

**Signpost Housing Association
and
Signpost Care Partnerships**

**Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy
2008–2010
and
Action Plan for 2009-2010**

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1. Introduction

In April 2008 the management Boards of Signpost Housing Association (SHA) and Signpost Care Partnerships (SCP) approved a Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy for 2008-2009.

In consultation with residents this strategy has now been reviewed and updated and this incorporates an Action Plan for 2009/2010.

1.1 Group mission statement

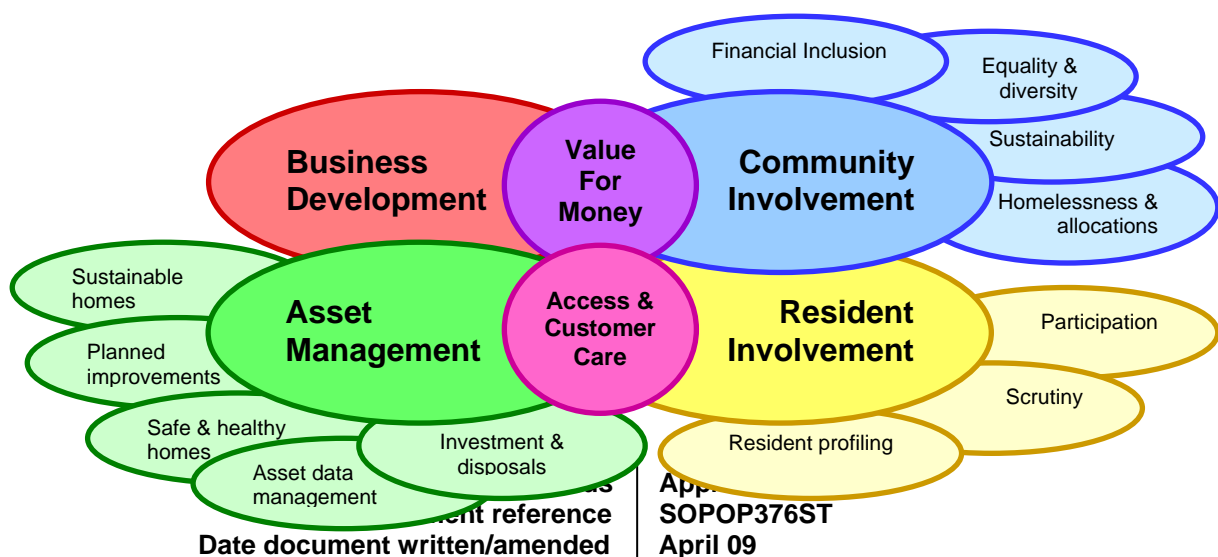
SHA and SCP, the associations, strive to achieve the Spectrum Group mission:

“To be recognised and respected for providing quality homes and services. Empowering people, supporting active communities and building better futures”.

1.2 Related strategies

The associations have six interconnected operational strategies that deliver against each part of the Group’s mission:

- Business Development Strategy - Providing quality homes (developing)
- Asset Management Strategy - Providing quality homes (maintaining)
- Value For Money Strategy - Providing quality services (cost effective)
- Access and Customer Care Strategy - Providing quality services (accessibility and care)
- Resident Involvement Strategy - Empowering people
- Community Involvement Strategy - Supporting active communities and building better futures



Progress against our strategies is reviewed regularly and annual action plans are developed to address any remedial or improvement actions required, in accordance with our Continuous Improvement Policy.

1.3 Related Group policies

This strategy contributes towards the Group's broad strategic theme of Tenants at the Heart, as set out in the draft Corporate Plan for 2009/2010:

"To ensure that the Group's tenants and residents have a strong and meaningful voice within the Group, that they advise and steer the strategic direction of the Group and take control of local decisions including budgetary spend".

The reviewed SHA and SCP Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy and updated Action Plan for 2009/2010 seeks to contribute to this theme by:

- Establishing a clear framework for resident consultation that empowers residents to contribute to the strategic direction and service delivery of the Associations;
- Broadens and deepens resident consultation;
- Ensures that the associations work in consultation and with residents to achieve continuous service delivery improvements.

The previous Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy included elements of financial inclusion and community involvement. These have now been taken out of the Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy Action Plan and are located within their appropriate strategy and relating action plan.

