

Building homes,
independence
and aspirations



Customer Involvement Strategy 2021 - 2024



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Welcome to our Customer Involvement Strategy 2021 – 2024

Welcome to Home Group Scotland's Seventh Customer Involvement Strategy, which sets out how we will involve and consult with our customers, stakeholders, colleagues and others to ensure that our services are delivered to the highest standards.

We're committed to building homes, independence and aspirations.

Our strategic goals in Scotland are:

- Delivering our customer promise
- Building the right homes in the right places
- Being 20% more efficient across all of our services

Who better to appreciate what service excellence feels like, than those who receive it!

Adopting a customer led approach, is the tried and tested method for shaping services. We have come a long way but want to make sure that we continue to nurture great communications and deliver the best services possible. Our customer involvement opportunities are diverse and accessible - there are many ways you can take part - see part two for how to get involved with us.

Customer involvement is a golden thread that runs from the design of service delivery through to our governance. Our customer board members influence our strategic goals and the wider board engages regularly with our Viewpoint team of customers, who made significant contributions to this Customer Involvement Strategy.

Customers are at the heart of everything we do. You have made us what we are today, shaping who we are and how we deliver our services. On behalf of the Board and our staff, thank you. *Myriam Madden, Chair Home Group Scotland Board*

1. Introduction

Our customer involvement strategy demonstrates how we will work with customers to improve services and meet our statutory and regulatory customer involvement requirements. It sets out a choice of involvement opportunities for customers, the ways in which we consult with our customers, and how we will provide customers with feedback. We also work with customers to develop a Customer Involvement Action Plan to help us deliver our aims and objectives and capture our priorities each year.

Our Viewpoint team, a group of customers from across Scotland who scrutinise performance and services and make recommendations for change, will continuously monitor and review the strategy to ensure that it meets the needs of our customers and Home Group Scotland. We have a wide variety of opportunities that customers can have a say in a way that suits them? – find out more in part two (pages 12 - 14)

We aim to engage with and involve as many customers as possible in delivering our services effectively and evaluating our performance.

Changes to the world we work in, shifting priorities, and most recently the effect of coronavirus, mean we need to be more inventive about offering customers more opportunities to participate in involvement remotely. In 2020 we supported customers to engage using digital technology. This marked the beginning of the new normal for customer involvement. Customers unable to attend meetings can give us their views and opinions remotely, through virtual meetings, consultations and webinars. We continue to work with customers empowering them to use digital devices and services. We offer a mix of options (when we can) – face to face and digital or a mix of both.

We are committed to working in partnership and involving our customers in a meaningful and effective way. Our strategy aims are to:

- provide a range of customer involvement, engagement and consultation opportunities to examine the services we deliver, focusing on customers' key issues
- offer decision-making opportunities to all our customers
- deliver good two-way communications and quality information using a range of formats to provide access for all our customers
- increase levels of customer satisfaction
- increase our culture of customer involvement, engagement and participation throughout Home Group Scotland
- increase mutual trust, respect and partnership working between colleagues, customers and other stakeholders
- maximise customer involvement activities for all our customers, tackling discrimination and ensuring inclusion and equality.
- offer affordability and value for money for our customers

2. Background

Home in Scotland Ltd (Home Group Scotland) is part of Home Group and provides affordable housing to communities throughout Scotland. We currently manage 5049 homes for social rent, mid-market rent and provide factoring services to owner occupiers from Dundee to Dumfries, with local teams in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries & Galloway and Dundee. Our geographical spread of properties, and range of house types, represent the diversity of our customers, and the challenges of developing a customer involvement strategy that fairly represents our varied customer base.

We believe our customer involvement strategy demonstrates a variety of ways to make sure that our customers can work alongside us, using methods that involve everyone fairly, no matter where they live. In our everchanging world our strategy will continue to evolve.

Working with customers is vital to delivering improved services and ensuring that customers feel able to influence the decisions we take. We understand that customer involvement must be at the heart of our culture and be embedded in the working practices of every colleague. This strategy sets out how we will work with customers to ensure opportunities are provided to influence the decisions made about our homes and communities.

3. Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter first published in 2012 was developed by tenants for tenants as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and was updated in 2017. It sets out the outcomes and standards that Home Group and all landlords in Scotland are expected to meet, and the levels of services customers should expect from Home Group in Scotland.

