



Core Business

Resident and Service User Involvement

Scope:	This policy applies to Circle 33 Housing Trust, Commercial and Leasehold, EPIC Trust, Invicta Telecare, Mole Valley Housing Association, Old Ford Housing Association, Roddons Housing Association, Russet Homes, South Anglia Housing, Wherry Housing Association.
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Signed Off :	Group Policy Forum, 20 th February 2009
Author:	Amy Carter, Policy Officer
Policy Owned by:	Policy
KLOE:	Resident Involvement Access and Customer Care
QAF (Supported Housing):	C1.5 Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion S1.1 Informing Service Users S1.2 Consulting and Involving Service Users S1.3 Empowerment and Supporting Independence S1.4 Participation in the Wider Community
Statute:	Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003 The Rent Act 1977 The Rents Act (Maximum Fair Rent) 1999 Housing Act 1988
Regulatory Code:	2.5 Circular: 'People First Delivering Change through Involvement', May 2007

Resident and Service User Involvement

1 Scope

1.1 This policy applies to:

- Circle 33 Housing Trust
- Commercial and Leasehold
- EPIC Trust
- Invicta Telecare
- Mole Valley Housing Association
- Old Ford Housing Association
- Roddons Housing Association
- Russet Homes
- South Anglia Housing
- Wherry Housing Association

1.2 This policy details our approach and commitment to resident and service user involvement. Group partners are responsible for implementing the policy through local involvement plans agreed with residents and service users.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Circle Anglia works to improve people's life chances through providing great homes and reliable services to residents, and through helping build sustainable communities where people want to live and work.

2.2 Resident and service user involvement is a central part of our work. It will be embedded into the consultation and decision making processes of the organisation.

2.3 We are committed to developing the processes and culture to support the steady growth of resident and service user involvement.

2.4 We will continue to expand our capacity for resident and service user involvement and develop resident and service user confidence in wider opportunities for participation.

2.5 As an organisation, we demonstrate a group wide approach to resident and service user involvement and offer involvement opportunities based on local requirements.

- 2.6 This group-wide approach is supported by a thriving range of local activities that are relevant to each group partner.
- 2.7 This policy confirms our compliance with external regulatory and inspection requirements.

3 Policy

- 3.1 The Tenant Participation Advisory Service defines involvement as, 'a two-way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where residents are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening'.
- 3.2 Involvement is about the ways in which our residents and service users can influence services, priorities, standards, and the way we work.
- 3.3 Establishing meaningful involvement is not about saying yes to every suggestion that is made. It is about listening to concerns, working on possible improvements in consultation with residents and service users and delivering this through our business plan.
- 3.4 Effective involvement is established by supporting residents and service users when they do get involved and ensuring that the relationship between the group and those interested in involvement is nurtured.
- 3.5 We will ensure that those who become involved gain valuable skills, by offering a training and development programme.
- 3.6 We will ensure we offer a diverse range of involvement activities to encourage involvement from people with differing requirements.
- 3.7 We recognise the importance of monitoring and reporting on the impact of participation.
- 3.8 We will ensure that involvement is meaningful to and representative of our resident and service user base.
- 3.9 Where a resident or service user has suggested changes to our organisation which have been implemented, we will inform them of the changes they have helped to make because of their involvement. Where we cannot implement a change that a resident or service user has suggested, we will give an explanation why.
- 3.10 We will ensure that resident and service user involvement is allocated a budget that reflects its importance to our functions.

3.11 We will remain adaptable in our approach to resident and service user involvement; this will ensure we react to the changing requirements of residents and service users.

4 Tenants Services Authority Requirements

4.1 This policy documents our compliance with the regulatory requirements of the Housing Corporation and the Audit Commission. The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has replaced the Housing Corporation and is using the Housing Corporation standards until a new regulatory framework is established.

4.2 Under the current regulatory system, larger social housing providers must certify that they have met the requirements of the May 2007, People First: Delivering Change through Involvement policy.