2. Context

The external factors in our operating environment that were identified in the last strategy were:

- The Hills Review;
- The Cave Review;
- The revised Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) on resident involvement;
- The Housing Corporation's 10 building blocks for involvement;
- The Housing and Regeneration Bill.

The strategy and accompanying action plan also takes account of The

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Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance, 2.5 and 2.7:

“(2.5) Housing associations must seek and be responsive to residents’ views and priorities:

- 2.5.1 reflecting these interests in their business strategy;
- 2.5.2 giving residents and other stakeholders opportunities to comment on their performance;
- 2.5.3 enabling residents to play their part in decision-making;
- 2.5.4 providing opportunities for residents to explore, and play their part, in how services are managed and provided.

“(2.7) Housing associations must demonstrate, when carrying out all their functions, their commitment to equal opportunity. They must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups”.

It also takes account of the Housing Corporation Circular 05/07, Housing Corporation requirements in relation to resident Involvement (May 2007).

Since last year the additional external factors identified are:

- The establishment of the new regulatory body, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA);
- The National Housing Federation’s draft Excellence in Service Delivery and Accountability – Code for members.

The TSA will be producing their new National Framework Standards towards the end of 2009. Hence this strategy takes the Associations to the end of March 2010, the review of this Strategy and development of the subsequent Strategy will need to take account of the new regulatory requirements.

3. Review of Previous Strategy

The reviewed strategy for 2009/2010 builds on the previous Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy 2008–2010, approved by the associations boards in April 2008. Any outstanding actions are included in the new Strategy Action Plan for 2009/2010.

3.1 The challenges identified in the last strategy were:

- To further integrate resident activities into the community; actions to further this are now included in the Community Involvement Strategy

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- To increase resident representation
- To develop and train resident representatives
- To develop working relationships between residents, members and staff
- To understand more about our residents needs and aspirations
- To promote financial inclusion; actions to further this are now included in the Financial Inclusion Strategy.

3.2 Key achievements during 2008/2009 have been:

- The establishment of a West Area Residents' Forum, which drew in the new residents who transferred from Western Challenge
- The establishment of a new Community Fund, administered by a committee of residents, board members and staff, with a proportion of the budget being given to the West Area Residents' Forum to administer. Residents' have successfully spent the fund on many community based activities and groups across all the areas in which the associations work
- Greater resident representation in service level groups, for example PARRR (Planned and Response Repair Review group) and MARG (Maintenance and Review Group, set up specifically for residents in Independent Living schemes), and resident involvement in the Service Action Team and Policies and Procedure Review Committee. Focus groups have been established, drawing in those residents' who have not traditionally participated in the more formal structures; the Independent Living Consultation Group, the Disability Focus Group. Focus groups for black and minority ethnic residents', home owners and families and the young, are in the process of being established
- Training for residents' has taken place at various levels, external one-off events, single issue seminars, joint training with staff and board members and training delivered by staff at the 'Lite Bites' sessions. Through this we have achieved an improved working relationship between residents and staff
- A lot of work has taken place on financial inclusion that will now be consolidated in the separate Financial Inclusion Strategy. Examples during the year being; articles in every edition of Your Voice, promotion of the tenants' home contents insurance scheme, distribution to all residents of a leaflet on keeping your home warm, planned maintenance work on moving towards the Decent Homes Standard and improving SAP ratings, the recent North Dorset Credit Crunch Conference.

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Understanding who our residents are through our resident profiling exercise that commenced during 2008, will enable us to better direct resident involvement, so that it meets the needs of the broad spectrum of current residents. This will also contribute to the Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the associations Equality Action Plans.

During 2008 the associations carried out a STATUS satisfaction survey. A weakness identified in the survey was that residents did not feel that their views are taken account of sufficiently. This has been addressed in the both the action plan for this strategy and the separate STATUS action plan.

4. The Reviewed Strategy for 2009-2010

4.1 Consultation

In drawing up the strategy for 2009-2010 consultation has taken place with residents at the Residents' Annual Conference, seminars held during the year on 'What our customers think of us' and budgets, with both East and West Forums, the Service Action Team and the Residents Policy and Procedure Review Committee.

4.2 The Challenges for 2009/2010

Key areas identified by residents that have been built into the reviewed strategy are:

- To further Improve communication with residents so they are fully informed on what we propose to do and when it will be done, and if this changes give an explanation and inform them what we will be doing and when
- Closer consultation on service delivery management
- More engagement with residents from the other subsidiaries in the Group
- Increased liaison between the East and West Forums
- Involvement through outreach work, to engage geographically remote residents and those who are unable to engage through other ways
- To listen to residents and feedback on service improvements and changes resulting from consultation
- Positive promotion of resident involvement.

