

**Signpost Housing Association  
and  
Signpost Care Partnerships**

**Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy  
2010-2012  
and  
Action Plan for 2010**

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# 1. Introduction

In April 2009 the Boards of Signpost Housing Association (SHA) and Signpost Care Partnerships (SCP), to be referred to in this document as the Associations, approved the 2009-2010 Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy.

In consultation with residents this strategy has now been reviewed and updated for the period 2010-2012 inclusively and incorporates an annual Action Plan for 2010.

## 1.1 Group Mission Statement

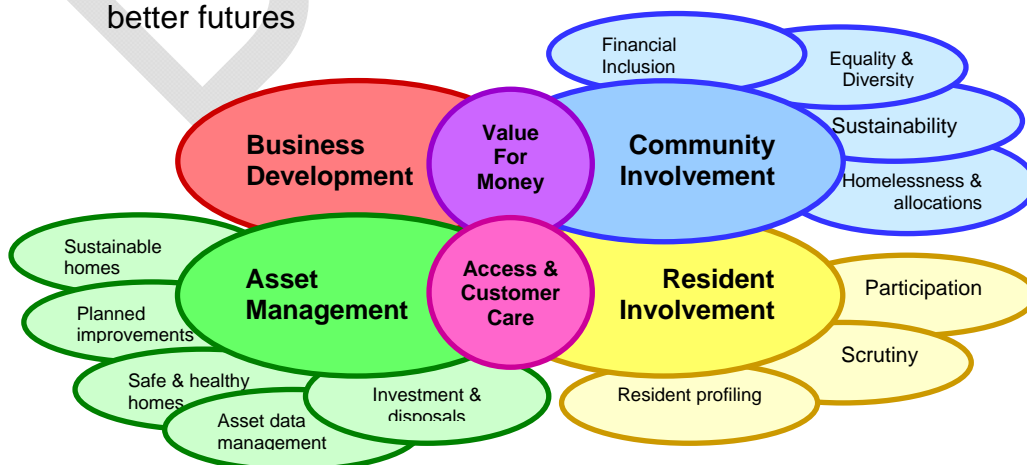
The Associations strive to achieve the Spectrum Group mission:

‘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 - Providing quality homes
- Asset Management - Providing quality homes
- Value For Money - Providing quality services
- Access and Customer Care - Providing quality services
- Resident Involvement - Empowering people
- Community Involvement - Supporting active communities and building better futures



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In accordance with our Continuous Improvement Policy, progress against our strategies is reviewed regularly. Annual action plans are developed to identify and address any remedial actions or improvements which may be required.

### 1.3 Related Policies

This strategy contributes towards the Spectrum Group's broad strategic theme of Tenants at the Heart, as set out in the draft Corporate Plan for 2009-2014:

"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 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 opportunities for resident consultation
- Ensures that the associations work in partnership with residents and local partners to achieve continuous improvements to service delivery.

The previous Resident Involvement and Participation Strategy included elements of Financial Inclusion and Community Involvement. These have now been removed and are located within the appropriate strategy and associated annual action plans.

This strategy sets out to acknowledge those people who are willing to work voluntarily to make a difference for others. It also recognises the responsibilities of the Associations as registered social landlords.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Context

This strategy takes account of:

- Housing Corporation Neighbourhoods and Community Strategy (2006)
- Sustainable Communities Act 2007
- Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England (Hills Report, February 2007)

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- Housing Corporation Circular 05/07: Housing Corporation requirements in relation to resident involvement (May 2007)
- People First: Delivering change through involvement (Housing Corporation, May 2007)
- Every Tenant Matters: A review of social housing regulation (Cave Review, June 2007)
- The Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE): Resident Involvement (July 2007)
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Housing Corporation Good Practice Note 16: Working with local authorities (April 2008)
- Excellence in Service Delivery and Accountability: Code for members (National Housing Federation, 2009)
- Quality Assessment Framework (Supporting People, April 2009)
- A new regulatory framework for social housing in England: A statutory consultation (Tenant Services Authority, November 2009)
- The Tenant Services Authority's Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (Tenant Services Authority, April 2010).

This document also takes account of the 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 provide 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”.

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## 2.2 The Tenant Services Authority – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

The Tenant Services Authority's (TSA) new regulatory powers came into effect for all social housing providers in England on 1 April 2010. The framework of service standards was developed in consultation with tenants, local authorities, housing associations and a variety of other partners.

The aims and approach to regulation, fundamental to the TSA include:

- Ensuring a fair deal for tenants
- Protecting taxpayers and other funders of social housing
- Being a modern and effective regulator.

Tenant involvement and empowerment features at the top of the list of six standards and consists of three required outcomes including:

- Customer service, choice and complaints
- Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding the diverse needs of tenants.

Associated with these outcomes are detailed specific expectations. These expectations should form part of the 'local offers' made to residents which in turn will be used as part of the framework for self-assessment. Involving residents is critical to this process.

## 2.3 Consultation

In drawing up the strategy for 2010-2012, consultation has taken place with residents and stakeholders at events, including:

- the Annual Stakeholder Conferences in Blandford, Exeter and Plymouth
- Seminars held throughout the year involving Board members, residents and staff
- the Annual Residents Conference
- Policy and Procedure Review Committee meetings
- Service Action Team meetings

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### 3. The Strategy

#### 3.1 Strategic approach

The Association's activity in this area is contained within a strategic framework made up of the following elements:

- Scrutiny
- Participation
- Resident profiling.

