

# Customer Engagement Strategy 2018-21



## 1. What is Customer Engagement (CE)?

When we talk about customer engagement, we're referring to the different ways our customers can shape and monitor the services we provide to them. It's a two way process which means we share information and ideas with them, and in turn we listen & act on their suggestions and comments. If we do this well, residents should see an improvement in the services we offer and we should make better decisions.

## 2. Why do we want to get customers involved?

The reason we want to get residents involved is simple - as part of the Ongo Group, we are dedicated to a single vision...

- **Creating and sustaining truly vibrant communities**  
...and we have one promise, which is:
  - **Everything we do is put back into local communities**

Our customers are the best people to tell us what's working well or not so well, which is why it is important they have their say on issues that affect their communities and on the services we deliver. Involving customers also links with our core values of:

- **Partnership** – customer engagement is at the heart of our business and we'll work to develop a culture where residents, officers and stakeholders can work together effectively
- **Drive** – excellent service delivery can best be achieved by the genuine and active involvement of residents in the decision making and monitoring of our services. With this in mind, we'll continue to encourage more people to get involved.
- **Responsibility** – we have a duty to keep residents informed of our activities and to consult with residents on proposals and changes which will affect them. We continue to develop existing and new methods of involvement to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute at a level that suits them

## 3. What's this strategy for?

It allows us to plan for where we want to take customer engagement in the future. Basically it looks at:

- Where we are now?
- Where we want to be?
- How are we going to get there?
- How will we know we have got there?

Over the last three years we have worked hard to:

- Encourage more people to get involved and to make sure that the various groups we support make a difference. We've tried to engage residents in different ways and now have a better idea of what works and what doesn't work;
- Ensure a range of diverse people are involved. It is now the norm for our groups to have members from a wide variety of backgrounds, ages, ethnicities etc and we try to avoid having age-segregated groups;

- Increase the capacity and effectiveness of our customer engagement structures;
- Ensure that volunteers are able to participate effectively by providing a wide range of learning and development opportunities.

We know all of this is working and that we are providing an effective Customer Engagement service because we've been awarded the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation again this year and we're acknowledged as a national high performer by Housemark's annual benchmarking. However, we will always look for ways we can improve, to make sure we're doing everything we can to:

- Provide opportunities for customers to shape and influence the planning, delivery and monitoring of the services we provide;
- Ensure that customers can make a significant difference to what we do and how we do it.

Over the next three years, our main aim is to continue to support and strengthen our existing customer engagement groups, making them even more effective and modernising the way we work. Three themes that will run throughout all of our work will be to:

- Continually strive to increase the diversity of our groups;
- Ensure there are opportunities for everyone to get involved;
- Promote what our involved customers do and what they've achieved.

#### **4. Our objectives for the future are...**

Over the next three years we will focus on the following objectives:

##### **Objective 1 - Provide customers with the information they need to access services and contribute to their communities**

###### **We will:**

- Regularly monitor and update information relating to customer engagement on the Ongo Homes website;
- Provide Key News in different formats, include information from other service areas, promote Customer Engagement achievements and involve the Key News panel in monitoring articles;
- Provide support to all recognised Resident Associations and Community groups, provide support for new ones to become established, work with them to increase the number of committee members and help them with funding applications for community projects;
- Provide customers with relevant information about the right to manage when requests are made and provide information about this in Key News.

##### **Objective 2 - Actively encourage customers to give us feedback, listen to their views and provide opportunities to improve and develop, new and existing services**

###### **We will:**

- Obtain views from customers in a variety of ways by using a diverse range of channels;
- Use social media to communicate with customers, promote services, events and undertake surveys;

- Provide support to volunteers and groups to enable them to better use social media;
- Consult with various customer engagement structures on written communications, as well as customer-facing policies and practices;
- Produce customer surveys using a variety of communication methods, such as online, via the telephone and via Key News;
- Attend promotional events such as the Ongo Carnival to get feedback on our services;
- Encourage tenant inspections and mystery shopping by our customers;
- Hold one-off focus groups for specific topics;
- Complete impact assessments following events to monitor feedback and identify where improvements can be made;
- Evaluate customer feedback from surveys and consultation to help influence future improvements in service delivery and new ways of working.