4.3 Housing providers are obliged to adopt this policy and agree an action plan with targets to address the requirements of the policy.

4.4 The requirements are:

- that corporate objectives must reflect our approach to and plans for involving residents and service users
- that housing providers publish a clear involvement statement, which can demonstrate how residents and service users have been involved
- that we continue to review the involvement statements using impact assessments which show how services have been improved
- that all housing associations owning 250 units of social housing or more should have at least one resident board member.

5 Documentation

5.1 To meet these requirements, each housing provider must produce three key pieces of documentation to evidence and record the resident and service user involvement undertaken.

Statements of Resident and Service User Involvement

5.2 Each group partner will produce a local statement detailing how resident and service user involvement will be encouraged and how feedback from that involvement will be included in the running of the organisation.

5.3 A version of this statement will be publicised to residents and service users in a user-friendly format such as a leaflet or booklet.

Impact Assessments

- 5.4 Each group partner will carry out a yearly review of how the Statement of Resident and Service User Involvement has been implemented called an Impact Assessment. The review will look at what has been achieved, who has been involved, and whether the involvement has provided value for money. A report will go out to all residents and service users of each group partner detailing the findings of the Impact Assessment.

Action Plans

- 5.5 Each group partner will produce an Action Plan to demonstrate what resident and service user involvement is planned for the coming year. The Action Plan will address weaknesses raised in the Impact Assessment and include a timetable and outputs that can be monitored. The Action Plan is locally specific and tailored to the local practices of each housing provider.

6 KLOE 5: Resident and service user involvement

- 6.1 The Audit Commission takes a flexible approach when assessing delivery of resident and service user involvement, with no expectation that we should organise and deliver services in a set way. The expectation is that the processes should remain adaptable and that we focus on the outcomes.
- 6.2 We aim to meet the guidance criteria of the Audit Commission's KLOEs when undertaking involvement work.
- 6.3 The KLOEs emphasise:
- the effectiveness of our communication with residents and service users regarding resident involvement and ease of access for involvement
 - the importance of achieving high levels of satisfaction with involvement, with high levels of confidence that the organisation takes account of consultation
 - embedding resident and service user involvement into the service we provide
 - consultation with residents and service users at an early stage of decision making
 - the involvement of service users in how schemes are run
 - providing support so that those who may be hard to engage and those with specific needs, can be involved
 - robust monitoring and evaluation procedures in place, with sound arrangements for reporting back to residents and service users

- ensuring carers and advocates are involved in decisions about service provision where relevant.

7 The Circle Anglia Customer First Standard

- 7.1 The group-wide Circle Anglia Customer First Standard sets out what involvement activities residents and service users can expect from each of the Circle Anglia group partners.
- 7.2 The application of this standard will be assessed on an annual basis, and a group wide impact assessment and action plan will be produced to demonstrate compliance of partners.
- 7.3 Within the Circle Anglia Customer First Standard each partner in the group will develop its own ways to deliver commitments to involvement, based on local options and requirements.
- 7.4 The local Statement of Resident Involvement, Impact Assessment and Action Plan will detail how each group partner will achieve the Circle Anglia Customer First Standard.

8 Principles of involvement

- 8.1 When offering opportunities for involvement, partners will adhere to the following principles:
- researching the level of existing communication and consultation to date
 - involving residents and service users from the outset of the development of any new action plans or intended opportunities
 - identifying and removing barriers to participation
 - providing information at key stages and in accessible languages and formats, even where there has been little progress
 - giving reasonable time for decision making and follow up
 - making resources available to ensure residents and service users are kept involved
 - determining the methods for reviewing and evaluating the involvement and how the results will be fed back to residents and service users
 - maximising the use of electronic consultation to those residents and service users who have indicated that this is their preferred means of communication and involvement
 - recognising that resident and service user involvement is a great benefit to the organisation

- ensuring that any involvement activities offer the best possible value for money.
- 8.2 Complaints are a vital part of feedback from residents and service users. Our aim is to use feedback from complaints to help us redesign the way our services are provided. Refer to the [Complaints](#) policy for further guidance.
- 8.3 Each partner in the group offers different opportunities based on local requirements, but most offer the following access routes for involvement:
- Board membership
 - Resident steering group
 - Neighbourhood boards
 - Resident consultation such as ‘have your say’
 - Resident associations
 - Service user groups
 - Local links
 - Day to day surveys and consultation.

