



Resident engagement review Winchester City Council

The first things to say...

- This review is designed to challenge Winchester to:
 - Ensure you deliver positive practice in respect of resident engagement
 - Assist in widening your span of engagement
 - Ensure you listen to and take action as a result of the resident voice
 - Help you engage with a representative proportion of your resident base
 - Meet regulatory expectations
- Engaged residents should be valued (and you do value them)
 - They give up their valuable time to help shape services
 - They are the “voice on the ground”
- But society has evolved over the years...and your engagement approach must evolve to meet changing expectations

Proposed consumer standards

- Safety & quality
 - Stock quality
 - Decency
 - Health & safety
 - Repairs and maintenance
 - Adaptations
- Transparency, influence & accountability
 - Fairness & respect
 - Diverse needs
 - Engagement with tenants
 - Information about landlord services
 - Performance information
 - Complaints
- Neighbourhood & community
 - Maintenance of shared spaces
 - Local cooperation
 - Safer neighbourhoods
 - Domestic abuse
- Tenancy
 - Allocations and lettings
 - Tenancy sustainment and evictions
 - Tenure
 - Mutual exchange
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The (proposed) transparency, influence & accountability standard

- Currently subject to consultation - due to replace the current tenant involvement standard
- Required outcomes include:
 - Diverse needs - Take action to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants
 - Engagement with tenants - Take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered
 - Performance information - Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services

The (proposed) transparency, influence & accountability standard

- Specific expectations include:
 - Diverse needs:
 - Understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs;
 - Assess whether all tenants have fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services
 - Engagement with tenants:
 - Give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services
 - Assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services
 - Registered providers, working with tenants, must regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. They must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims

Service highlights

- There is clear commitment at all levels to deliver impactful engagement
- Resources (across the council) appear decent – it's also everyone's responsibility – but you need to decide where to apply those resources
- The Housing Engagement and Communication Plan proposes a wide range of engagement activities
- There are several current activities designed to help shape/improve services
- But challenges remain:
 - Formal engagement membership does not reflect your diversity
 - The outcomes of resident engagement are not yet evident to any great extent

Housing Engagement and Communication Plan

- Revised strategy – subject to review/amendment following this review
- Objectives
 - Know tenants and priorities and shape the business accordingly
 - Easy for all residents to share views
 - Resident priorities become WCC priorities
 - Residents are respected, valued and listened to
 - Residents feel able and confident that worthwhile to engage
- You may wish to add
 - Engagement is representative
 - Engagement leads to improvement
- Plan presents wide range of opportunities, including
 - Formal and informal
 - Scrutiny
 - Reality checking
 - Surveys
- Once finalised, we recommend an annual plan of activity and a formal means of evaluating outcomes

Know your customers

- This is a key area of importance for the Regulator
- The Regulator spoke at a recent HQN event and stressed the importance of knowing your homes and knowing your tenants and advised “don’t just do it for us”.
- It is important to collect the data to shape services not just comply with expectations
- Recommendation - Carry out a customer data collection exercise to understand the make-up, diversity and needs of your resident base

Formal engagement

- Currently primarily via TACT and SDG(s)
- TACT is a formal part of the council's governance framework
 - Treated with due importance – significant matters are considered
 - Very formal setting – might this put some people off?
 - Membership not representative of wider resident base
 - Some thought it a time-intensive activity
 - Differing views on effectiveness – our view that outcomes relatively limited in terms of achieving real improvements for residents
- SDG(s) – currently combined and more representative of tenure
 - Members and officers were more positive about its effectiveness
 - Are they more effective due to focus?
- Challenge is whether you can make TACT more representative and impactful

Formal engagement (continued)

- Tenant scrutiny – WCC had sound approach with evidenced outcomes but ceased at time of pandemic and not relaunched since
- Recommendation - unless you can make present arrangements representative and impactful, consider a change of structure/approach:
 - Moving to four consumer standard groups each focused on a standard
 - Consider less formal surroundings – perhaps even fully virtual to aid representation
 - Consider appointment of director-level support (from elsewhere in the council) to support development
 - Carry out a wide (and targeted) recruitment campaign

Informal engagement

- Wide range of initiatives either offered or planned to be
 - Estate walkabouts/street meets/block briefs
 - Resident inspectors and mystery shopping
 - Social inclusion activities
 - Electronic engagement
- Ensure they are well advertised & stakeholders invited
- Based on sound principles
 - Informal dip in/dip out
 - Ideas that have been tried and tested elsewhere
- Recommend review of offer following publication of proposed standards
 - To incorporate key areas of concern such as fire and health & safety
 - Consult with residents over menu of engagement – what levels of interest do you have for activities?

Informal engagement (continued)

- Develop an e-engagement strategy/programme utilising relevant social media to appeal to differing communities

Conclusion

- Your engagement plan is a sound footing to deliver an effective range of ways in which tenants and homeowners can influence service improvement
- There are some key priorities:
 - Data collection exercise to understand your resident profile
 - Make your formal framework more representative or revise it to make it more attractive to the wider resident base
 - Ensure you can deliver the informal activity that will be attractive and meaningful (consider the appropriate resource allocation across formal and informal engagement)
 - Carry out a wide recruitment exercise to attract more people to get involved
 - Ensure you measure the outcomes of engagement and keep activities under review