



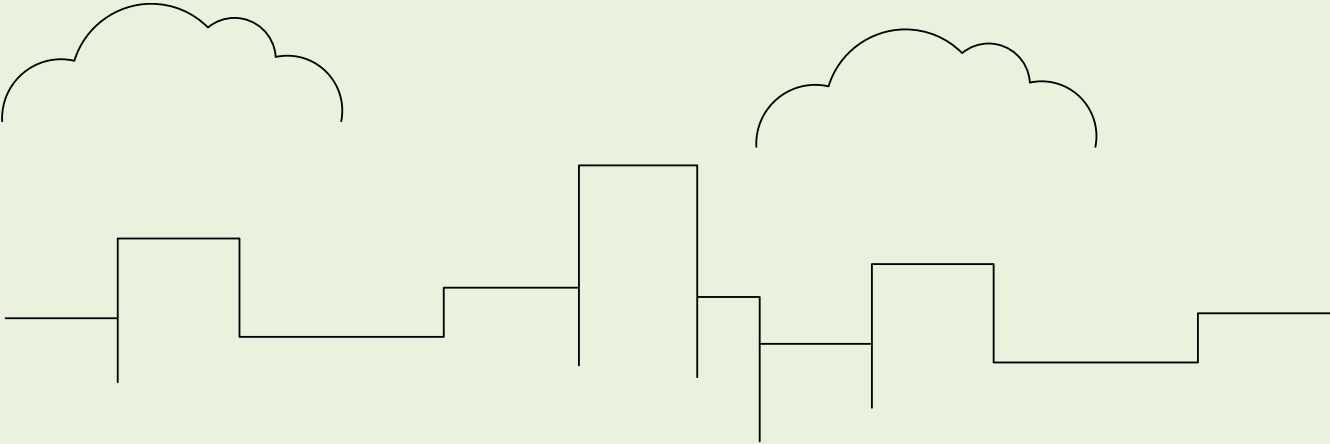
Customer Engagement Strategy

2024 – 2027

live • grow • thrive • together

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Introduction

At Salix Homes we are not only about providing good quality affordable homes, we are also about transforming lives and supporting our communities. Everything we do as an organisation is for the benefit of our communities, customers and their homes.

Our Corporate Plan Our Sustainable Future 2023-25 sets out our objective to support our customers and communities through ensuring a strong and influential customer voice through our customer engagement arrangements.

Our customer engagement strategy puts the detail into that objective. It aims to ensure our customers have a voice and are able to shape and influence the services we deliver, the safety of their homes and how we spend their rent to deliver services and maintain and improve their homes.

The customer engagement strategy also supports the delivery of our values – **Trustworthy, Successful and Inclusive** – aiming to ensure all our customers have a voice and are listened to.

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Background and context

National context

Since the Grenfell Fire Tragedy in 2017 there has been calls to strengthen the customer voice in social housing and ensure customers have the information and resources they need to have a genuine say in how their homes and services are managed.

The call to strengthen the customer voice and put a greater focus on the customer and the services they receive from landlords has recently been enshrined in law with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Building Safety Act 2023.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 puts tenants at the heart of social housing. It enables the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to carry out proactive consumer regulation and gives the RSH powers to enforce the regime. To enable this the RSH has introduced a revised set of consumer standards. These set out clear standards landlords need to meet in relation to transparency, influence and accountability. These are;

- Registered Providers must take tenants views into account in their decision making about how landlord service are delivered.
- Provide tenants with information about landlord services so they can use services, understand what to expect from their landlords and hold their landlord to account.
- Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlords performance in the delivery of services.

This strategy aims to ensure that Salix Homes meets these standards.

The Building Safety Act 2023

The Building Safety Act 2023 aims to improve the fire and structural safety of residential high rise buildings. One of the requirements of the Act is that each high rise building should have a Resident Engagement Strategy that sets out we will include all residents in building safety decisions. This includes any decisions about the management of the building or the management of building safety risks.

This strategy aims to ensure that our approach to customer engagement takes these standards into account.

