected characteristics, will be treated fairly and have equal access to participating:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

In order to ensure equal access to participation reasonable adjustments can be made including (but not limited to) use of interpreters, Braille, alternative premises for meetings, appropriately timed meetings to maximise attendance or by providing support for people with additional support needs. The association will consider any requests for adjustments to help anyone who experiences a barrier to participating.

Aims

The tenants and customers of Yorkhill Housing Association are vitally important, and by getting customers involved in the decision making process this can help:

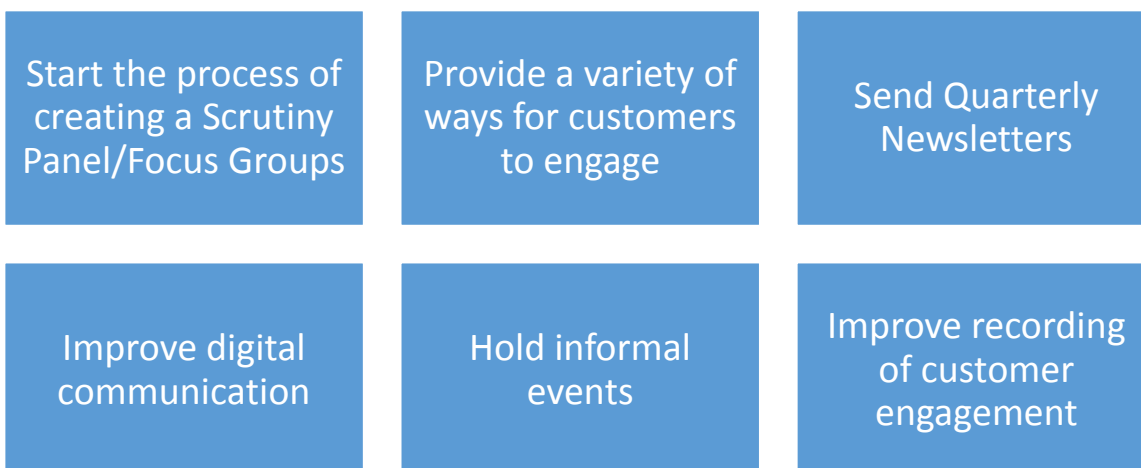
- Shape the way the organisation looks after its homes.
- Improve the services all customers receive.
- Customers voice their opinion on things that matter to them directly to staff and management committee members.

The association will benefit by:

- Having clear evidence of its stakeholder's wishes and what they think their service should look like.
- Being able to accurately shape the organisation to best look after those needs.
- Increased customer engagement may lead to new Management Committee volunteers.

Together the association and its residents will enjoy a better working relationship where communication is easier and quicker.

The strategy for the financial years 2022-25 aims to achieve the following:



These aims help to achieve the Association's Core Objectives:

- Provision of affordable social housing
- Local control and accountability
- Efficient local service provision
- Viability
- Equality of opportunity for all customers
- Legal and regulatory compliance

How we will achieve these aims

In order to achieve these aims the Association will:

Start the process of creating a Scrutiny Panel/Focus Groups

The Association will seek to create a Scrutiny Panel to monitor its performance and help develop new policies and procedures. This Scrutiny Panel will link in with every area of the business, however does not replace the aims or responsibilities of the Management Committee or the Services Sub Committees.

The Management Committee and Services Sub Committee will monitor performance and help set the strategic aims of the Association. The Scrutiny Panels objectives will be to look closely at individual policies and procedures, and the practical effects. The Panel will look to develop more efficient procedures, and the outcomes will be presented to the Sub-Committees for discussion and ratification into the relevant policies where appropriate.

This process may take several years to get fully established as there are no current groups already running. In an effort to build up to this the Association will establish Focus Groups for individual areas of work such as reviewing policies or procedures. Members of the Focus Groups may become interested in a Scrutiny Panel once they attend these meetings.