These have also been taken account of and have influenced the associations objectives for 2009-2010.

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4.3 The Objectives for 2009-2010

From the above consultation exercise, the identified objectives for 2009/2010 are:

- To review the structural relationships in our existing mechanisms for involvement
- To promote the arrangements for involvement across the Group
- More diversity in resident involvement
- Increased resident empowerment
- To ensure that residents have the appropriate training and skills in order to participate effectively
- Back to basics on service delivery
- Improving resident satisfaction on having their views taken into account
- To further embed resident involvement in the psyche of the association
- To accurately capture and record all resident involvement activities.

To address these challenges and achieve the objectives, the major activities we will carry out are:

- Engage in discussion with the existing Forums and residents' groups to review the current arrangements and agree a structure that is representative and democratic
- Work within the Group to establish the Spectrum Residents Group, that will actively scrutinise the business of the wider Group
- Find ways to further increase involvement of SCP residents
- Broaden the range of focus groups activity to achieve engagement with residents who are under represented. Use the Signpost 101 initiative and resident profiling to identify residents
- Devolve resident involvement budgets to the forums. Involve residents on the Service Action Team and the review of all policies and procedures. Engage with residents at early stages in key strategic decisions, for example budget setting
- To develop with residents a training programme from the current work being done on assessing training requirements. To ensure that all training is recorded and that the training programme is delivered in a variety of ways so that the maximum number of residents can take part. Procuring training in a way that delivers value for money
- Resident involvement on the Service Action Team will help the work of

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the team focus on the theme of 'back to basics'; which is about getting the core service delivery right first time. Improved communication, doing what we say we are going to do and telling residents what we have done, being the essence of what residents have expressed to us during consultation events

- We will positively promote resident involvement through branding the service using the mechanisms of Your Voice, with new residents, through the post new-tenancy visits and the 3-year rolling programme of visits to all residents
- Staff need to be aware of all the different ways that residents can participate and be promoting this in their day to day engagement with residents. Training will be one way of delivering this. Another mechanism, for example, will be the involvement of residents in team meetings and the induction process for new staff
- We will work with the Group to implement a standard mechanism for recording all resident involvement activity. This will enable the associations to evidence the impact of resident involvement, meeting KLOE requirements for an excellent service and achieving 2-star accreditation.

The accompanying action plan sets out the detail of the identified objectives and how these will be achieved.

4.4 Reviewing Progress

We will report progress on the Action Plan to residents through the new bi-monthly residents' representative newsletter, the quarterly newsletter distributed to all residents, Your Voice, and reports to the East and West Forum meetings.

A report reviewing progress on the 2009–2010 Action Plan will be presented to Boards in September 2009.

The Strategy will be reviewed with residents during January to March 2010 with a new strategy being presented to Boards.

4.5 Impact Assessment

An Impact Assessment of Resident Involvement during 2008/09 will be presented to subsidiary boards in June 2009 and Group board in July.

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An impact assessment of resident involvement will now be carried out on an annual basis.

5. Related Documents

1. Group Resident Involvement Policy
2. Group Resident Consultation Policy
3. Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
4. Group Continuous Improvement Policy
5. Access and Customer Care Strategy
6. Financial Inclusion Strategy
7. Community Involvement Strategy
8. Value for Money Strategy

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6. Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Signpost Housing Association and Signpost Care Partnerships Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy 2008-2010 Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
1. To review the structural relationships in our existing mechanisms for involvement				
Engage in discussions with the existing Forums and residents' groups to review the current structural arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree new arrangements that are representative and democratic • Implement the new arrangements ensuring that all parts of the structure have appropriate constitutions and terms of reference • Seek to actively engage and involve SCP residents in the formal structure 	1 1 3	June 09 July 09 March 10	J-AF HSM CRIO CRIO VP
2. To promote the arrangements for involvement across the Group				

