

Tower Hamlets Homes

Resident Engagement Strategy 2021-2026

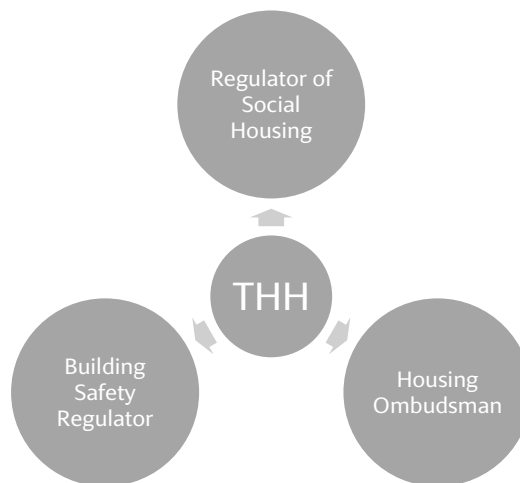
Our vision is to 'Create Great' – Great Service, Great Homes and Great Communities – and we cannot do this without engaging with our residents.

This means working across our various resident engagement options so that residents of all backgrounds can continue to shape services and hold us to account.

Our Regulatory Framework

Our strategy is designed to support us in delivering our obligations under the

- Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard as regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing
- The Building Safety Bill as regulated by the Building Safety Regulator and,
- The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code



Our strategy is underpinned by our pledge to:

1. Consult and involve residents at the earliest opportunity
2. Show the impact of engagement
3. Use clear and transparent language
4. Make it easy to become involved
5. Embrace technology
6. Support development opportunities

1. Consult and involve residents at the earliest opportunity

We will actively engage residents on key decisions which require consultation and set out clearly the scope of the consultation. We will develop guidelines to ensure all services follow common standards and ensure residents are engaged at the earliest stages.

2. Show the impact of engagement

We will provide feedback on the outcomes of engagement and consultation sessions. This will be done by:

- Providing information based upon a 'you said - we did' model to show how feedback is used to deliver change
- Publishing outcomes from consultation events.

3. Use clear and transparent language

We will work to ensure our communications with residents don't discourage them from engaging. We will do this by ensuring:

- Communication materials avoid jargon and are easy to understand
- Information is accessible to residents and open to scrutiny
- The Plain English Crystal Mark standard is adopted across all our communications.

4. Make it easy to become involved

We will continue to work closely with residents through our current engagement framework. We will also:

- Ensure the ways to get involved remain simple and are widely publicised
- Regularly consult with residents in line with the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment standard to review our engagement model
- Work with partners to ensure we engage a broad audience. For example, working with food gardens, employability and youth services or local charities and community groups serving residents such as those with disabilities
- Provide reasonable support for residents who may find getting involved difficult because of a disability, language barrier or childcare problems.

5. Embrace technology

We will embrace technology to provide residents greater flexibility on how and when they engage. We will:

- Provide digital engagement opportunities ranging from facilitating virtual Residents' Panels to 'Task & Finish' group meetings
- Use social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter to inform residents of our services and publish key information.

6. Support development opportunities

Effective engagement relies on residents having access to right skills and information. To support this process, we will:

- Provide residents training opportunities which support their capacity to engage and provide constructive challenge
- Support residents to acquire digital credentials recognising their skills and contributions enhancing their opportunities for employment
- Use tools such as reverse mentoring to build capacity and encourage greater involvement from groups that are under-represented

Opportunities for engagement

The strategy reflects the diversity of residents we serve and outlines the different engagement options available to suit people's involvement preferences.

The strategy is based on three levels of involvement

- **High level** - informing strategic business priorities, monitoring performance against Key Performance Indicators and undertaking scrutiny reviews
- **Medium level** –participating in specific consultation workshops to advise and provide feedback on a particular service area
- **Low level** –informed regularly on key updates and may participate in consultation surveys, attend roadshows and provide feedback digitally

The variety of engagement opportunities means we can reach out to a diverse range of residents. This enables some residents to engage strategically while others take on a less formal role but actively engage in community-based projects and support initiatives such as employment and skills training.

High level engagement:

- *Residents' Panel*

Residents' Panel is one of our key engagement forums. Members play an advisory role, monitor and help improve performance, make recommendations, and hold THH to account. The Panel consists of five tenants, four leaseholders and two tenants of leaseholders. The group welcomes observers. Information on current membership and past and future meetings are regularly published on our website.

- *Building Safety Forum*

A resident led committee focusing on building safety, the group was formed following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower. It meets quarterly and acts as a strategic forum where residents can influence how THH manages and engages residents on issues of fire and building safety and responds to changes emerging through public inquiries and legislation. The group is made up of resident representatives from across our involvement forums and is supported by relevant Directors and Heads of Services.

- *Tenant and Residents' Associations (TRAs)*

TRAs are important ways for resident views to be heard. Independent, locally based organisations led by residents, they are a positive force in the community. They help to build social capital by bringing people together while providing THH with valuable customer insight to help us improve services. Currently, we have 28 TRAs across Tower Hamlets. Information on how to set up a TRA is published on our website.

Senior leaders from THH meet with all TRAs at least twice a year at the Residents' Roadshows where they provide an overview of plans for THH and the role of residents in helping us improve.

Medium level engagement:

- *Service Development Group (SDG)*

The SDG is a pool of residents who participate in consultation activities throughout the year on different THH services. Using a 'Task & Finish' approach, the group offers flexibility to residents who want a degree of formal engagement but cannot commit to more structured forums. Information on these projects and details of past projects are published on our website.

- *Localised engagement on High Rise Blocks (Building Safety)*

The draft Building Safety Bill will require landlords to have dedicated engagement strategies for residents in High Rise Residential Blocks (18m and above). These strategies will facilitate localised engagement in individual blocks will aim to achieve the following objectives –

- a) Ensure residents are empowered to play an effective role in ensuring their building is, and continues to be safe;
- b) Set out the ways in which residents can get involved and the benefits to them from participating in engagement on building safety;
- c) Identify the building safety information residents wish to be provided with and the ways in which this should be provided;
- d) Establish methods of improving our approach to engaging with residents in relation to the safety of their home;
- e) Clarify our responsibilities and residents' responsibilities to ensure their homes remain safe.

Low level engagement:

- *Selective participation in key events/consultations*

Some residents may not want to regularly attend meetings or events. Signing up to our Getting Involved register enables residents to engage at a lower level of commitment. This may range from receiving updates via emails on projects to occasionally participating in surveys or attending roadshows.

- *Food Gardens*

We support residents who wish to maintain and improve food gardens across THH estates. This provides an opportunity where residents of all backgrounds can join in a collective initiative, working alongside each other in a positive community-minded way. It also allows us to engage residents that are often harder to reach.

Reporting progress against the strategy

Progress against the delivery of this strategy will be reported to the Board annually.