The Charter covers 16 key areas including participation and communication. For more information, or to compare landlord performance, why not visit the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) website at www.housingregulator.gov.scot

In engaging with customers, the Charter seeks to ensure that customers:

- can participate in the decision-making process
- are satisfied that their views and priorities are reflected in their landlord services
- are given opportunities to be involved in developing, monitoring, assessing and reporting on the quality of the housing services the landlord provides
- have a range of methods of getting involved – including ways suitable for those hard to reach or seldom heard
- can get involved – if and when they want to – at levels they feel comfortable with
- get support to build their capacity for more effective involvement
- can take part in reviewing opportunities for involvement to ensure that they work

Our Customer Promise and the Charter

Our customer promise sets out the services our customers can expect us to deliver. We use the customer promise and the Charter as a measurable framework to work within, improving the services we deliver. We invite customers to be involved in monitoring our Customer promise performance, making recommendations for improvement.

Our customer promise



...to provide a safe place to live

- We'll guarantee your home meets all fire safety standards and contains a working smoke alarm
- We'll make sure gas and electric safety checks are carried out in the required timeframe - it's your responsibility to allow us access to carry out these checks
- We'll make sure your home is secure and all external doors fully meet the relevant British Standards



...to deliver a reliable repairs service

- We'll aim to attend emergency repairs in six hours and make sure any damage is made safe
- We'll aim to resolve all standard repairs in 14 days
- We'll keep you updated on the status of your repairs and maintenance work and share all relevant information



...to care about you

- We'll make our complaints process easy to access and simple to understand
- We'll make sure our colleagues have the relevant up to date skills and training
- We'll recruit caring colleagues who understand their customers' individual needs and can offer the support needed



...to help communities grow

- We'll make local investment to support communities to thrive
- We'll carry out inspections to make sure your neighbourhood or service is clean and tidy
- We'll take strong action where anti-social behaviour happens and work closely with partners to tackle incidents



...to tell you where your money goes







- We'll tell you how your rent and service charges are calculated each year
- We'll tell you how and why we make decisions on large projects and spend from head office
- We'll tell you how and why we spend money on your home and community



...to work together with customers and partners

- We'll help you contact agencies who can offer specialist advice, such as the police, charities and your council
- We'll work with partner organisations to offer you full support
- We'll work with you to receive feedback and improve our services

Matching our customer promise to the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes

Customer Promise	Scottish Social Housing Charter outcome(s)
 to provide a safe place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 - Quality of housing ▪ 5 - Repairs, maintenance and improvements ▪ 6 - Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes
 to deliver a reliable repairs service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 - Communication ▪ 4 - Quality of housing ▪ 5 - Repairs, maintenance and improvements ▪ 7, 8 and 9 - Housing options ▪ 10 - Access to social housing
 to care about you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 - Equalities ▪ 2 - Communication ▪ 11 - Tenancy Sustainment
 to help communities grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 - Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes ▪ 13 - Value for money
 to tell you where your money goes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 - Communication ▪ 3 - Participation ▪ 13 - Value for money ▪ 14 and 15 - Rents and service charges
 to work together with customers and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 - Communication ▪ 3 - Participation

4. Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

This Act has the objectives of “...safeguarding the interests of consumers, supported improved quality and delivering better outcomes for communities.”

Under the Act, landlords must consult with customers, applicants, Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) and anyone else they want, if changes are to be made to the way we let our homes (allocation policy).

5. The Legal Framework - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gave customers and customer groups the right to be involved and to take part in decisions which affect them. Other laws have strengthened customers’ rights. The Act also places duties on landlords to ensure

there are ways for customers to get involved in decisions and to support and resource customer involvement – (also referred to as tenant participation). For additional information go to www.scot.gov All social landlords must develop a participation strategy with customers and put it into practice. At Home in Scotland we refer to this as a Customer Involvement Strategy.

6. Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR safeguards and promotes the interests of all customers of social landlords in Scotland and uses the Charter to assess how all landlords perform. The SHR expects landlords to put customers at the heart of their organisations. How Home in Scotland performs will be monitored every year by the SHR. You can view our performance and compare it to other landlords at <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance>. The Charter and SHR require that Home Group Scotland have arrangements in place to make sure that customers can scrutinise and help improve our performance, and influence decisions about policies and services.

