

Family First Resident Involvement Statement 2008 to 2010

Summary

1. This statement sets out:

- what resident involvement is
- why it is important to us
- how residents can get involved
- how this statement fits with our business strategy
- our priority outcomes for resident involvement
- our priority actions for 2008 to 2010
- how we will monitor and evaluate our resident involvement activity
- the resources committed to resident involvement
- how we will ensure value for money
- our standards for resident involvement

The Housing Corporation encourage all housing associations to produce a Resident Involvement Statement.

What is resident involvement?

2. The Housing Corporation define resident involvement as:

- all of the activities and processes that a housing association undertakes that help it to know what its residents and communities want
- all of the activities and resources that enable people to be involved, if they want to
- all of the activities that enable residents and communities to have more influence over decisions when they want it
- the framework in which involvement is delivered (e.g. the Involvement Statement and Impact Assessment).

Why is resident involvement important to Family First?

3. We want to make sure that all our residents have the opportunity to get involved. We believe that resident involvement improves services, enhances accountability to service users and helps build social capital. We believe that resident involvement can support community cohesion.
4. Resident involvement helps us to provide excellent services and value for money, and to become more open and responsible for our actions and the work we do. We're committed to taking action to promote, encourage and support various ways for residents to get involved.
5. The existing inspection framework means that a housing association must have effective involvement if they wish to gain three stars.

How can residents get involved in Family First?

6. If residents want to get involved, we provide a wide-range of ways so that residents can choose the way that suits them best. This includes:
- being kept informed
 - getting active on a particular local issue
 - responding to consultations
 - becoming a resident representative
 - joining a residents' group or association
 - becoming a tenant inspector or mystery shopping
 - joining one of our service improvement groups, which all have resident members
 - becoming a member of our Service Scrutiny Group
 - being elected to LHA North's consumer advisory panels
 - becoming a Board member

How does this statement fit with other strategy, policy and procedures?

7. This statement is based on LHA-ASRA's Group Resident Involvement Strategy. The Group Strategy sets out:
- our priorities for resident involvement
 - the different ways that residents can get involved
 - the roles and responsibilities of staff and residents
 - standards for resident involvement which must be complied with by all parts of the Group
 - an action plan for delivering the strategy – these actions have been included in the individual resident involvement impact assessments for each of the Group's subsidiaries
8. LHA-ASRA has a number of resident involvement procedures to support colleagues. All are available on the resident involvement intranet site.

What are our priority outcomes of involvement?

9. The Group Resident Involvement Strategy sets out our priority outcomes for resident involvement. These are to:
- **increase LHA-ASRA's accountability to residents** by involving residents in the formulation, implementation and ongoing review of our policies, strategies and procedures
 - **embed equality and diversity in Group activities** by reaching out and involving traditionally excluded or under-involved residents in our communities, including young people, residents living in supported or sheltered housing, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and other residents who have been traditionally under-involved
 - **improve our services through involving residents**, helping LHA-ASRA deliver a customer-focussed housing service by consulting and involving as many

residents as possible in continually improving our services to meet residents' needs and aspirations

- **build social capital** by working in partnership with residents to involve them in decision-making at local and strategic levels across the organisation and to involve them in shaping their neighbourhoods and in developing sustainable communities
- **contribute to our corporate goals** by delivering these outcomes; the resident involvement strategy will help LHA-ASRA to achieve the key corporate objectives of the group.

11. Therefore involvement is at the heart of our business strategy. It has also been recognised through the experience of the Mock Inspection that effective resident involvement is at the heart of high performance organisations. The mock inspection found that although Family First's Tenant Participation Policy (2005) demonstrated commitment by having specialist staff and a range of RI approaches, few targets in the policy had been met. A very small number of tenants were engaging. A range of weaknesses were identified. Actions to tackle these have been identified in the impact assessment.

What are our priority actions for 2008 to 2010?

12. Our impact assessment contains a detailed action plan for 2008 to 2009, with clear actions, targets, timescales and responsibilities. This includes cross-cutting equality and diversity and value for money activities.

13. Our key priorities for 2008 to 2010 are:

- To develop more effective resident scrutiny of performance and ensure residents are involved in decision making, including the development of strategies
- To involve residents in improving services, including: customer care and contact centre, repairs service, neighbourhood services and income management
- To maintain and support a wide range of options for involvement
- To work with residents to improve community cohesion and increase influence over quality of life in neighbourhoods and communities
- To increase the capacity, confidence and skills of residents who get involved by developing appropriate support for residents who get involved, including training and expenses
- To develop appropriate support for colleagues so that delivery of resident involvement is at the heart of all we do, and not confined to a specialist member of staff
- To ensure that resident involvement activity becomes outcome-focussed and is properly recorded, monitored and evaluated.

How we will monitor the success of Family First's involvement activities?

14. The delivery and monitoring of this Statement is through our annual Impact Assessment. The impact assessment reports on the outcomes achieved by resident involvement in the previous financial year and sets out the planned outcomes for the

year ahead in an action plan. We send a summary to residents with the annual Performance magazine. The full document is available on request.