Local context

Salix Homes has a strong track record of customer engagement and involvement. In 2020 we further developed our approach to customer voice and influence to ensure customers are at the heart of decision making. We reviewed our customer engagement activities and put in place a strong customer engagement framework to ensure customers are able to get their voices heard in a way that suits them.

We recruited to and developed our Customer Committee who are a key part of our governance structure with delegated responsibilities from the Salix Homes Board. The chair of the customer committee is also a board member to provide a link to the board.

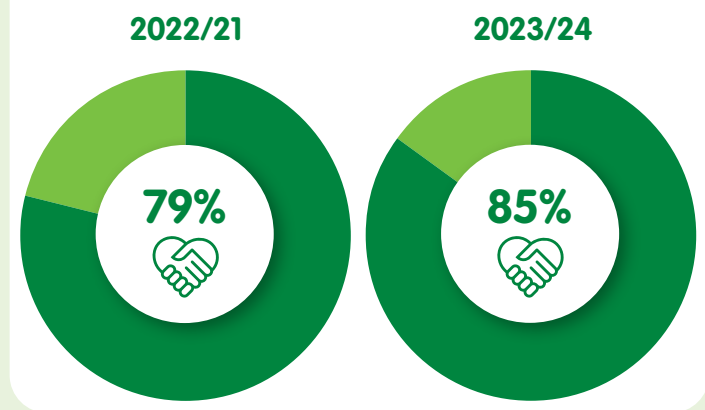
We introduced an approach to customer scrutiny and recruited a pool of customers who carry out pieces of scrutiny on a task and finish basis. Since 2021 the Customer Committee have commissioned six pieces of scrutiny including anti social behaviour, repairs and customer service. These have led to a number of service improvements.

A number of specialist groups have been developed that sit under the Customer Committee and are chaired by committee members. These include an Apartment Living Forum which discusses issues affecting apartment living including building safety, caretaking and cleaning and security, a Complaint Oversight Group which reviews complaints responses and learning from complaints and a Procurement Panel which has been involved in procuring our investment programme contractors and arboriculture contract.

We have also worked with our Community Connectors to strengthen link with our local communities and estates, improved the insight we receive from our surveys and worked with our customers to review our website. We also developed our customer voice report and signed up the National Housing Federation Together with Tenants Charter.

As a result of this work we have seen improvements in customer satisfaction with being kept informed. This has increased from 79% in 2022/21 to 85% in 2023/24. We have also seen improvements in customer satisfaction that the landlord listens and takes tenants views into account with this increasing from 60% in 2022/21 to 77% in 2023/24.

Customer Satisfaction with being kept informed has increased from 79% in 2022/21 to 85% in 2023/24



When looking at feedback left by customers in relation to these questions, dissatisfaction seems to be more with engagement at a local level;

“They don’t come round and make checks to see where we live and what the conditions are like.”

“I don’t think they make any contribution to neighbourhoods so they could do a lot more.”

“I don’t receive much information from Salix at all. All I receive is a quarterly newsletter. I think this could be more frequent to improve.”

“Salix made a promise that these new homes would have estate walkabouts. They promised to keep an eye on the estates to keep the area nice. However, we have not seen these happening.”

“I live in a cooperative and the Co-op converses with Salix who in turn gives us feedback, so we feel very closely tied to management and decisions. We find it very easy to get hold of Salix, through our Co-op, and raise any issues or get responses to problems in the neighbourhood. So, I think the system between the Co-op and Salix works very well.”

This strategy aims to build on this work and further strengthen our approach to customer engagement and the opportunities customers have to influence services.

Our Customer Engagement Framework

The strategy sets out to build on our existing customer engagement framework. The framework aims to give customers opportunities to engage with and influence Salix Homes in whatever way they wish whether that's staying informed through the provision of information, all the way to being part of the governance structure. The framework aims to recognise that different customers want different things from their landlord and that this may vary over time.

Informing

We give our customers information about our policies, events and services that may affect them.

Website and social media

Publications – policies, reports etc

Limelight

Customer charter

E-newsletters and mail-outs

Performance information

Insight

Opportunities to give views in relation to service delivery, policy and procedures.