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
Work within the Group to establish the Spectrum Residents' Group	• Advertise for expressions of interest in Your Voice	1	Complete	EB CRIO
	• Provide support for selection panel	1	April 09	
	• Provide any identified training for residents on the group	2	Sept 09	
Provide opportunities for more informal cross-resident discussions and meetings	• Promote Group Annual Residents Conference and ensure residents who wish to attend are able to	2	Sept 09	CRIO
	• Invite WCHA and MHA residents to SHA/SCP annual residents conference	2	Nov 09	CRIO
Work with Western Challenge on resident inspections	• Discussions on this already commenced, if agreement reached to progress timetable to be agreed	2	Started	CRIO
	• Provide training/support for residents who are to be involved	2	March 10	CRIO
3. To achieve more diversity in resident involvement				
Continue to support focus groups already established	• Ensure support provided for Independent Living, Support and Disabled focus groups to continue and strengthen throughout 09/10	1	March 10	HSM
Establish new focus groups for Home Owners, BME, Young People	• Use Signpost 101 and resident profiling to identify possible participants	1	Started	CRIO
	• Consult with identified participants most appropriate mechanism for running group	1	June 09	

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish groups 	1	Dec 09	CRIO
Increase the range of ways that residents can be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with residents investigate reward scheme for involvement 	3	Sept 09	CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider appropriate alternative ways that SCP residents can participate, consult with SCP residents and produce some ideas 	2	Sept 09	VP CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold at least six 'local conversations' at scheme/neighbourhood level 	2	March 10	HSM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate develop local estate agreements for involvement 	3	March 10	HSM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider revitalising email group 	4	Sept 09	CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use new Website to promote resident involvement, including use of on-line questionnaires (timetable dependent on that for implementing new Website) 	2	July 09	JS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide computer access facility in reception at Signpost House 	2	July 09	JS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ways of increasing use of Tenants Resource Centre in consultation with residents 	3	Sept 09	J-AF HSM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local estate inspections to be introduced across the stock, involving residents and local key stakeholders, to be recorded 	2	Sept 09	HSM
	Continue to promote and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold annual Residents Conference 	1	Nov 09

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
current annual and celebratory events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold annual Celebration Event • Garden Competition • Christmas lights, if residents wish to continue with this • Community Champions 	1 1 3 1	Nov 09 July 09 Dec 09 March 10	CRIO CRIO CRIO CRIO
4. To increase resident empowerment				
Devolve resident involvement budgets to Area Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss principles and arrangements with Forums • Build into work on revised formal structures • Agree with residents timetable to devolvement and seek to devolve as much decision making during 09/10 as possible • Work with Forums to develop budgets for 10/11 so that full devolution can take place from April 2010 	1 1 1 1	May 09 June 09 July 09 Oct 09	J-AF J-AF J-AF J-AF VP
Involve residents in the Service Action Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Action Team now established and Terms of Reference agreed • Seek participation from West Forum • Seek participation from SCP • Identify any training requirements by June 09 and deliver as training provided 	1 1 1	May 09 May 09 June 09	CRIO CRIO CRIO
Seek to establish a Resident Scrutiny Committee as part of new formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable/measurement as with Objective 1 			

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
structural arrangements				
Engage with residents at early stages of key strategic decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents Review Group for Policies and Procedures now established with Terms of Reference. Priorities for review and level of involvement agreed Regularly review the priority list for reviews and re-assess level of involvement Engage with residents in budget setting process at early stage, hold annual budget seminar with residents, Board members and staff Ensure that timetable for all key strategic decisions includes resident engagement 	2	Quarterly Oct 09	JW JW
Produce bi-monthly newsletter for resident representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce bi-monthly newsletter starting May 09 	2	March 10	J-AF
Consult and involve residents in production of annual residents calendar (which includes a report on previous year's performance) and future reviews of Residents Guide (issued as a handbook to all new residents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual residents calendar to be produced in November Residents Guide to be reviewed in November 	3	Nov 09	HSM
Expand current engagement activities to West Area Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish West Area PARRR (Planned and Response Repairs Review group) Discuss progress of this with West Area 	3	Sept 09	HSM
		3	March 10	CRIO

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	so that engagement develops as the West Area Forum develops			
5. To ensure that residents have the appropriate training and skills in order to participate effectively				
Develop a training programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete training needs forms • Produce a training plan for the year • Deliver in variety of ways to meet specific needs • Demonstrate that training has been provided in accordance with value for money 	1 2 2 1	April 09 May 09 March 10 March 10	CRIO CRIO CRIO JS
Record all training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all training is recorded in the Resident Training log 	1	March 10	J-AF VP
Produce all material/communications in 'plain language'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate alternative 'plain language' accreditations • In consultation with residents subscribe to appropriate accreditation 	3 3	June 09 July 09	J-AF J-AF
6. Back to basics on service delivery				
Agree with residents what areas of service need to be improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work of Service Action Team will inform this process • Work of Residents Policy and Procedure Committee will inform this process • Work of Scrutiny Committee when 	1	These are all ongoing activities	All