The Charter gives customers more power to hold landlords, including Home Group Scotland to account. Every year we provide evidence to the SHR on how we have achieved the Charter outcomes. This report is known as the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). The SHR publishes an annual report on landlord performance. The SHR's approach highlights the importance of our customers being involved in assessing and monitoring performance standards.

The SHR requires Home Group Scotland to:

- agree our approach to self-assessment with customers
- ensure this approach is effective and meaningful and publicised to our customers
- demonstrate how self-assessment is being implemented
- provide a statement of how we will involve customers in self-assessment activities

We have involved customers in identifying approaches which will work best for them in Scotland and learn from the experiences of customers in other areas within Home Group. Our customers continue to be involved in setting their priorities and agreeing the scrutiny methods.

We are always looking for new and inventive ways to get customers more involved, and give their views. Customers' views are crucial in making sure that we deliver the services customers want. We plan to involve more customers in areas such as the design of new homes and issues such as energy efficiency.

7. Our Commitment to equal opportunity

The Scottish Social Housing Charter states that landlords should ensure that every customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

In compliance with the Equality Act 2010, Home in Scotland has a duty to:

- protect against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- develop equal opportunities between those who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not
- adopt good relations between those who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not

We are committed to provision of services to customers in an environment free of discrimination, harassment, stigma and victimisation, and are determined to ensure that all customers feel able to participate and have their views heard. In order to achieve this, we will:

- develop creative ways of including customers from hard to reach groups and those usually less likely to participate
- ensure that meetings, consultations and other events are hosted in barrier free, accessible venues
- offer customers access to materials in a variety of formats and languages on request
- provide free, appropriate transport to meetings where required
- ensure that all customers are treated, and treat others with respect and dignity

8. How this strategy was developed and who was involved

Home Group Scotland have been working with the Scotland Viewpoint team to build a tailored menu of involvement and engagement opportunities that customers can participate in, at levels that they are comfortable with.

A Viewpoint team (for more info on Viewpoint or how to join see page 12) was set up in 2014 and one of its roles was to review and monitor the Customer Involvement Strategy and action plan, supported by colleagues. This is a working document and is continually reviewed. This strategy also sets out the processes we have in place, and available resources to support the strategy, and to make sure it is successful.

Producing the 2021 -2024 strategy has been done through virtual meetings, due to the impact of Covid-19. Additional information has been included from customer consultations and satisfaction surveys regarding preferred methods of engagement, barriers customers face when trying to participate, and how satisfied or dissatisfied customers feel about opportunities to participate. We also commissioned the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Scotland to assess our strategy, making recommendations for improvement which have been included in this version.

We have listened to what customers tell us is important to them, offering preferred, effective, methods of delivering meaningful information and ways to communicate with us.

This strategy builds on the successes of earlier Customer Involvement strategies, recognising the need to work with customers who may not be social renting customers. As introduced with the Scottish Social Housing Charter, 'other customers' include (but are not limited to) mid-market renting customers, factored owners, homeless people and applicants for housing. It also extends to people who are affected by our estate management services or share common areas with our customers and those people affected by antisocial behaviour, and recognises that to improve services based on customers' experiences, there is a need to build a strong, lasting relationships through communication, engagement, involvement and scrutiny.

In 2019 Home Group Scotland were very pleased to achieve two National Good Practice Awards – Runner up for Tenant Participation Champion of the year Organisation, and Tenant Participation Champion of the year (Newly Involved Customer). We will continue working with customers to develop best practice examples in engagement and involvement.

A summary of this Strategy will be published and issued to all our customers. This full Strategy is available on request and on our website at www.homegroup.org.uk/getinvolved.

9. Benefits Home Group Scotland aim to achieve through customer involvement

- giving customers a voice
- empowering customers to hold Home Group Scotland to account
- happy contented customers
- customers will be more willing to engage with Home Group Scotland
- reassurance that we make customers feel comfortable about getting involved
- increased levels of customer scrutiny to support improvements

We will produce an annual impact assessment report which sets out how customers have changed, shaped and influenced the way we work across Home Group Scotland. The report will include customer value for money assessments.

We have created You said, we did reports where we will record changes from consultations, workshops etc. and will feature them in Homelife magazine, the Charter Performance Customer Report, rent consultation newsletter and other performance publications.