#### 3.2 Building on current achievements

The Associations already involve residents in a number of ways to provide opportunities for residents to influence service delivery. This strategy aims to build on this work, including:

- Supporting the Spectrum Residents Group (SRG) established as a scrutiny group in 2009 with SHA and SCP resident representation
- Supporting residents involved in ongoing work of the Policy and Procedure Review Committee and the Service Action Team
- Building on the work done with existing consultative groups for Independent Living, Supported Housing and Disabled residents by extending representation and including new groups for Young People and residents from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds
- Involving residents in decision making with colleagues in Signpost Services through the Planned And Responsive Repair Review Group (PARRR) and the Maintenance and Repair Group (MARG)
- Involving residents in staff events such as the Staff Conference and at local team meetings
- Consulting with residents on the Design Forum in the development of new homes and communities
- Consulting with residents at a local and scheme level through the existing Forums on future structures.

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### 3.3 Scrutiny

#### 3.3.1 Aims

The Tenant Services Authority policy of Co-regulation requires organisations to have in place effective resident scrutiny. Pivotal to this is the need for residents to be equipped with the confidence, capacity and skills which are required for such a role. Resident scrutiny should aim to put residents at the heart of decision making by challenging the organisation, making it accountable and providing meaningful recommendations for improvement.

In consultation with residents, the actions identified to achieve the aims include:

- Engaging in discussions with the existing Forums to review the current structural arrangements
- Work within the Group to support the work of the SRG
- Seek to devolve Resident Involvement budgets to area Forums
- Engage with residents during the early stages of key strategic decisions
- Agree with residents which areas of service need to be improved
- Generally improve communication with residents, communities and stakeholders
- Deliver on any identified actions from 2009 Resident Involvement Impact Assessment and carry out an Impact Assessment for 2010.

#### 3.3.2 Measures of success

The key measures for success in achieving effective scrutiny include:

- Providing an effective mechanism for resident scrutiny of key business activities in the form of the SRG, with representation from SHA and SCP residents
- Providing an effective mechanism for resident scrutiny of strategies, policies and procedures in the form of the Service Action Team and Resident Policy and Procedure Review Committee.

#### 3.3.3 Strategic Goals

- Achieve a minimum of 2 star accreditation from the Audit Commission

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## 3.4 Participation

### 3.4.1 Aims

By providing a range of opportunities and support options, residents are able to challenge the Associations and influence decision making at strategic and local levels. Through these structures, residents can make a difference to the way we deliver services and improve their quality of life in the longer term. This participation is critical the Associations' success as a business by seeking the views and delivering a service which meets the needs of people who live in and around our homes.

In consultation with residents, actions identified to achieve effective participation include:

- Continue to support focus groups which are already established
- In consultation with residents, increase the range of ways to be involved, including seeking to engage with residents aged between 21 and 35
- Continue to promote and support current annual and celebratory events
- In consultation with residents, consider producing a bi-monthly newsletter for resident representatives
- Expand current engagement activities with residents in the west area of our operations
- Working with residents to identify individual training needs and develop and deliver a training programme which will help to increase individual skills, capacity and confidence
- Promote Resident Involvement through positive branding of the service
- Produce a Resident Involvement statement which will be reviewed annually
- Ensure all staff are aware of the ways residents can be involved and engage with the organisation and provide more opportunities for staff and residents to interact together
- Include Resident Involvement as a standard agenda item at team meetings and at 1-2-1s with staff
- Ensure all Resident Involvement activity is recorded on the organisations Continuous Improvement database and cross referenced to meet Quality Assessment Framework requirements

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### 3.4.2 *Measures of success*

In consultation with residents the key measures for success include:

- Maintaining an in-depth and accurate database to monitor participation to inform decision making and measure the impact of Resident Involvement on our services
- Establishing consultative groups for those residents who have not traditionally participated
- Providing Resident Involvement training for all staff

### 3.4.3 *Strategic Goals*

- Achieve a minimum of 2 star accreditation from the Audit Commission
- 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile performance in Customer Satisfaction
- Increase in satisfaction from residents that views are taken into account

## 3.5 Resident Profiling

### 3.5.1 *Aims*

In order to provide the best possible service to our residents and understand their needs, it is vital for us to know who our residents are. The aim of the Resident Profiling initiative is to gather information about our resident population and analyse the data to inform business planning, resource allocation, and effective communication.

In consultation with residents, the actions identified to achieve resident profiling include:

- Actively engage and involve SCP residents in formal Resident Involvement structures
- Produce all literature and communications in 'plain language'

### 3.5.2 *Measures of success*

The key measures for success for this element of the strategy include:

- Having residents engaging with the Associations who are representative of residents as a whole, as measured by the annual Impact Assessment and Customer Diversity Audit.

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### 3.5.3 *Strategic Goals*

- Achieve a minimum of 2 star accreditation from the Audit Commission
- 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile performance in Customer Satisfaction

## 4. **Reviewing progress**

We will report progress on the Action Plan for 2010 on a quarterly basis through the resident newsletter, Your Voice. Reports will also be made to residents at Forum meetings east and west.

A report reviewing the half year progress on the action plan will be made at the Common Purpose Board meeting in July 2010.

Progress against the action plan will also be monitored by Managers through standard performance reporting measures.

The strategy will be reviewed with residents between January and March 2012 with a new strategy being presented Boards by April 2012.

### 4.1 **Assessing the Impact**

An Impact Assessment of Community and Resident Involvement during 2009 will be presented to the Common Purpose Board in July 2010 and the Group Board in July 2010.

A separate document for residents will be distributed with the autumn edition of Your Voice in September 2010.

## 5. **Related Documents**

- Group Policy: Resident Involvement (GCE251PO)
- Group Policy: Resident Consultation (GCE069PO)
- Group Policy: Equality, Diversity and (GCE115PO)
- Group Continuous Improvement Policy (GCE113PO)
- SHA & SCP Access and Customer Care Strategy
- SHA & SCP Value For Money Strategy

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