9 The Role of Involvement across the organisation

RASP – Resident and Service User Panel

- 9.1 The Circle Anglia Resident and Service User Panel (RASP) is formed of nominees from across Circle Anglia. It is a representative voice for residents and service users in the governance structure of the organisation.

Community Development

- 9.2 Community Development staff work closely with resident and service user groups to develop initiatives to encourage crime reduction, improvement of education and health and specific projects with elders, young people and service users.

Housing Management

- 9.3 Housing management staff will be key to delivering our resident and service user involvement commitments. Estate inspections are an important opportunity for residents to express their views about the services we provide. Front line staff can assist residents in becoming involved by making them aware of opportunities in their area.

Property Management

- 9.4 Where residents and service users are involved in the appointing and reviewing of repairs contracts, the service provider will be accountable to those who use the service. Involvement in cyclical and planned maintenance arrangements will allow residents and service users' greater control over the services they receive.

Service Providers

- 9.5 Where service users are directly involved in planning service provision we can ensure that we are offering the most appropriate service to meet their needs.

Commercial and Leasehold

- 9.6 There are legal requirements for commercial and leasehold to consult with residents and service users about any changes to service charges. Please see the [Service Charges](#) policy.

Income/Rent Teams

- 9.7 We have statutory duties to inform residents about any proposed rent increases. We will consult with residents on our rent setting policies, where our actions are not entirely bound by the law. Please see the [Rent Setting](#) policy.

10 Who to Contact

- 10.1 The Head of Sustainable Communities is responsible for developing the strategy and vision of involvement across the Circle Anglia group.
- 10.2 On a practical level, resident and service user involvement is the responsibility of each member of staff within the organisation.
- 10.3 Guidance and advice can be obtained from the following specialists at each group partner:

Group Partner	Job Title
Circle 33 Housing Trust	Resident Involvement Services Manager
Commercial and Leasehold	Customer Liaison Manager
EPIC Trust	EPIC Trust Involvement Manager

Invicta Telecare	Resident Involvement Officer
Mole Valley Housing Association	Resident Involvement Officers
Old Ford Housing Association	Community Facilities Officer
Roddons Housing Association	Tenant Participation Officer
Russet Homes	Resident Involvement Officer
South Anglia Housing	Resident Involvement Officer
Wherry Housing Association	Neighbourhood Manager (Resident Involvement)

11 Service Standards

We will:

- 11.1 Give clear information about how residents and service users can become involved.
- 11.2 Give clear information about how residents' and service users' issues or concerns will be addressed.
- 11.3 Provide appropriate training and support to those who would like to become involved.
- 11.4 Guarantee feedback on any consultation within three months, stating: what views were obtained and how the information is being used.
- 11.5 Recognise that everyone is different and will need to get involved in different ways.
- 11.6 Provide meaningful opportunities to get involved that meet residents' and service users' needs.
- 11.7 Provide formal recognition of residents' and service users' contributions.

12 Monitoring

- 12.1 Each partner in the group will carry out an annual Impact Assessment and report the results to residents and service users.

- 12.2 Where it has been introduced, each group partner will use the TPTracker program to record and monitor resident and service user involvement.
- 12.3 The delivery of all local involvement plans will be monitored by the Resident Involvement Benchmarking group.
- 12.4 RASP ensures that the agreed Circle Anglia Customer First Standard is implemented and that relevant performance indicators, policies and strategies are properly scrutinised by residents and service users.
- 12.5 The success of involvement will be monitored by the responses received from residents and service users who have been involved. Meaningful opportunities for involvement will benefit the organisation by resulting in greater customer satisfaction.
- 12.6 Involvement Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) measure:
- the number of residents involved in both formal and informal structures
 - the number of residents involved in formal decision making structures (i.e. Boards)
 - the number of residents who are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in decision making.
 - the number of training sessions organised per year that have enabled residents to become involved
 - the average annual spend on resident involvement per household.