The Association will compensate attendees of these groups with gift vouchers in an effort to encourage attendance.

Provide a variety of ways for customers to engage

The Association recognises that there may be barriers to engaging. Customers may struggle to commit their ongoing time to some formal methods such as joining the Management Committee for example. Instead they may prefer to answer quick surveys, answer text messages or emails, or take part in a quick telephone or 'Zoom' conference.

Conversely some other customers may wish to play a bigger part in the Association's decision making. Options including Scrutiny Panels, or joining the Management Committee may be suitable.

In order to meet as many customers preferences as possible a 'Menu of Engagement' has been created with a variety of options, including how a customer can get involved in each. *(See Appendix 1)*

Send Quarterly Newsletters

The Association will aim to produce quarterly newsletters detailing the ongoing work, performance data, and some helpful information and advice. Customers are invited to read these and ask any questions they may have or suggest future articles.

Improve digital communication

The Association has access to a variety of digital processes in which to engage with customers. In terms of Social Media Yorkhill HA currently has a Facebook page, and a Twitter account. Both are used primarily for listing news events, and on occasion communication with tenants and customers.

The Association also uses email extensively – both internally and in communication with customers. This communication channel can be utilised to communicate with tenants and customers, replacing the need for physical letters to be posted in many circumstances, thus forming a cost-saving process.

The Association is also progressing with the implementation of a new software package for Housing Management – Homemaster by Designer Software – and this should be implemented by Quarter 2 (July to September) of 2022/2023. This software will allow tenants, contractors, and other customers to access an online account to perform many functions – checking their rent balance, reporting and monitoring repairs, completing online forms etc. The Association should encourage and assist tenants to use this new software as it will allow an effective digital communication process, and assist in auditing the associations work.

Hold informal events

The Association should seek the opinion of its customers in a variety of methods. Informal communication channels will help to seek the opinion of customers without requiring a large time commitment.

Various informal communication methods will include:

- **Coffee mornings:** Approximately once a year the association will set up a ‘coffee stall’ outside its front doors offering passers-by a free tea, coffee, or hot chocolate. Customers who come to the stalls can be surveyed about the Association, its performance, future plans, or to help with its decision making process. The Association can use this opportunity to highlight its work.
- **Surveys:** The association will increase its digital surveys to gauge customer satisfaction levels, or to ask an opinion about a piece of work. These may include text messages, through social media, or on the website.
- **Verbal conversations:** Staff will be encouraged to seek opinions from customers when talking with them about other queries. Simple telephone surveys will be created to be asked and recorded.
- **Good Neighbour Award:** The Association will run an award each year for tenants and residents to nominate their neighbours for being positive or helpful in their lives or in the community.

Improve recording of customer engagement

In order to establish if the Association has met the aims of this Customer Engagement Strategy we will improve our recording of customer engagement.

This will include a register of events, the number of customers contacted, and the outcomes of the engagement. Minutes of formal meetings will also be recorded.

This information will be presented to the Services Sub Committee and will be reported to customers through newsletters.

Barriers to Engagement

Any customer wishing to get involved with Yorkhill Housing Association is welcome to contact the association directly, regardless of how much time they can contribute. There are a variety of methods where a customer can participate in the association's decision making process and staff can help them decide how best they can get involved.

Customers can be provided with training and support throughout the participation process to ensure they understand any technical processes or jargon.

If anyone experiences any barrier, for whatever reason, to them participating they are encouraged to contact a member of staff who can discuss any appropriate adjustments.

Review

This strategy is intended on being a living document and will be adjusted and updated as needed. A review of the strategy will be carried out every three years.

Appendix 1: Menu of Engagement

Various options for engaging with the Association are detailed below; these are listed by the amount of time required (high-low).

