



Rhondda

housing association | cymdeithas tai

Tenant Involvement

Our Commitment

2019-2023



OUR COMMITMENT

Rhondda Housing Association is committed to listening to and hearing the views of our tenants when developing and providing services. We know we may not always get things right, so our commitment is to listen and learn from our tenants' experiences.

This document provides information about our commitment, the involvement options available to our tenants, the benefits of involvement and our plans for resourcing, delivering and monitoring.



1 / Background

Regulations Guiding Tenant Involvement Activities

The Welsh Government Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations in Wales (2017) puts tenants at the heart of regulation and requires individual Housing Associations to show how tenants are involved in shaping services and influencing the decisions made by Associations.

This is supported by the *'Building a Safer Future'* Hackitt Review (*an independent review of building regulations and fire safety*) which argued for increased and easier access to information, greater tenant and resident involvement and improved ways to make services right (routes to redress).

A key feature of the Regulatory Framework is the 'Standards of Performance' that Housing Associations must meet. These standards are decided by the Welsh Minister, in line with section 33A of the Housing Act 1996. Performance Standard 2 requires Housing Associations to 'provide effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services'.

Meeting this standard requires the Association to:



Demonstrate how tenants are effectively involved in strategic decision making and shaping services in ways appropriate for tenants and the organisation.



Meet all applicable legal requirements, providing for the health and safety of tenants in their home.



1 / Background continued

Our Corporate Plan

Throughout our 40 year history, Rhondda Housing Association has demonstrated a strong commitment to involving our tenants and we are proud of this. However, we are also committed to continuous improvement and ensuring our activities and services are suitable and meet the needs of tenants.

As such, a key aim in our new Corporate Plan (Business Plan) for 2019–2023 is that



We will deliver tailored (personalised) high quality services to our tenants.



In order to achieve this we have set ourselves the following aims:

- We will regularly review our services and identify what we could do better in the future.
 - We will use customer information and feedback from our tenants to develop service standards that ensure we are delivering the right kind of services at the right time.
 - We will explore ways of making services easier to access, this may be in different ways and at different times that suit our tenants.
 - We will offer new and varied ways for tenants to take part, meaning more tenants can get involved.
- To deliver these aims, over the next 5 years we will:
 - Continually involve and consult with our tenants.
 - Raise awareness of tenant involvement opportunities and increase the number of tenants who are actively involved to 15%.
 - Provide tenants with relevant and timely information in a way that is suitable and easily available.
 - Identify and offer support with any difficulties with getting involved.
 - Provide training to ensure staff, at all levels of the organisation understand and support our Tenant Involvement Commitment in their day to day work.
 - Link Tenant Involvement with Community Engagement projects and encourage tenants to develop their skills and get more involved in their community.
 - Support and encourage tenants to become more involved through training and other support projects.
 - Keep this commitment under review, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of our tenants.



2 / Benefits of Involvement

We are committed to involving tenants in decision making, as we recognise the positive difference tenants make in improving and shaping the services that matter to them.

Tenants can support us to improve services, increase satisfaction levels, and offer good value for money, as well as offering support and mentoring to others and supporting the communities they live in.

This commitment puts our tenants at the centre of our service improvement plans and ensures we are honest, open and responsible in the way we work.



3 / Involvement Options

We recognise the importance of offering a range of involvement opportunities, which meet the needs of tenants and provide the chance for as many tenants as possible to be involved with us.

To achieve this and to deliver the aims of this commitment, we consulted with our tenants during spring 2019 on the different involvement options available.

Feedback from that process and other consultation exercises with staff and Tenant Board members, together with research into best practice, have resulted in the 'Menu of Involvement options' contained in this commitment.

This can be found on page 12, downloaded from our website at www.rhondda.org, available at our offices, or from Housing Officers.

Our commitment provides an opportunity for tenants to influence:

- **Policy decisions that will affect them.**
- The services they receive.
- **The Association's future priorities.**

We have 3 types of involvement:

Get Informed — Sharing information about our services and important issues with tenants, as well as promoting event and projects. This information will be available through our newsletter, annual report, our website and social media e.g. Facebook. This type of involvement requires a low level of commitment from tenants.

Get Together — Opportunities to improve services by sharing feedback and ideas at tenant events, community meetings, tenant and resident groups, through home visits and routine satisfaction surveys. This type of involvement requires a medium level of commitment from tenants.

Get Involved — Opportunities to review, influence and change strategies and services, through involvement in our Service Improvement Groups and Tenant Scrutiny Group. This type of involvement requires a medium to high level of commitment from tenants.



4 / Making Involvement Easy

We will offer opportunities that meet the need and interest of tenants, in ways that best suit them, while ensuring tenant involvement is at the heart of Rhondda Housing Association, at all levels and across all teams.