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	established will inform this process			
Improve communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep residents in the loop on service delivery activities, be clearer on when things will be done and if they are not done explain why and when they will be done. Evidence that we have done this 	1	March 10	All
7. Improve resident satisfaction on having their views taken into account				
Positively promote resident involvement through branding the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles in Your Voice throughout the year Post new-tenancy visits, commencing now 3-year rolling programme of visits, commencing now Web site; involve Residents Champion for new Website in development of this, Champion already identified Welcome Packs to be produced and gifted to new residents by Area Forums or local resident groups 	1 1 1 2 2	March 10 March 10 March 10 Sept 09 June 09	CRIO HSM HSM JS HSM
Inform residents on changes/improvements made as a result of consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles in Your Voice Information on new Website Reports in bi-monthly resident representatives newsletter 	1 2 1	March 10 March 10 March 10	CRIO JS J-AF

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information given to residents during rolling programme of visits Specifically feedback on outcome of surveys 	1	March 10	HSM
		1	March 10	All
8. To further embed resident involvement in the psyche of the associations				
Ensure all staff are aware of all different ways residents can engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce Resident Involvement 'pack' for all staff 	2	June 09	J-AF
Provide more opportunities for residents and staff to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve residents in staff induction programme Hold local office/team open days for residents to attend Arrange for staff to attend residents meetings, including Area Forums Hold five seminars for Board members, residents and staff Involve residents in staff conferences Hold at least one stock tour for Board members, residents and staff 	3 3 2 1 2 2	March 10 March 10 March 10 March 10 March 10 March 10	JW J-AF VP J-AF VP JS JW JW
Provide resident involvement training for all staff and offer to contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree training to be provided and how it will be delivered Ensure all staff trained Include resident involvement as part of staff 	1 2 2	April 09 June 09	J-AF JW

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Objective	Deliverable / Measurement	Priority 1-4	Target	Lead
	induction programme		March 10	JW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer training to contractors 	2		
Resident Involvement to be part of all local team meetings and 1-2-1's with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure resident involvement is part of all standard local team agendas 	1	Start April 09	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure resident involvement is discussed at staff 1-2-1 meetings 	1	Start April 09	All
9. To accurately capture and record all resident involvement activities				
Work within the Group to implement a standard mechanism for recording all resident involvement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHA/SCP have looked at TP tracked software 	1	Complete	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold demonstration of software across the Group 	1	April 09	CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree timetable for implementation if decision is to procure 	1	April 09	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree alternative mechanism if TP tracked is not to be used 	1	May 09	J-AF
Carry out an 08/09 Resident Involvement Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree standard Group approach for carrying out the audit 	1	April 09	CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out the audit for SHA and SCP in May 	1	May 09	JS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report results of Audit to June Boards 	1	June 09	JS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Audit to July Group Board 	1	July 09	JW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out any identified actions identified from the audit 	1	March 10	HSM
Ensure that all resident involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with SCP managers how to achieve 	2	June 09	J-AF

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activity in SCP is recorded in order to meet new QAF requirements	this			VP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide SCP staff with training/guidance on how to record involvement • Ensure that involvement is recorded 	2	July 09	CRIO
Produce a checklist to assess all venues to be used for resident activity to ensure they are accessible to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a draft pro forma checklist and consult with residents before adopting 	1	March 10	VP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a draft pro forma checklist and consult with residents before adopting 	2	June 09	CRIO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue agreed checklist with procedure for all staff to use when booking/arranging venues • Ensure that checklist is used 	2	July 09	CRIO
		1	March 10	HSM

JW = John Wright, Managing Director SHA and SCP

J-AF = Julie-Ann Foster, Divisional Director Housing Services

VP = Val Page, Divisional Director Support Services

JS = Jonathan Simmons, Policy and Customer Services Manager

CRIO = Community and Resident Involvement Officers, Elizabeth Baker (EB) and Kate Weeks (KW)

HSM = Housing Services Managers, Andrew Heath (AH) and Pauline Watts (PW)

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