



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

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1. Policy Context

Leeds Jewish Housing Association is committed to involving our residents and to gathering their views and priorities in order to influence the delivery of our services. Resident engagement forms one of the 4 strategic aims. LJHA's resident engagement can be seen as a thread that runs through the other 3 priorities.

This Resident Involvement Policy provides the framework to ensure that we work in partnership with our residents at all levels. Resident engagement forms an integral part of the: Regulator of Social Housing Resident Involvement and Empowerment Standard, the Charter for Social Housing, and the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter.

The Together with Residents Charter can be found in the Appendix to this policy.

LJHA Approach

Resident involvement is about residents taking part in decision making and influencing decisions about:

- LJHA policies.
- The services LJHA provides.
- The housing LJHA provides.
- Wider issues that affect their community.

It is a two-way process that involves us sharing information, ideas and decision making with residents, with the aim of improving housing standards, conditions and services. We will co-design and deliver involvement activities that are reflective of service areas and use the feedback, findings and results from these activities to shape future provision.

As one of the largest organizations in the Leeds Jewish community, LJHA aims to listen to, communicate and engage with both our residents and the wider community. We aim to make a positive difference to the Leeds Jewish community, support individual residents and enhance community cohesion.

2. Aims and Objectives

LJHA aims to have an inclusive approach to involvement through:

- Ensuring that there are a variety of different opportunities for residents to influence the services they receive, and at various different levels.
- Developing innovative methods designed to increase the opportunities for residents to become more actively involved in the scrutiny of LJHA's services
- Enabling training opportunities that will empower residents to be involved in improving homes and their communities.
- Providing resident-led scrutiny which demonstrates Value for Money for both residents and the organization.

- Providing a range of accessible activities for residents to influence the service.
- Engaging with residents in the ways they are most comfortable with, and which reflect their needs and preferences.
- Embedding resident involvement across the organization
- Developing the capacity of residents so that they have the information, knowledge and confidence to become involved and influence decision making within LJHA.
- Developing new and innovative means by which residents can get involved.
- Ensuring resident scrutiny is visible at the highest level of Governance.

LJHA aim to deliver this policy through an inclusive approach to engagement and involvement by:

- Listening to our residents and staff.
- Looking at different ways and methods of work.
- Changing services that we collectively agree need changing.
- Using technology to improve communication.
- Benchmarking ourselves against other housing associations.
- Developing and supporting our residents and staff to achieve their potential.
- Identifying wider community groups and individuals to work with.
- Developing a range of ways to effectively communicate with these partners
- Ensuring that we are well-known by promoting the good work of LJHA to our partners.
- Encouraging our residents to make improvement suggestions in a variety of ways and forums.

We will achieve the above by:

- Delivering a service which reaches out to all residents, delivering services equally and inclusively.
- Developing feedback methods, and ensuring feedback leads to change which residents can trace and evidence.
- Collecting the communication preferences of residents for more effective involvement and feedback.
- Providing a menu of options of resident involvement.
- Developing a culture of ownership within LJHA, where residents' views are seen to be critical to service development and regeneration.
- Share with residents changes made e.g. "You Said We Did" on all resident feedback, as well as reasons for changes we couldn't make e.g. "You Said We Couldn't".

- Enhance the role of valued existing panels to support Operations Committee and Board assurance.
- Expanding our community-based and digital feedback.
- Developing ways to digitally capture resident transaction and interaction with officers, feeding comments into resident consultation on policies and services.
- Supporting and building the capacity of involved residents for effective engagement.
- Measuring success and monitor outcomes from all engagement through key performance measures.
- Increasing the numbers of residents engaged per year of this strategy.

3. Involvement Activities

LJHA will offer a range of ways for residents to become involved at a level which suits them. Engagement may be through structured or group-focused activity, or more informally through a variety of means.

Feedback and opinion will be:

- A two-way process of resident-staff and resident-Board collaboration.
- Acknowledged and the resident will be told how their feedback has improved resident services, or why their feedback is unable to be effect change.
- Easy-to-access and accessible.
- Based on a commitment to ensuring that residents are provided with the right level of information to help them make decisions and to give feedback.
- In line with our Communications Charter.

Residents in Governance

- The Board and Committees engage in setting LJHA's strategy and monitor the delivery of the strategy through information on performance and compliance. They agree action plans, manage risk & the financial impact within the business plan set by Board. Our Operations Committee sets and monitors resident services, standards and policies including our Resident Involvement Strategy.
- LJHA actively encourages residents onto committees. Residents who wish to engage are recruited for their skills and experience. LJHA will offer opportunities to those expressing interest who have some of the skills required, to enable them to enter formal training and secure their place in our governance structure by interview as vacancies occur.