We will provide many opportunities for tenants to be involved with us. Enabling tenants to better understand our services and have meaningful input and influence, while building confidence and gaining new skills and experiences.

There will be some opportunities that require more regular involvement and group membership, but others that will be more flexible, such as local events and digital involvement e.g. through our website. We will cover 'out of pocket' expenses for travel and other reasonable costs to support tenants in attending and taking part in meetings, events, groups, conferences, training courses and other activities.



5 / Links to Community Engagement

This commitment is linked with the Community Development Plan, meaning that involved tenants can also take part in our other projects, such as Get Set, Get Skilled and BeActive.

These projects focus on tenancy support, skills and training and health and wellbeing. Being involved in itself, through any of the options, can help to build skills and confidence which may lead to involvement in other projects and activities.





6 / Tenant Involvement and Governance (Rules and Regulations)

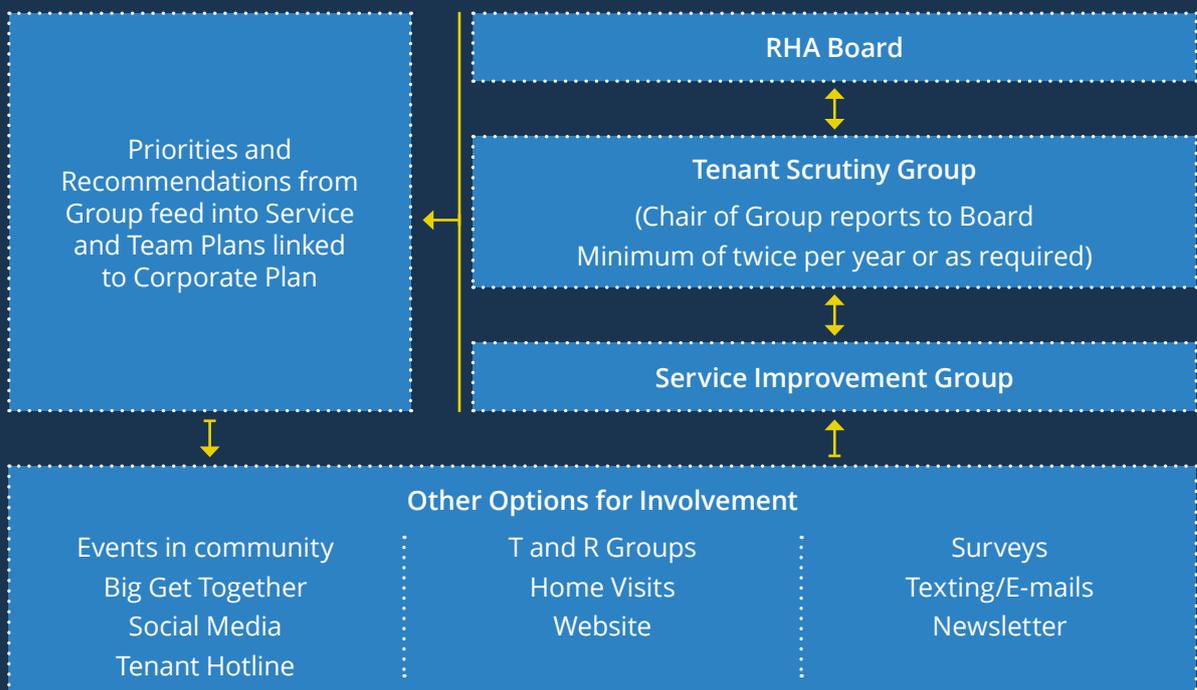
We will deliver greater scrutiny (assessment) of services through our new commitment, encouraging tenants to be more involved in reviewing and influencing services through our 'Governance Pathway'.

This pathway outlines the way tenants, staff and Board members will communicate, ensuring the Board is fully aware of current services and performance, tenant satisfaction and the issues that affect tenants.

Tenants who are involved digitally (Get Informed) or in their community

(Get Together) can progress to involvement in our Service Improvement Groups and Scrutiny Group (Get Involved) who feedback to and meet with the Board of Management and our Audit and Risk Committee. All services and policies reviewed and approved by tenants will hold our 'Tenant Approved' kite mark.

Tenant Involvement Governance Pathway



7 / Funding Tenant Involvement

It is important that we provide suitable funds to deliver our Tenant Involvement Commitment. An annual Tenant Involvement budget of £25,000 is made available and is used to fund events, venue hire, training, travel and other out of pocket expenses, promotional work and to support small community projects.

We have a dedicated Tenant Involvement Team of two officers (increased to three in 2019) working directly in the area of Tenant Involvement, who have responsibility for the delivery of this commitment.

