

# Customer Engagement Opportunities

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# Section 1

## Introduction

Our vision is  
to create & sustain  
truly vibrant  
communities



Dear Resident

Thank you for taking time to read this handbook. We hope this will provide you with information that will encourage you to become involved in customer engagement activities with us in the future.

We recognise that excellent services are achieved through the meaningful and active involvement of our residents. We want to give all of our residents the chance to tell us what you think about the services you receive and to influence decisions that affect your home and neighbourhood. We therefore give a genuine commitment to develop and expand our existing methods of involvement to make sure this continues to happen.

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) has recognised our commitment to engaging and involving residents and has granted our customer engagement service a national accreditation award. With your help, we will continue to remain one of the best customer engagement services in the country.

If you are interested in any of the involvement opportunities available then please contact us on 01724 279900 or email the Customer Engagement Team direct on [customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk)

You can also register your interest to become involved by completing the Menu of Options leaflet at the back of this information pack. If you have any specific needs such as large print, Braille, translation, audio or you require any other form of support then please contact us.

So don't delay, get involved today. Your views and opinions do count and your involvement can make a real difference to our services and your community.

## Why get involved? What's in it for you?

Getting involved and participating is an important way for individuals to get their views heard and to influence decisions which affect their homes and local communities.

Being involved brings lots of rewards:

- Recognition for your work from us and from your community
- A sense of achievement by having a say and influencing decisions affecting your home and community
- It brings improvements to your home and community
- The opportunity to learn new skills and increase knowledge, at a pace and level of your choosing

- You can meet like minded people and make new friends
- You can do something from the comfort of your home, or it can get you out of the house

Residents should all have an equal opportunity to become involved regardless of their situation. It's important to us that residents are not out of pocket as a result of attending meetings or other activities (e.g. conferences or training events). We will cover out-of pocket expenses for travel and other reasonable costs to encourage you to get involved.



## What can I do now?

Find out more about the opportunities available by reading through the information in this booklet and make a note of what would be of interest to you using the menu of options form at the back (you can tick as many options as you like). Send

the form back to us using one of the methods detailed. Or alternatively you can contact us direct by telephone on 01724 279900 or email [customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk)

## Meet the Customer Engagement Team

We know that it's important you find an opportunity to do things you enjoy and being involved works best if you are happy with your contribution. We also recognise that sometimes there are things that might make it a little more difficult for you to take part, so we offer support to all our volunteers.

We have a dedicated Customer Engagement Team who provide help, advice and support to any resident who wants to be involved in working in partnership with us to influence decisions and improvements to our homes and communities.

For example we offer ongoing support when a group of residents wishes to set up a residents association or community group.

The support available for a residents association or community group at the early stages include:

- Finding a venue for meetings and advertising them
- Providing administrative support for producing agendas, minutes of meetings and newsletters
- Providing useful contacts for other agencies and staff that can help your group, e.g. Ongo Homes Officers and partners such as the police and the local council
- Training and support to help the group get established
- Help with transport or childcare costs to attend meetings

**For more information, please see our guide to setting up and running a residents association or community group available from our website [www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes](http://www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes) or by contacting our Customer Engagement Team on 01724 279900.**



## Section 2

# How can you be involved?



There are many ways in which you can get involved and while resident associations or community groups are the most popular form of involvement there are a range of other options which may be more suitable for you.

## Examples of the involvement opportunities

### Resident Associations or Community Groups

A residents association is a group of people living in a neighbourhood who want to improve the quality of life within their community.

A residents association or community group works to promote the interests of all residents and brings local communities together. Working together as a group to change things or make things better is a great way to meet your neighbours, share your concerns, create community spirit and improve the local area.

There are many reasons why people may wish to get together to form a group:

- To campaign for something – e.g. better grass cutting service, activities for youngsters, better parking facilities
- To campaign against something – e.g. new housing policies, closure of community facilities
- To increase community spirit by holding social events and meeting people - e.g. coach trips, jumble sales, summer fairs etc.
- To make sure people are informed of issues that may affect them

Ongo Homes has a responsibility to ensure that groups are being truly representative of the

community they represent. We need to ensure that the right level of resources and support are available to Resident Associations and Community Groups so they can operate efficiently and effectively. A recognition criteria provides guidance on how Resident Associations and Community Groups should operate. Copies of the criteria are available upon request and can be found on our website [www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes](http://www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes)

To find out more details about groups in your area or if you are interested in starting one up then contact us.

### Community Voice

Community Voice is the main constituted resident umbrella group that is supported by Ongo Homes. This group works in partnership with us to discuss operational and customer facing issues in order to influence improvements to housing and communities within the region. Community Voice meetings usually take place on a monthly basis in a formal meeting setting. The membership of the group is open to all Ongo Homes Tenants and Leaseholders.

