

TENANT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (Tpas), define tenant engagement as *'working with tenants to co-produce effective services that meet a variety of needs... It's about empowering tenants, residents and communities to work with your organisation to achieve shared aims'*. Redditch Borough Council (RBC) are members of Tpas and commit to reflecting the values of their National Tenant Engagement Standard.

The Housing Service is governed by The Regulator of Social Housing and are committed to adhere to their Consumer Standard Code of Practice (April 2024). Under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 the Regulators consumer standards are mandatory

Specifically, regarding this Tenant Engagement Policy, we commit to adhere to The Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA) Standards in the Code of Practice, which are:

- **Fairness and Respect-** Registered providers must treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.
- **Diverse Needs-** In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants.
- **Engagement with Tenants-** Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.
- **Information about Landlord Services-** Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
- **Performance Information-** Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services.
- **Complaints-** Registered providers must ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly.

This Policy sets our commitment to involving tenants in shaping, improving, and monitoring the services they receive.

The Housing Service provides a broad range of Landlord functions, all of which will have tenant engagement and oversight, these services are:

- Repairs and Maintenance (internal and external areas)
- Capital Investment and Improvement Works (internal and external areas)
- Caretaking
- Health and Safety and Fire Safety

- Leasehold Section 20 works
- Neighbourhood and Tenancy
- Rent Arrears, Services Charges and Rental Income
- Allocation and Lettings of our Homes
- Complaints and Quality Assurance
- Business Information and Performance Data

Effective engagement ensures tenants have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions and contribute to service development.

This policy supports a culture of openness, transparency, and partnership working between tenants, staff, and external agencies.

We believe our tenants are the experts on living in their homes and as such we want them to help us shape the services we provide and how they are delivered.

We want to work in equal partnership with our tenants to help us continually improve, ensuring our tenants feel empowered to hold us to account and actively contribute to improving the housing service.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Key Objectives

To provide a range of engagement methods, ensuring tenants are informed about how feedback influences decisions, supporting tenants to develop skills, and monitoring engagement effectiveness.

Our intention is to create a culture across the Housing Service that will:

- Strengthen trust, communication and collaboration between RBC and our tenants.
- Ensure tenants have accessible and varied opportunities to participate in decision-making that affects them.
- Improve service quality by incorporating tenant feedback.
- Promote accountability and transparency; and encourage community cohesion.
- Provide clearly defined and agreed roles for tenants in the governance arrangements of the organisation.
- Provide an appropriate and agreed scrutiny model and ensure processes are in place, with clear routes into the governance, business and service delivery operations of the Housing Service.
- Ensure tenants are meaningfully engaged in the co-creation, monitoring and review of the organisation's engagement strategy to make sure it delivers clear impacts and value.

- Ensure we understand who our tenants are, including their diverse needs, and use appropriate methods to overcome any barriers to communication or engagement, including where these are linked to protected characteristics, or where tenants have nominated representatives or advocates to engage on their behalf.
- Provide sufficient resources to deliver effective engagement and tenants can influence the decision about the resources made available.
- Provide an appropriate menu of engagement opportunities that reflects the tenant profile and responds to their different needs in relation to equality, protected characteristics and any additional support, which can then be evidenced in the delivery of our services, engagement activities and communications to promote widespread engagement (Appendix 1).

2.2 Supporting a tenant engagement culture:

- We recognise tenant engagement will only be effective if we as the landlord are committed to involving tenants in our decision-making processes.
- Tenant engagement is an expectation of all staff involved in the delivery of housing services.
- Tenant engagement should be easy and accessible for tenants to choose to be as involved and when they want.
- We will ensure that tenants are given sufficient time to consider issues properly.
- We will offer solutions to help overcome any barriers to engagement, providing both digital and in person engagement.
- We will provide training and support for any tenants who would like to engage with us.
- We will provide expenses for things such as travel and transport for tenants who would like to engage with us.
- We will ensure information is provided in a range of formats.

2.3 Options for Tenant Engagement:

- We will ensure a range of informal and formal opportunities are made available for our tenants to engage with us (appendix 1).
- Engagement may range from being kept informed to taking a lead in decision-making.
- We will work with our tenants to develop and maintain a structure that provides a range of engagement opportunities.
- Throughout the year, we will facilitate a range of engagement events.
- Tenant Panel membership opportunities will be advertised for all tenants.
- Annual tenant satisfaction surveys will be carried out in line with regulatory requirements.

3. Responsibility

Responsibilities include:

- Councillors and Senior Leadership in providing oversight, appropriate resources and facilitating meaningful overview and scrutiny.
- Housing Management and Engagement staff to lead engagement delivery.
- All RBC staff by promoting a culture of openness in our tenant communications.
- Tenants to ensure they are participating constructively.

4. Complaints- When Things go Wrong

We have an accessible complaints policy that defines a complaint, how to complain, key timescales, routes for redress, how to access help and support and who has responsibility for the complaints process.

Housing Services understand that sometimes things go wrong, and the service is keen to use legitimate cases of both internal and external tenant and services users' dissatisfaction to learn about what has gone wrong and use the information to improve the services it provides.

Tenants and service users are actively encouraged to send us their feedback on the services they receive and participate constructively in reviews and improvements relating to the way services are designed, delivered and managed.

Formal Complaints will be accepted and addressed in line with guidance as set out in the Housing Services Complaints and Enquiries Standard, which in turn meets the standards for The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code

RBC recognises complaints as valuable feedback. It will provide a clear and fair complaints process, respond within published timescales, use outcomes to improve services, and report on complaint trends to our tenants.

Complaints will not affect a tenant's right to access services or engagement opportunities.

5. Information Sharing

Capturing and storing of tenant data will always be carried out in strict compliance to GDPR legislation.

Customer information will not normally be passed onto any third parties without the customer's prior written consent, or in exceptional circumstances where disclosure without consent is warranted. These circumstances are defined as follows:

Where there is over-riding legal, social, or public interest considerations, e.g., there is a risk of serious harm to the person themselves or others if the information is not disclosed.

Where information is required by the police as part of a criminal investigation and is subject to data disclosure procedures.

Where information is required by an authority for the assessment or collection of any tax or duty of a similar nature.

Where, because the Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it handles, it may need to use the information provided by customers, to prevent and detect fraud. The information may also be shared for the same purposes with other organisations that handle public funds.

The information may also be used for statistical purposes, which means we may pass this information, in confidence, to the relevant government department.

6. Equal Opportunities

The Council promotes equal opportunities in the services it provides. Our aim is to implement and maintain services which ensure that no tenant is treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, being or becoming a transsexual person, being married or in a civil partnership, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, age, being pregnant or having children or sexual orientation nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law.

7. Legislation and Guidance

Engagement activities will comply with relevant housing, data protection, equality, and regulatory requirements, including national standards for tenant involvement and empowerment.

Relevant Legislation and documents are as follows:

- The Housing Act 1985
- The Charter for Social Housing Tenants 2020
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- TPAS National Tenant Engagement Standards 2024
- RBC's Tpas Inspection Report 2025
- Redditch Borough Council (47UD) Regulatory Judgement 2025
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards 2024
- Regulator of Social Housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024
- The Tenancy Agreement
- The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months by engaged tenants, then reviewed every two years.