10. Timescales for completion of actions set out in the strategy

Our annual action plan sets out our target timescales for all actions agreed in year 1 (see part 3).

11. Monitoring our customer involvement activity

Our Customer Involvement Strategy will be reviewed every three years, and as a working document will continue to evolve.

The Scotland Viewpoint Team will review progress with the Customer Involvement action plan twice each year. The action plan will be updated on an annual basis and communicated to all customers via our website www.homegroup.org.uk and our performance report.

A review of progress will be published in the annual Customer Charter Report and other performance newsletters.

We will produce an annual impact assessment report which sets out how customers have changed, shaped and influenced the way we work across Home Group Scotland.

We have created You said, we did reports where we will record changes from consultations, workshops etc. and will feature them in Homelife magazine, the Charter Performance Customer Report, rent consultation newsletter and other performance publications.

The action plan has been developed in consultation with our Viewpoint team and other customers. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects best practice and to give our customers the opportunity to comment on whether the Involvement strategy is working effectively.

12. Links to other strategies/policies relevant to Customer Involvement

Below is a list of Strategies and policies with specific involvement elements which you may be interested in learning more about. Summary policies can be provided on request to the Lead Engagement Advisor for Scotland on 0191 731 1892 or at eveline.armour@homegroup.org.uk

- allocations policy
- anti-social behaviour policy
- communications policy
- complaints, compliments and comments policy
- equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- factoring policy
- neighbourhood and estate management policy
- safeguarding policy
- recruitment and resourcing
- volunteering

PART TWO

13. How to get involved with us

Our customers' views are the heart of all customer involvement and are vital in ensuring that we are consistently providing and monitoring quality services. We want to deliver services that meet and exceed the expectations of our customers. A menu of involvement opportunities has been developed to encourage customers to participate, offering a variety of ways.

Involvement – a menu of opportunities

Working with you to shape our services

To find out more about any of the activities listed below, or to ask about how you can get involved contact Eveline Armour, our Lead Engagement Advisor for Scotland on 0191 731 1892 or email eveline.armour@homegroup.org.uk

- **Home Group Scotland Board**

You can have a say on how Home Group Scotland is run. We have customer members on the Home Group Scotland Board, who are selected through a recruitment process, ensuring that customer involvement runs right at the heart of our decision making. Home Group Scotland Board are responsible for agreeing strategy, policy and financial decisions, but also delegate management of the business to our Director for Scotland.

- **Viewpoint Team**

You can get involved in helping us set policy, monitoring our services and ensuring that we're doing what we say we do. Meeting at least every two months, the Scotland Viewpoint team scrutinise our services and monitor our performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter, our peers and our Customer promise.

- **Customer Forums**

You can be involved nationally. We will launch our Customer Forum for Scotland in 2021, this was delayed due to the pandemic. However, our national Forum meets four times a year and includes involved customers from across Home Group. You can get involved in our Forum in Scotland designed to drive improvements to meet with our customer promise. Our Customer forum will provide face to face responses to customer queries, are attended by senior leaders, and Scotland Board members.

- **Open house meetings**

You can take part in local meetings in your community where you can meet with colleagues to discuss tenancy matters and involvement opportunities. We will write to let you know when the open house meetings are being held in a community near you. We will be trialling some virtual open house events during 2021.

- **Customer promise assessments**

You can become a customer promise assessor and work with colleagues to assess how well we're doing at delivering our customer promise to customers at a local level. Customers grant neighbourhoods gold, silver or bronze awards based on customer feedback. Improvement plans are agreed and tracked by Viewpoint. Home Group

Scotland colleagues action improvement plans and provide feedback. For more on our customer promise see pages 5 – 7.

- **Estate walkabouts**

You can join our housing managers, maintenance surveyors, other colleagues and agencies e.g. local council, Police and contractors on estate walkabouts. We use walkabouts to look at the overall appearance of your surroundings including communal areas and open spaces. Customers can make recommendations for improvement. Housing managers will write to let you know the dates and times for estate walkabouts in your neighbourhood, and how you can get involved.

- **Equality and diversity**

You can join Life Swap interactive sessions enabling participants to see life through the eyes of others. Life Swap members tell their stories, inviting others to ask questions that they may usually be afraid or too embarrassed to ask. Many of our Life Swappers become Home Group Role Models too. Life Swap and Role Models help to reduce stigma, challenge stereotypes and break down barriers between different groups.