Resident Consultative Group

The Resident Consultative Group (RCG) is our consultative panel, functioning as a resident body with the capability to be a critical friend strategically and positively challenging the organization's services and policies.

The RCG can influence:

- The corporate plan.
- Procurement contracts for resident facing services.
- The content of the annual report to residents.
- Performance improvement.
- Accountability for disposal, demolition or changes in management services.
- Resident-facing strategies and policies.
- How LJHA can review and deliver the 6 commitments in the NHF Together with Residents Charter, and the 7 areas of the Charter for Social Housing.
- The formation of Hot Topic Group 'task and finish' reviews.
- The work that Resident Ambassadors may perform.

The RCG may act as a sounding Board for resident opinion by officers wishing to change or develop a service or resolve a resident facing problem. They will give their opinions on all matters related to new regulatory and legal changes which will impact on LJHA and residents. The group may review and suggest service standards and policies following research with a wide range of residents in Hot Topic Groups.

The RCG may report to, or advise the Board and/or Operations Sub-Board on some or all of the below:

- The delivery of the regulatory consumer standards, providing the Operations Sub-Board with assurance of delivery.
- The delivery of this resident involvement strategy, progress and outcomes.
- The quarterly report on the activities and impact of resident involvement
- Views on an annual report on engagement, complaints, equality & diversity outcomes.
- Key Performance Indicators or service standards which matter to residents and can trigger a Hot Topic Group review /investigation, when they have concerns.
- Their views on forthcoming regulatory or legal requirements which are housing on consumer-related.
- Any proposals which may demolish, dispose or change the management or delivery of our services, setting out the advantages and disadvantages of proposals to residents and to LJHA.
- Complaints made and responded to, and lessons learnt as a result of complaints being made.

Resident Ambassadors

Resident Ambassadors are residents who are interested in reviewing and improving services and engagement in the immediate vicinity of their homes. They may represent a street, a block of flats or a collective of residents with a common trait/interest.

Our Ambassadors work with the LJHA to:

- Communicate issues of concern in the block, street or neighbourhood from their fellow residents. This may range from fly tipping and litter to tenancy or repairs-related issues.
- Listen and engage with neighbours safely on their opinions on LJHA services.
- Feed in information on communal services like gardening and cleaning.
- Feed in information about events and activities which LJHA could partner with.
- Undertake walkabouts or inspections (if practical) with relevant staff.
- Suggest materials for newsletters, the annual report, social media and the website.
- Feedback any information received from LJHA staff to their fellow residents, informing them of any actions which LJHA are taking as a result of their information and reporting.

We may invite our Resident Ambassadors to join our staff and help us gather data – resident to resident through research to support the detail required for LJHA service reviews and Hot Topic Group activity. They may gather opinions in discoverable by household and anonymously.

Hot Topic Groups

Resident-facing strategies, policies, service standards, or other operational initiatives will be reviewed in conjunction with residents. Hot Topic Groups are purposely designed to allow residents to provide focused ideas or opinions on a range of services which we provide to everyone, or where services have dropped.

Our Hot Topic Groups:

- Are designed to be task and finish groups with defined start and finish points
- Are composed of residents who have either been approached to their recent experience of service delivery, or have an interest in the area.
- May either be operational, looking at day-to-day matters, or may be strategic through, for example, the commissioning of services.
- Support the RCG through any 'deep dive' activity in gaining resident opinion
- May either meet in person through a regular series of meetings, or enable residents to engage in consultation via separate one-to-one conversations.

The amount of Hot Topic Groups existing at any one time may vary depending on the nature and purpose of the group. However, the number of Hot Topic Groups will be manageable based on the capacity of LJHA staff to support the administration of the

various groups. Volunteers may receive a small amount of training/awareness when commissioned and will receive staff support to complete the task.

Resident & Resident Associations

LJHA may consider the formation of a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA), composed of a representative group of residents, shared owners, and leaseholders. This may be constituted from existing Resident Ambassadors across LJHA properties, or may be an entirely different group of residents.

A TRA may, potentially, be granted funding and resources in order to allow independence and to pursue local community and neighbourhood initiatives. In return, we will invite them to gather data/opinions from their area of benefit, to support wider engagement. A TRA may work closely with the Resident Consultative Group.

Developing our Digital Engagement and Feedback

LJHA would like to harness the influence and potential of digital tools in order to increase the reach of our consultation and involvement. Where appropriate and possible, reducing our carbon footprint, we will try to minimize the use of paper-based communication, utilizing e-mail and online surveys to canvass the opinion of residents.

- Working with other organizations as appropriate, we will address digital exclusion amongst residents who are prevented from engaging with us virtually.
- We will maintain a resident-focused Facebook account to share information relevant to LJHA Residents and invite opinion and feedback.
- Our website will be developed to accommodate digital feedback, with feedback visible to residents, including what has been done as a result of that feedback.