However, staff across the whole organisation will be involved in making our commitment a reality. For example Housing Officers can encourage tenants to be involved and share any feedback with the team.



9 / Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

We will record involvement activities, monitoring the projects we deliver and use this information to ensure we are responding to what tenants are telling us.

Monitoring of our commitment will involve internal audits, update reports to both the Board of Management and Tenant Scrutiny Group, and feedback gained through involved tenants. Members of the Board of Management and our Audit and Risk Committee will also meet regularly with the Scrutiny Group, attending 'Question and Answer' style sessions based on subject important to tenants, identified through our surveys and Service Improvement Groups.

We will ensure tenants are fully informed of the difference their involvement has made through project updates, feedback from the Board of Management and using 'You said – We did' style feedback,

through Get Informed. We will actively listen, meaning we will 'Ask, Inform, Listen and Act'.

In July 2019 the Regulatory Board for Wales (RBW) published a report called 'The Right Stuff – Hearing the Tenant's Voice'. The report is the outcome of a review undertaken by the RBW in relation to tenant involvement and provides guidance for Housing Associations to consider. Our approach to developing this Commitment with our tenants and our aims and outcomes are consistent with the guidance provided in the report and this will continue to be used as a reference and guidance tool as the Commitment is delivered and continues to evolve.

ASK



INFORM



LISTEN



ACT



This Commitment will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the Tenant Scrutiny Group.



10 / Menu of Involvement Options

Menu of Involvement Options

Options	What does it involve?	How much time would it involve?	How would being involved in this benefit me?	How many tenants can be involved at any time?	Like the idea? Here's how to get involved...
Feedback through Social Media e.g. Facebook 	<p>Regular information on services and projects available to you.</p> <p>For example training courses, events and opportunities to get involved.</p>	Your time if you choose to take part.	<p>A really good source of up to date information on what the Association is doing or offering.</p> <p>You can feedback to us about information that you would like to see or use this to advertise your own events.</p>	No limit in number but must opt in.	<p>You can opt in or out at any point.</p> <p>On Facebook Rhondda Housing Association</p> <p>On Twitter @RHAHousing</p> <p>On Instagram @rhahousing</p>
Website 	Regular updates of important information related to Rhondda Housing Association or your tenancy.	Your time if you choose to read it.	You can feedback to us about the information that you would like to see or use this to advertise your own events.	No limit.	Keep an eye on our website www.rhondda.org
Newsletter 	<p>Annual newsletter where Rhondda Housing Association shares information on our plans, priorities and services.</p> <p>We will also publish tenant's pictures, stories or articles in the newsletter.</p>	<p>Your time if you choose to read it or contribute to it.</p> <p>Available online and in the post.</p>	Useful information, available to all tenants.	Shared with all tenants.	If you would like to help us produce the Newsletter then please contact Get Involved staff on 01443 424200
Tenant Hotline 	A place for you to leave your opinions and suggestions on our services, or anything you would like to see us doing.	Flexible times, from your own home and when you have something to share.	An opportunity for you to easily share your opinions and ideas with us.	Open to anyone who wishes to leave feedback.	Simply ring our hotline on 01443 424242 . If you'd like a call back, don't forget to leave your name and address.

Options	What does it involve?	How much time would it involve?	How would being involved in this benefit me?	How many tenants can be involved at any time?	Like the idea? Here's how to get involved...
Fun days in your community 	Small events in your area, where you get to speak to staff and discuss what matters to you.	1 morning a year. At a central venue in your community.	A chance to influence services and RHA's priorities that directly affect you or the area that you live in.	No limit.	Events will be organised by RHA and will be advertised locally and on RHA's social media.
Tenant Big Get Together 	Big annual get together where tenants and staff meet to discuss and agree Rhondda Housing Association plans and priorities.	1 day a year. At a central Rhondda Cynon Taf venue.	A chance to influence services and RHA's priorities that directly affect you or the area that you live in. An opportunity to talk with Management staff.	No limit.	The Big Get Together will be organised by RHA and will be advertised locally and on RHA's social media.
Tenant and resident groups 	A tenant group who meet regularly and have a specific interest in their local community.	Meetings in your community. Could be weekly or monthly depending on the group.	A chance to meet neighbour or socialise, as well as influence things that directly affect you or the area that you live in.	Anyone in the local community.	Your Neighbourhood Officer will tell you if there is already a group in existence. If not and you would like to set one up, you will need to have the support of some of your neighbours. Your Get Involved team can help with the set up.
Home Chat 	Home visits are carried out once every two years. Staff visit to chat with you about if you are happy in your home and to understand what services you need from us.	1 hour every 2 years.	Complete a short questionnaire and we can provide personalised information around your interests.	Anyone living in your home.	These visits are already carried out by staff and are part of our commitment to helping you manage your home.
'We did – you said' survey 	Only happen if you have received a service from us e.g. a repair or budgeting advice.	Your time if you choose to take part.	Share your views on how we are doing and ideas on how we could improve.	Open to all tenants who have recently received a service.	You will be contacted by phone or email when you have received a service from us, to find out how we did.