### **Objective 3 – Recruiting and supporting Tenant Shareholders to vote on Ongo Homes issues**

#### **We will:**

- Promote the benefits of becoming a Tenant Shareholder and encourage membership in a variety of ways including: when promoting the Customer Engagement menu of options, through articles in Key News and through information on the Ongo Homes website;
- Use different methods to encourage our existing Members to attend Board AGMs and other relevant meetings.

### **Objective 4 - Up-skilling Community Voice members to make decisions on operational policies**

#### **We will:**

- Ensure Community Voice officers have the right level of skills by providing training opportunities to help them develop in their roles and by holding annual team building days;
- Provide a person specification for each officer role and conduct annual appraisals;
- Provide support to Community Voice Officers and hold regular monthly meetings;
- Provide support to new members who join the group to enable them to understand the remit of Community Voice;
- Monitor agenda items to ensure that regular decision items are included;
- Conduct annual impact assessments to monitor the effectiveness of the group and identify areas for improvement.

### **Objective 5 - Supporting Resident Scrutiny Panel members to provide an independent view of service delivery and to influence the strategic direction of services**

#### **We will:**

- Support the Resident Scrutiny Panel to provide an independent view and put forward recommendations for service improvements to the Ongo Homes Executive Management Team and Community Voice;

- Include all approved recommendations on our performance monitoring system and provide updates to the panel on progress made;
- Provide the relevant resources to enable panel members to fulfil their roles, e.g. ICT, stationary;
- Provide training opportunities to members to help develop their knowledge and skills;
- Promote achievements of the panel in the Key News and on the Ongo Homes website.

## **Objective 6 - Working with Tenant Inspectors and Mystery Shoppers to understand how customers experience our services**

### **We will:**

- Support Tenant Inspectors to enable them to provide information that will help make a difference to the services provided by Ongo Homes;
- Maintain monthly inspections to include: estate inspections, green space and empty homes;
- Provide members with Risk Assessments and monitor these annually making any changes when required;
- Provide training opportunities to include attendance at conferences and seminars;
- Identify areas suitable for Mystery Shop exercises from different service areas and feedback from other Customer Engagement groups.

## **5. How do we know these are the right things to focus on?**

When deciding on our objectives, we've taken into consideration a number of different factors including:

- What's happening nationally;
- What the Regulator for Social Housing tells us we should be doing;
- Our own information, using housing data, customer and staff surveys;
- What our customers have told us, including which issues are important to them;
- How these fit with Ongo Homes Corporate plan and the overall strategic aims and objectives;
- How these fit against the TPAS standards.

Further information can be found in **Appendix One**.

## **6. How will we measure & monitor success?**

It is very important that feedback from customer engagement is used to have a positive impact on service delivery. Feedback helps us to deliver an efficient and effective service.

We will monitor activities for effectiveness and information will be analysed to ensure the needs and priorities of customer are taken into account.

Information from involvement activities will be used with other service areas to shape and improve their services in the future. We also want to make sure that customers who are involved will see the achievements and feel they have made a real difference.

We will work alongside customers to monitor the successful delivery of this strategy and will include the community voice officers, annual impact assessment process, resident scrutiny, performance management and benchmarking.

We will publish information and outcomes of customer engagement in a variety of ways including the Ongo Homes Annual Report and our public website.

We will also look at the following measures and aims:

- Customer Satisfaction that we are 'listening to and acting upon tenants' views' will be sustained or increased from its 2017 level of 91%;
- Customer Satisfaction with 'keeping tenants informed' will be sustained or increased from its 2017 level of 93.3%.

We will also retain our TPAS accreditation for providing excellent resident involvement services.