**Time commitment - meetings are held for three hours every month.**



## Tenant Board Members

The landlord function within Ongo Homes is managed by a board made up of 2 tenants, 1 council representative and 9 independent (non-tenant) members. Having tenant representatives means that residents are involved at the highest level of decision making. All our Board Members are volunteers.

Being a Board Member is of huge importance to Ongo Homes with one of the most important roles being the involvement of making strategic management decisions and acting on the best interests on the future of the company.

**Time commitment - meetings are held for two and half hours every month.**

## Residents Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Panel consists of a group of residents that carry out detailed investigations into different aspects of Ongo Homes services, (from a customer perspective).

The group undertake a wide range of different methods to find out the 'nuts and bolts' of a service area and use the information gained to highlight good practice and recommend where improvements are needed.

**Time commitment - meetings usually last for three hours and the frequency of meetings increases during an investigation. Additional time commitment for undertaking methods relating to research (e.g. work shadowing, interviewing, surveys etc.) will be required. This depends on the nature of the work involved for each investigation.**

## Tenant Inspectors

Tenant Inspectors are resident volunteers who check our services in various ways. Some of the inspections they can be involved with include:

- Acting as Mystery Shoppers
- Estate inspections
- Empty homes visits
- Surveys

Any Ongo Homes resident can inspect our services. You may get involved in all aspects of the work or you may prefer just to do Mystery Shopping. You choose a way that suits you best.

**Time commitment - meetings take place every two months and normally last one and half hours.**





## Complaints Monitoring Panel

The complaints monitoring panel is made up of resident volunteers who focus on how Ongo Homes deal with complaints. The group work as a team to analyse complaints, checking for themes and trends in order to influence if things can or should be done differently.

**Time commitment** - meetings take place for two/three hours every three months.

## Diversity Working Group

This is a partnership group of residents and staff who are responsible for making sure all Ongo Homes customers are treated fairly and appropriately and that everyone has equal access to quality services and involvement.

**Time commitment** - meetings take place for two hours every three months.

## Special Interest Groups

These are groups of residents that have something in common. Officers from Ongo Homes work in partnership with various minority groups, e.g. BME (Black & minority ethnic community). They meet to share their experiences of our services and discuss specific requirements in terms of culture, tradition, religious beliefs and language.

**Time commitment** - meetings take place as and when required.

## Maintenance Panel

Residents are involved in this panel to ensure that Ongo Homes maintenance service meets the needs of its customers. The panel invite customer representatives to the meetings to discuss their repairs and share their experience on work recently carried out to their home. The panel also influence improvements and the way in which the repairs service is delivered to residents.

**Time commitment** - meetings take place for two hours every two months.



## Key News Editorial Group

Ongo Homes provides information and updates in a key news magazine which is sent out to all our residents. This editorial group involves residents in developing and deciding upon the articles for inclusion within each edition of the newsletter.

**Time commitment** - meetings will vary depending on the timescales and deadlines for producing the newsletter.

## Leaseholder Forum

This is a group which consists of leaseholder representatives who come together regularly to discuss common issues such as service charges and notification of major works.

**Time commitment** - meetings are held for two hours every three months.

## Sheltered & Retirement Scheme Panel

This panel represents the views of tenants living in the sheltered and retirement schemes. They influence decisions and agree on consultation methods to help improve the quality of lives for those living within the schemes.

**Time commitment** - meetings are held for two hours every three months.

## Armchair Champion Group

This group is open to all Ongo Homes residents to be consulted on a range of services that we provide. It provides an opportunity for individuals to take part either by post or electronically, e.g. via email, to put their views across that will influence improvements to services without leaving the comfort of their own home.

This type of involvement structure is attractive to individuals who prefer to use digital methods, with the option to receive and complete information via email.

**Time commitment** - consultation with this group may vary depending on the type of consultation taking place.

## Plain Language Panel

Members of the Plain Language panel help make our communications more user friendly. As a member of this group, residents are asked to check what we have written before it is published. You would be checking that the information is easy to read, free of jargon and clearly gets the message across.

You do not have to attend a meeting to be part of this group. We can send information to your home and then you can return your comments to us by emailing, telephoning or by post.

**Time commitment** - consultation with this group takes place as and when information requires checking.



## Focus/Consultation Groups

We regularly use focus groups to gather views and opinions on a specific area of Ongo Homes Services.

The groups can be a one off meeting to discuss a specific topic which would normally include a small group of residents and one or two Ongo Homes officers. The residents will be encouraged to put forward their own personal views on the particular topic in question. For example, people who have recently been allocated an Ongo Homes property being able to influence the standard and condition of future empty homes that are made available to let.

**Time commitment** - these meetings are usually held as and when required and would last for a period of two hours.

## Surveys

We use a variety of written, telephone and electronic surveys to find out your views about a range of issues that affect residents' homes and their communities. We use your comments to improve and develop our services and to plan the best use of our resources. Surveys are an easy way for you to give your views from the comfort of your own home.