10 / Menu of Involvement Options continued

Options	What does it involve?	How much time would it involve?	How would being involved in this benefit me?	How many tenants can be involved at any time?	Like the idea? Here's how to get involved...
Text 	<p>Regular opportunities to take part in feedback surveys.</p> <p>Information sent directly to you about the services RHA provides and any other important information about your home or your tenancy.</p>	<p>You opt-in to receive information.</p>	<p>A really good source of up to date information about all the things the Association is doing.</p> <p>You can feedback to us about information that you would like to see.</p>	<p>Unlimited number but must opt in.</p>	<p>Contact the Get Involved staff on 01443 424200 or GetInvolved@rhondda.org</p> <p>You will also need to complete a short form in order to opt in.</p>
Emails 	<p>Regular opportunities to take part in feedback surveys.</p> <p>Information sent directly to you about the services RHA provides and any other important information about your home or your tenancy.</p>	<p>You opt-in to receive information.</p>	<p>A good source of up to date information about all the things the Association is doing.</p> <p>You can feedback to us about information that you would like to see or use this to advertise your own events.</p>	<p>Unlimited number but must opt in.</p>	<p>Contact the Get Involved staff on 01443 424200 or GetInvolved@rhondda.org</p> <p>You will also need to complete a short form in order to opt in.</p>
'You said-we did' surveys 	<p>Surveys will be undertaken every two months on themes that are important to tenants.</p> <p>We will try to involve a representative group of tenants.</p>	<p>Your choice to take part, from own home.</p> <p>Response by tablet, in person, by phone.</p> <p>Focus will be to provide information and receive responses via social media or e-mail (it is possible to carry out on paper in limited circumstances).</p>	<p>A chance to play a part in changing things which you have interest in.</p>	<p>Unlimited, but we aim to include at least 50 tenants who commit to complete the surveys.</p>	<p>Contact the Get Involved staff on 01443 424200</p>

Options	What does it involve?	How much time would it involve?	How would being involved in this benefit me?	How many tenants can be involved at any time?	Like the idea? Here's how to get involved...
<p>Area panels / Tenants and Residents Groups</p> 	Tenants who meet to discuss issues and ideas that are relevant to where they live.	Your time if you choose to take part.	Share you views on how we are doing and ideas on how we could improve.	Open to all tenants who have recently received a service.	You will be contacted by phone or email when you have received a service from us, to find out how we did.
<p>Service Improvement groups</p> 	Tenants who help us to agree the subject of surveys, look at the results and make suggestions about what should be changed. They share this information with the Scrutiny Group and Board of Management.	You opt-in to receive information.	<p>A really good source of up to date information about all the things the Association is doing.</p> <p>You can feedback to us about information that you would like to see.</p>	Unlimited number but must opt in.	<p>Contact the Get Involved staff on 01443 424200 or GetInvolved@rhondda.org</p> <p>You will also need to complete a short form in order to opt in.</p>
<p>Scrutiny Group</p> 	<p>Tenants who meet to examine our policies and our ways of working and also consider the suggestions made by the Service Improvement Group.</p> <p>This group shares information with the Associations Board of Management and our Audit Committee.</p>	Meetings at our offices. Weekly meetings for a set period throughout the year.	<p>Chance to influence our services.</p> <p>Receive training to improve skills.</p> <p>Gain knowledge of the work of RHA.</p> <p>Invited to attend Local / National meetings about around Housing issues.</p> <p>Invited to attend Housing related conferences.</p>	Unlimited number can express a wish to be involved, but meetings will be a maximum of 15 people at a time, with appropriate skills and training.	Contact the Get Involved staff on 01443 424200 if you would be interesting in joining the scrutiny group. Some training is needed.
<p>Board Membership</p> 	We have a Board which is based on the skills that each individual member can bring to it e.g. Accountancy skills, Housing knowledge. Board vacancies will be advertised and individuals who have the skills required can apply for a position.	<p>Monthly meetings, training days and information papers/reports to read.</p> <p>Meetings at our offices or other venues.</p>	<p>Receive training to improve your skills.</p> <p>Attend conferences.</p> <p>Sit on interview panels for new staff members.</p> <p>Gain knowledge in lots of areas such as Health and Safety, Repairs etc.</p>	Dependant on matching skills to a vacant board position and will be subject to a selection process.	Vacancies will be advertised on our website and Social Media with details of any skills that are needed.



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