15. Family First will monitor outputs, like the number of residents who are involved, but our key focus is on outcomes - what resident involvement has actually achieved. This is in line with the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Involvement Policy, and Audit Commission inspectors' methodology. Research has demonstrated that residents will only become, and stay, involved if their housing association can convince them that getting involved matters and can make a difference. Residents need to see real outcomes. The Tenant Involvement Commission (2006) found that tenants want their housing association to: get the basics right and go the extra mile; give tenants choices; make involvement personal; and be accountable.

What resources will we commit to enable involvement?

16. All colleagues have a role to play in helping residents to get involved. First line support is provided by neighbourhood officers. Colleagues in other departments (for example, Property Services and Development) must also involve residents. Support to colleagues is provided by the Community Investment Team (CIT). LHA-ASRA employs a Resident Involvement Manager and Family First has a part-time Resident Involvement Officer. The specialist resident involvement team provide policies and procedures; advice and training; a regularly updated intranet site; a quarterly newsletter; and hands on support. A summary of colleagues responsibilities is attached (Appendix 1).
17. The Group strategy contains commitments around the support we will provide to residents. This includes:
 - providing information in clear language and alternative formats
 - providing inductions, regularly updated involvement handbooks, training, support, quarterly newsletter and expenses to active residents
 - advice and practical support to recognised residents' associations, and a residents' association budget to provide limited financial support
 - advice and support to residents who are involved in local community groups
 - a community development budget that can offer limited financial support to activities that benefit the community
 - scheme enhancement budget and external training budget managed by the Consumer Advisory Panels.
18. To support our resident involvement activity Family First provides a dedicated budget to support meetings, expenses, training, conferences, etc. This budget was £5,000 in 2008/09.

How will we ensure value for money?

19. The cost of resident involvement has to be set against the benefits which it brings. Budgets are regularly reviewed by colleagues and active residents. The priority is delivering "win-win" activities that benefit both residents and Family First. Budget information will be included in impact assessments, so that we can balance costs against outcomes.

Agreed by FF Board 21st October 2008

What are our standards for resident involvement?

20. Family First is committed to following the standards in the Group Resident Involvement Strategy:

- Standard for information and feedback
- Standard for resident consultation
- Standard for resident involvement
- Standard for resident representation
- Standard for involving all sections of our community
- Standards for resources for resident involvement
- Standards for monitoring and measuring performance
- procedure for resolving disputes between active tenants groups and LHA-ASRA

How will we review this statement?

21. We will review this statement with residents and colleagues in April 2010.

Colleague responsibility for resident involvement

Work area	Lead responsibility
Ensuring all Board reports and service improvement plans include RI and consultation	Directors and Heads of Service
Involving residents in corporate planning process, strategy reviews & service changes	Directors and Heads of Service
Production of Streetwise, Performance, information leaflets	Director of Property Services
Colleague training, ensuring RI in JDs, etc	Director of HR
Customer complaints	Director of Housing
Family First Board	Director of Care and Support
Involving residents in specific service reviews, contractor procurement and colleague interviews	Heads of Service
Central reporting of satisfaction surveys	Head of Performance Management
Compliance with Customer Care Strategy	Head of Customer Services
Consumer Advisory Panels (CAP)	Area Managers
CAP elections	Area Managers
CAP annual appraisals	Area Managers
Service Improvement Groups	SIG lead officers
Promotion of RI opportunities	Neighbourhood Officers
Ongoing support of CAP & Res reps	Neighbourhood Officers
Neighbourhood reviews	Neighbourhood Officers
Estate inspections	Neighbourhood Officers
Monitoring & review of communal service contracts	Neighbourhood Officers
Liaison with resident groups	Neighbourhood Officers
Partnership work and engagement with local agencies and initiatives	Neighbourhood Officers
Induction of active residents	Resident Involvement Officer
Support to set up & sustain resident groups	Resident Involvement Officer
Community development work in priority areas	Resident Involvement Officer
Support & advice to staff on RI	Resident Involvement Officer
Supporting resident led events	Resident Involvement Officer
Resident rep annual appraisals	Resident Involvement Officer
Delivery of outreach projects to tackle financial exclusion & worklessness	Resident Involvement Officer
Strategy/policy/impact assessment	Resident Involvement Manager
Information on RI for residents	Resident Involvement Manager
Core training programme	Resident Involvement Manager
CAP/RR Handbook	Resident Involvement Manager
Support resources for staff – intranet/liC	Resident Involvement Manager
Forum 100	Resident Involvement Manager
Service Evaluation Group	Resident Involvement Manager
Community Development & RA budgets	Resident Involvement Manager
Annual active residents event	Resident Involvement Manager
Sharing best practice with other housing providers	Resident Involvement Manager
Liaison with residents on regeneration schemes	Head of Community Investment
Decent Homes & Decent Places Consultation	Property Services Officers
Consultation/satisfaction	Service delivery teams
Web-based interaction with residents	IT Department