High rise engagement strategies

Focus groups

Customer satisfaction surveys

Neighbourhood days and community events

Complaints and compliments

Online polls and tools

Customer Engagement Framework

Involving

Opportunities to influence decision making and service design and delivery at a local and strategic level.

Apartment Living Forum

Complaints Oversight Group

Scrutiny pool

Procurement Panel

Community Connectors

Estate walkabouts

Governance

Involvement in the governance structure of Salix Homes and in managing homes and services.

Customer Committee

New Barracks TMO

The framework is split into four quadrants to represent the different ways customers can engage with Salix and influence services.

Informing

We give our customers information about our policies, services and events that may affect or interest them. The activities under informing intend to ensure that our customers have the information they need to understand our services and are able to compare them to others. This information ensures customers can access our services and can form views about us as an organisation and the services we offer. This provides a gateway for customers who want to share their views of our services and influence how we deliver our services.

Insight

These are opportunities to give views on service delivery, neighbourhood issues, policies and procedures. This can include through surveys, polls, on estate walkabouts or at community events, and through complaints and compliments. This enables customers to share their views and insights on our services easily and without a lot of time commitment. These opportunities can be both local (at community events and estate level) and at a more strategic level through surveys, polls and focus groups. The views shared through insight opportunities will be feedback to our customer, groups, into customer scrutiny and to customer committee and board to influence service delivery and policies and procedures.

Involving

These are opportunities to influence decision making and service design at a local and strategic level. These options are for customers who want to get more involved in influencing decision making and service design including through becoming part of one of our specialist groups, becoming a Community Connector, getting involved in the scrutiny of our services or becoming more involved in community groups. These opportunities to influence our services at a strategic or local level require a greater time commitment than our insight opportunities. These groups will receive insight gathered through our customer satisfaction surveys, community groups and complaints and compliments along with opportunities to speak to staff and managers delivering services to help them make recommendations to improve how we deliver our services to our Customer Committee and board.

Governance

These are opportunities to be involved in the governance structure of Salix Homes, actively influencing and making decisions on how services are delivered based on feedback from customer insight, customer scrutiny, performance and good practice. These are options for customers who are happy to commit time and effort to being directly involved with Salix Homes.

Customer Engagement Strategic objectives

Strategic objective

1

Develop our customer engagement framework to give customers the opportunity to shape what is important to them.

The aim of this objective is to ensure our customer engagement framework gives customers opportunities to shape what is important to them in the way they choose. Our existing customer engagement framework is well established and embedded, but it does not explicitly recognise the importance of more informal methods of engagement and influence or offer these as a menu of opportunities for customers to choose from and dip in and out of depending on how much time they want to commit. This objective will ensure that we continue to develop and strengthen our customer engagement framework to create more opportunities for customers to get involved and share their views according to their needs and preferences.

Year one actions include;

- Publicise our customer engagement framework and menu of opportunities to ensure customers are aware of the different ways that they can share their views and influence services.
- Develop, publish and monitor our high rise engagement strategies.
- Review our specialist groups to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.
- Review our approach to scrutiny to ensure it continues to reflect good practice.

Strategic objective

2

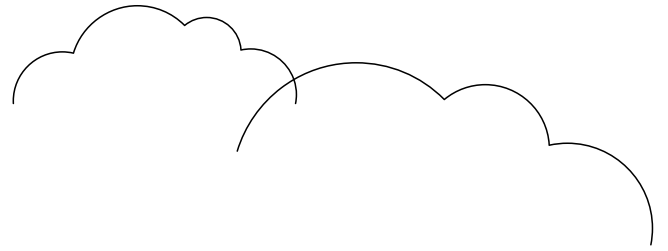
Collaborate with our communities to better understand the customer experience.

One of the areas where our customers have told us we need to improve engagement is at a local community level. This also reflects feedback customers have given us that they would like to see their housing officers out and about on estates more and have more local face to face contact with us.