13 Equality and Diversity

- 13.1 It is essential to recognise that residents and service users of any age, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, sexuality or sexual orientation; or customers with any physical or mental disability, religion or religious or other beliefs, marital or family status, caring responsibilities, sensitive medical conditions, should be treated equally and fairly.
- 13.2 We will be sensitive to residents' and service users' individual needs and will tailor our approach accordingly.
- 13.3 We will take steps to identify any language or communication requirements and ensure that we provide information in the appropriate format.
- 13.4 We will hold meetings in places accessible to people with disability, mobility or sensory impairment needs.

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- 13.5 We will take care to hold meetings at times that do not exclude people with diverse commitments.
- 13.6 We will be aware of and avoid planning meetings during religious or cultural days or festivals.
- 13.7 All customers will have access to this document upon request or from our website www.circleanglia.org/customers
- 13.8 This document can be translated or provided in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio) upon request.
- 13.9 Equality and Diversity training is mandatory for all staff.

14 Publicising the Policy

- 14.1 Circle Anglia publicises its policies and procedures on to residents and staff in a number of ways:
- Resident Handbook
 - Leaflets
 - Resident Newsletter
 - Resident Website
 - CIRANO
 - Policy Briefings
 - Training
 - The Circle Anglia Customer First Standard
 - Group partner statements of resident and service user involvement

Glossary

Term	Definition
Cirano	Circle Anglia Online – our internal intranet.
CSCA	Commercial Services Circle Anglia – a group partner of Circle Anglia which includes the development and sale of new properties.
GPF	Group Policy Forum – representatives from each of the group partner boards who scrutinise and approve policies on behalf of their board.
KLOE	Key Lines of Enquiry – the criteria used by the Audit Commission to assess housing providers standards.
LPI	Local Performance Indicator – a measure of performance specific to each housing provider.
QAF	Quality Assessment Framework – the criteria used to assess support providers such as EPIC Trust.
RASP	Resident and Service User Panel – a group made up of representatives from across Circle Anglia who are part of the planning and decision making structure for the organisation.
Residents	Occupants of any Circle Anglia property: including general needs tenants, shared equity owners, market rent tenants and leaseholders.
SMPRG	Senior Managers Policy Review Group – Managing Directors and representatives from Circle Anglia senior management who assess and approve policies.
TSA	Tenant Services Authority – The Housing Corporation has been replaced by the Tenant Services Authority as the Regulator of Registered Providers of Non-Profit Social Housing.

Related Documents

Document	Link
Connected Policies:	Complaints ; Service Charges;
Forms and Letters:	
Leaflets:	Putting Things Right
Other:	Circle Anglia Customer First Standard

Version history

Version no.	1	Date effective:	November 2007
Full / partial review?	New Group Policy		
Brief summary of changes:	n/a		
Staff consultation (teams):			
Resident consultation:			
Signed off by:	GPF 27 th September 2007		
Author:	Zoe Buick		

Version no.	2	Date effective:	February 2009
Full / partial review?	Full		
Brief summary of changes:	Updated documentation section to reflect TSA/Housing Corporation requirements. Refresh of KLOEs and 'Customer First Strategy' section. Monitoring and LPIs updated.		
Staff consultation (teams):	Resident Involvement Benchmarking group; Neighbourhood; Community development, Head of Sustainable Communities.		
Resident consultation:	All group partners via the Resident Involvement benchmarking group. Feedback from EPIC Policy Forum, Mole Valley Operations Working Group, Russet Forum, Way Ahead with Wherry		
Signed off by:	GPF 20 th February 2009		
Author:	Amy Carter, Zoe Buick		

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