We will develop our transparency to enable the website to show feedback and progress based on:

- a) Digital comments by residents on their opinions.
- b) Digital expression of resident priorities against corporate objectives.
- c) Using digital methods to explain policies & services and ask opinion on standards of service, etc.
- d) Board and Sub-Board papers.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

LJHA are committed to capturing the views of diverse or representative cross-sections of the community, and ensuring that every resident feels listened to and respected. We recognise the integral part that a culture of equality, diversity, inclusion plays in enabling us to communicate effectively and accessibly, whether in person or in writing.

LJHA are committed to:

- Ensuring that any engagement activity with residents is based on a culture of dignity, fairness, honesty and respect.
- Equality of opportunity by ensuring that expressions of interest in joining our resident forums are welcomed from everyone.
- Valuing the diversity and talents of all of our residents, and the positive implications this has for the impact of our resident engagement forums.
- Demonstrating our understanding of the different needs of our residents, including in relation to those with Protected Characteristics.
- Providing residents with accessible, clear and relevant information in a range of formats, including in response to individual communication preferences. This includes offering a range of ways for residents to contact us.
- Ensuring that we consult with residents in the completion of Equality Impact Assessments for relevant policies and processes, which may impact upon people with one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

Building Capacity to Engage Inclusively

Our engagement approach is based on a two-way relationship of learning, focused on improving knowledge and capacity.

LJHA are committed to educating and providing support to residents to build their capacity to be more effectively involved. We will do this by providing resident members of the Board, Sub-Boards and Resident Consultative Group with the appropriate skills and knowledge to effectively carry out their responsibilities at the highest levels of involvement.

This training may be delivered in various ways:

- In-house training on services and business areas, delivered by managers or Board members in order to understand how and why residents can challenge the organization.
- Via resident training opportunities delivered by the wider housing sector, such as the Housing Quality Network, Scrutiny and Involvement Network, National Housing Federation.
- Via peer-to-peer learning with involved residents at other housing associations. Through mentoring opportunities.

LJHA will also ensure that staff members are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to engage effectively with residents, whether through communication skills/customer service training, disability awareness training, or housing management training. We also foster a culture of peer-to-peer learning, providing staff with the opportunity to understand the integral part that resident engagement plays in the overall organizational strategy of LJHA.

Working in Partnership

We will work with Leeds City Council, Leeds Homes, national housing organizations, other housing providers and other partners to develop and share best practice in resident participation.

We will also take every opportunity to work with other Jewish organizations, and wider community and voluntary sector organizations in Leeds to plan and deliver joint engagement initiatives, showing how we are supporting the welfare and participation of our community.

4. Performance Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with residents to assess its effectiveness and relevance to the overall organizational strategy. Throughout the lifetime of this policy we will carry out impact assessments of resident involvement activities, which will capture the outcomes of each activity and how it has helped to make a difference to the LJHA service.

We will develop performance and outcome measures to measure and monitor resident engagement. We will involve our residents in decision-making on the setting of service standards for housing-related services, as well as monitoring these standards. As part of this, we will involve our residents in scrutinizing our performance and the making of recommendations to us as to how performance might be improved.

LJHA will develop and improve our recording of:

- The impact of resident engagement, including the numbers of new residents involved in one of our engagement forums.
- Resident engagement outcomes like improved performance, Value For Money, reduced waste or reduced cost, increased resident satisfaction and increased social value.

LJHA will:

- Consult with the RCG on measures of quality of the involvement service and our value for money and procurement strategies and policies.
- Ensure value for money features in all policy, service review, Resident Consultation Group, Ambassadors and Hot Topic Group outcomes.
- Ensure that resident engagement is measured in terms of our digital and face-to-face engagement activity.

All reports to Board and Committee will include a section within a report template, which includes the extent and detail of resident engagement. Board and Committee may challenge or reject those reports which they feel have not gathered or considered sufficient resident opinion.

5. Links to Other Key Documents

LJHA Complaints Policy
LJHA Equality & Diversity Policy
LJHA Organizational Strategy
LJHA Resident Involvement Flyer

Appendix: Together with Residents Charter – National Housing Federation

<https://www.housing.org.uk/topics/together-with-residents/>

There are 6 commitments in the resident charter, currently being piloted by 137 housing associations:

1. **Relationships** – housing associations will treat all residents and residents with respect in all of their interactions. Relationships between residents, residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
2. **Communication** – residents and residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organization is working to address problems, how the organization is run, and information about performance on key issues.
3. **Voice and influence** – views from residents and residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform decisions. Every individual resident and resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.
4. **Accountability** – collectively, residents and residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect their homes and services and the quality of the homes and services they provide.
5. **Quality** – residents and residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
6. **When things go wrong** – residents and residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents and residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.