Collaborating with our communities – whether that's with customers at an estate level or with community groups who represent our communities – provides more accessible ways for customers to engage with us in their own way. Collaborating with community groups and networks helps us to reach customers who may not engage or who may face barriers to engagement such as customers with disabilities, customers from ethnic minority backgrounds and young people.

Year one actions include;

- Reinvigorate our community connectors including improving the information and resources available to support them.
- Develop and publish a programme of neighbourhood and community events including estate walkabouts to ensure we are visible in our communities and customers can share their views on our services.



- Map organisations in Salford that support and connect with customers in the community such as disability organisations, ethnic minority, LGBTQ+ community groups and networks and make best use of partnership working to reach a wider range of customers with diverse needs.
- Review our community grants and use of social value to increase impact in our neighbourhoods.

We want to ensure that we are able to listen to the views of all our customers and will ensure we understand where our ‘silence’ is within the feedback we receive from our customers so we can take action to ensure the feedback we act on is representative of our customer base.

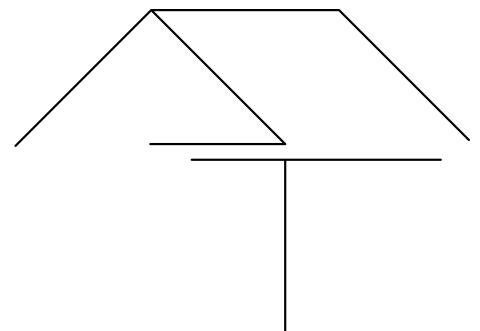
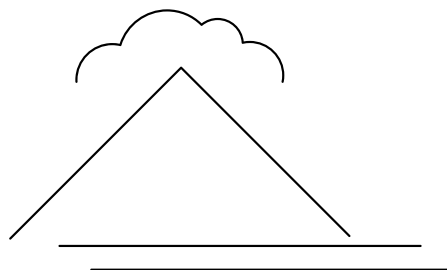
Year one actions include;

- Investigate and introduce an online customer engagement tool including ability to have online polls, consultations and conversations.
- Use customer feedback and insight to support process changes in specific areas, where there is a clear trend that Salix isn’t getting it ‘right first time’.
- Ensure we are using customer insight to inform decision making and can evidence how we listen and learn from customer feedback.
- Understand where our ‘silence’ is within the feedback we receive and develop methods of engagement to address the gaps and gain insight that represents our customer base.

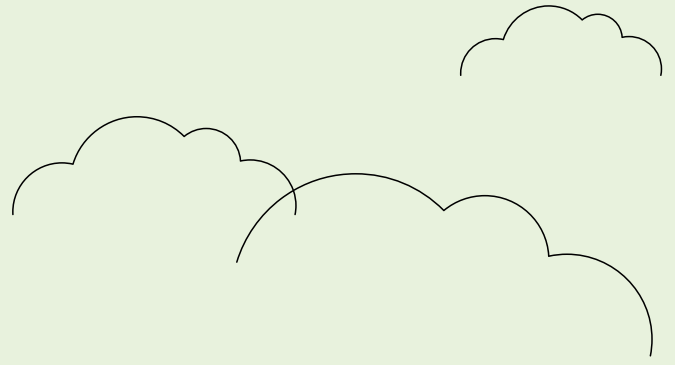
Strategic objective 3

Continue to develop efficient ways of listening to customer-wide views through understanding surveys, sentiment, and trends.

We have a number of well-developed methods through which customers are able to share their views including through transactional surveys for a number of key service areas, through complaints and compliments and through the tenant satisfaction measures. We also carry out ad hoc surveys and insight research when we review specific services or change our approach to a service area.



Monitoring and review



The Customer Committee will monitor the delivery of the **Customer Engagement Strategy**, receiving biannual updates on progress against the action plan.

The Customer Committee will review the success of the strategy on an annual basis including developing yearly action plans.

Customer satisfaction will be monitored through the tenant satisfaction measures and through reviews of individual engagement channels.

Success measures for the strategy include an increase in the number of customers reporting;

- ✓ Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.
- ✓ Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.

We will produce an annual customer voice report detailing how customers influenced services and service delivery. This will be published on the website as part of annual report suite.



Notes



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