Customer Engagement Method	Time Commitment Required	How to get involved
<p>Become a Management Committee member</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p> <p>The Management Committee is the board ultimately responsible for setting the strategic aims of the association.</p> <p>The committee meets around 10 times per year and meetings last approximately 2 hours each. These meetings are usually on a Thursday at 6pm.</p> <p>Papers are prepared in advance and will involve a high level of understanding and capability to challenge staff, and ensure the Association is meeting its Legislative and Regulatory Requirements.</p> <p>Full training, and a comprehensive induction package will be provided.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Marion Menabney Chief Executive</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>
<p>Member of Sub-Committee <i>(optional in addition to Management Committee member)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p> <p>Only members of the Management Committee are eligible to become members of a Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committees are split into 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services Sub Committee (2 parts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing Management ○ Property Services • Governance and Finance Sub Committee <p>Each sub-committee looks at an area of the Association’s work, monitors its performance and helps set a strategy. Outcomes of these meetings are brought to the full Management Committee to be reviewed and ratified.</p> <p>There are approximately 14 sub-committee meetings each year (total of both groups), and last around 1 hour each.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Marion Menabney Chief Executive</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>

<p>Become a Scrutiny Panel / Focus Group member</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medium</p> <p>The Association is seeking to create a Scrutiny Panel. This panel will meet approximately 6 times per year and meetings will last around 1-2 hours each.</p> <p>The panel will take time to scrutinise an area of the Association’s work including its policy and procedures. This will involve discussion of the policy and procedure paperwork, and may involve some practical elements such as visiting void properties or common areas as required.</p> <p>It is intended that these meetings will be held during office hours, however this is dependent on member’s preferences.</p> <p>A degree of understanding of the Association’s work would be beneficial but training and an induction will be provided.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Grant Kennedy Housing Services Manager</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>
<p>Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medium</p> <p>Currently no Registered Tenant Organisations (RTO) exist within Yorkhill Housing Association’s tenants. The Association would be happy to assist tenants to set up an RTO if there is sufficient interest.</p> <p>RTOs could be groups of tenants from the same tenement close (sometimes called Close Meetings), or from an individual street, or even just a group of interested tenants within our stock.</p> <p>If you would like to create set up a RTO please contact the Association for more information.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Grant Kennedy Housing Services Manager</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>

<p>Surveys</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>Surveys will be sent out from time to time. These may be following a repair you have had to your property, or to gauge opinion on a proposed decision from the Association. These will be typically short and concise however further information can be given at any time.</p> <p>These surveys will assist the Association to determine levels of satisfaction, or to help us decide the best option on a decision.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Administration or relevant manager as detailed</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>
<p>Rent Consultation Process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>The Association reviews its rent charges each year. This process takes into account inflation, and the expected expenses for the forthcoming year.</p> <p>Each year all tenants will be contacted to seek opinions on proposed increases. Information will be provided at the time to explain the Association’s position, however tenant feedback is crucial to this process. All responses are presented to the Management Committee to help them make an informed decision.</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Grant Kennedy Housing Services Manager</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>
<p>Performance Publications</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>In March each year, following the end of the financial year, the Association gathers performance data and submits this to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This is in a set format and every Registered Social Landlord provides the same information in the same format to be collated and published.</p> <p>Following the submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator the Association will produce documentation describing its performance. Customers are able to make comments or make any enquiries at this point (and at any point throughout the year).</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <p>Marion Menabney Chief Executive</p> <p>0141 285 7910</p>

<p>Newsletters</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>The Association will aim to produce quarterly newsletters detailing the ongoing work, performance data, and some helpful information and advice. Customers are invited to read these and ask any questions they may have. Newsletters may also contain further surveys or invitations to consult with tenants.</p>	<p>Contact: Administration 0141 285 7910</p>
<p>Websites/Social Media</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low</p> <p>The Association currently has a Twitter and Facebook account. Customers are invited to register and ‘follow’ the Association’s accounts where news, events, and emergency information is provided.</p> <p>Additionally customers are able to contact the Association through these channels if desired.</p>	<p>Contact: Administration 0141 285 7910</p>