## Training

This is ideal if you want to improve your employment prospects, acquire skills or gain more knowledge that will help you to become better informed in decisions that affect your home or you just want to learn something new. We provide various free training opportunities which are open to all Ongo Homes residents; for more information contact customer engagement on 01724 279900 or email [customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk)



## Section 3

# Funding for local communities



Ongo Homes is committed to providing support for community groups to apply for various funding opportunities. To help you prepare information and submit funding applications we have produced a beginner's guide on how to make a good funding application. Copies of this can be provided by contacting the Customer Engagement team on 01724 279900, email [customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk), or through our website [www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes](http://www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes)

Grants which Ongo Homes directly provide include:

### Start Up Grants for Resident Associations & Community Groups

A Start Up grant will be given as a one off payment to all new resident associations and community groups to help with the cost of getting the group up and running and to pay towards items such as leaflets and venue hire.

To qualify for this grant the following criteria needs to be met:

- The group should be willing to represent views of all tenants and residents living within an agreed boundary area. The area they represent will be detailed in a constitution developed in partnership between the association and the Customer Engagement Team
- Support will be provided from Customer Engagement for a period of 6 months to help a group to become established and the committee developed in their roles
- The group must adopt a formal constitution that is recognised by us and members must sign up and abide by our Volunteers Code of Conduct
- A bank account for the group to be opened containing 3 different signatures on the account which must be from different households

### Annual Grants for Resident Associations & Community Groups

The Annual grant is for established resident associations and community groups to help with running costs to pay towards venue hire, stationery, leaflets and advertising.

The amount of grant available will depend on the number of Ongo Homes properties covered by the group.

This grant is in addition to individual groups raising their own funds through various means.

To qualify for this grant, the following criteria needs to be met:

- Each individual group to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and accounts to be checked prior to meeting taking place
- Election of the officers and committee as stated in their constitution



If you want to know more about the information provided in this booklet.



Get in touch and ring us on  
**01724 279900**,  
ask to speak to a member of the Customer  
Engagement Team.



**email**  
[customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk)



**facebook**  
[facebook.com/OngoHomes](https://facebook.com/OngoHomes)



**twitter**  
[@ongouk](https://twitter.com/ongouk)

“Get involved,  
make a  
difference”



Alternatively you can write to us  
at Ongo Homes, Meridian House,  
Normanby Road, Scunthorpe  
DN15 8QZ

# menu of options

## Would you like to be involved? Which service areas interest you?

Costs & Budgets	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability & special needs housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhoods & environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing policies & procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tackling anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rent income	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service charges	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supported housing (included sheltered)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letting of properties	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>		

See below for details of the opportunities available, please tick your area of interest.

Title	Description	Your time commitment	Interested?
<b>Light Bite</b>	1. Basic information on customer engagement opportunities	Half an hour chat with officer from Ongo Homes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Becoming an Ordinary Member	Yearly at the AGM (or as & when required).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Main Course</b>	<p><b>Become part of a group that works in partnership with us on a regular basis:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resident Associations or Community Groups</li> <li>2. Tenant Inspectors, Mystery Shoppers &amp; Green Inspectors</li> <li>3. Young Persons projects (age 14 to 25 years)</li> <li>4. Leaseholders Forum</li> <li>5. Sheltered &amp; Retirement Panel</li> <li>6. Community Voice</li> <li>7. BME Communities (Black, Minority Ethnic)</li> <li>8. Maintenance Panel</li> <li>9. Residents Scrutiny Panel</li> <li>10. Complaints Monitoring Panel</li> <li>11. Tenant Board member</li> </ol>	Meetings held monthly, quarterly or half yearly.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Side Dishes</b>	<p><b>Be involved from the comfort of your own home:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Armchair Champion</li> <li>2. Plain Language Panel</li> </ol>	Occasional input from home.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Desserts</b>	<p><b>One off, involvement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus or Consultation Group</li> </ol>	As and when required.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return the completed form to the address below or fill the form in online at [www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes](http://www.ongo.co.uk/ongo-homes)

View the opportunities available on the DVD link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VYyjk5MDkM>

Are there other ways you would be interested in getting involved? (please provide details)

How satisfied are you with the overall service provided to you by Ongo Homes?

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied  No opinion

Name

My telephone number is

(home)

(mobile)

(work)

My e-mail address is

Address

Signed

Dated

What is your preferred method of contact?

Phone  Letter  Email  Text

**Customer Engagement**  
Ongo Homes  
Meridian House • Normanby Road  
Scunthorpe • DN15 8QZ

**Telephone**  
**Customer Engagement on:**  
**01724 279900**  
**or email**  
**[customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk)**