You can also apply to join our new National Customer Equality and Diversity Steering Group where customers will lead on creative and innovative ways to raise awareness of diversity issues and influence Home Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda.

- **Customer insight, learning from complaints and satisfaction surveys**

You can give us your feedback on services. Our Customer Insight team or research partners will contact you at least once a year to find out your views on the quality of service and let you share your customer experience.

You can give your views on how well we perform against our customer promise, our repairs service, and anything else you would like to tell us about. The feedback we receive from you provides us with insight into what we are doing well and where we need to focus improvements.

In addition to regular customer satisfaction surveys - every three years, we ask customers from all over Scotland questions about the quality of our services. Some questions are set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). Customers' responses are part of the information we feedback to the SHR every year and publicise through customer performance reports and on our website. However, we want to go further than this, for example by carrying out other consultations to find out more about how our customers view the affordability of our services. You can help by participating in our consultations and surveys.

- **Publication workshops**

You can influence the design and content of publications by taking part in workshops, keep an eye on our newsletter and website for dates.

- **Kiss groups**

You can ensure that written communications are informative, relevant and easy to read by taking part in KISS (keep it short and simple) groups

• Recruitment

You can be part of a recruitment panel to help to recruit new colleagues. You could help us to find the right person for the job by supporting the recruitment process. You will be able to speak to prospective colleagues. All training is provided.

• Digital involvement

You can give your views and opinions digitally by emailing us or registering for **anyone@home** email eveline.armour@homegroup.org.uk to register

You can get help to use digital devices, training and get online

You can take part in many customer consultations using SurveyMonkey

You can access services using My Home Account

You can attend virtual meetings with us. We will continue to explore other options to maximise opportunities for virtual customer involvement.

• Value for money

You can have a say in how the rent money we collect is spent. You can get involved in scrutinising our services. Customers will be given training to help them, and asked if they believe the services we provide represent good or poor value for money. We will also ask you about how affordable your rent and service charges are.

• Scrutiny

You can be involved in scrutiny activities to examine that we do what we say we do. Several of the involvement options we have are methods of scrutiny of our services. Scrutiny and self-assessment go further than engagement or involvement, giving customers opportunities to review processes as well as results. Viewpoints team, estate walkabouts and customer promise assessments are examples of our well-established scrutiny opportunities for customers.

If you want to find out more, please contact Eveline Armour on 0191 731 1892 for an informal chat.

14. Communications

• How will we communicate with you?

We asked customers how you prefer us to communicate with you. Feedback from surveys and consultations identified the following preferred methods of communication:

We will:

- write letters
- hold face to face community meetings
- send information to everyone on our digital group anyone@home
- consult with customers using SurveyMonkey, anyone@home and offer face to face meetings where possible
- offer a range of digital methods to communicate including an easy to use website, customers surveys and other applications
- provide digital question and answer sessions
- offer virtual customer meetings whenever possible
- provide training and support for digital meetings
- publish information via

- newsletters
- consultation feedback
- our website www.homegroup.org.uk
- social media

You can influence the content of publications including Homelife magazine, the annual rent and service charge consultation newsletter and Customer Charter Report by taking part in workshops. For more info contact Eveline Armour on 0191 731 1892 or eveline.armour@homegroup.org.uk

• What we will consult on?

We will always consult with customers on the following:

- changes to policies and procedures regarding housing management and related services, including rent and service charges, repairs service, allocation of houses, estate management, anti-social behaviour and tenancy management
- service standards relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance
- customer Involvement strategy
- any proposals for a change in landlord in accordance with S115 (1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

• How will we consult with customers?

We are adapting and flexing our consultation methods to take into account changes in our customers lives, technology advances and the increasing need to deliver services remotely. We offer a range of consultation methods including:

- Virtual open meetings as well as face to face local community meetings
- Telephone, on-line and face to face surveys
- consultations on anyone@home
- ask customers to provide feedback via newsletters/publications
- my home account
- surveyMonkey
- letters

• Routes to decision making and reporting consultation outcomes to Board and managers

Feedback received from customers is analysed and outcome reports are published for customers, our Business Management Team and Home Group Scotland Board. We also publish “You said, We did” reports which are then sent to all relevant customers, where applicable, or in the case of national initiatives to all customers.

• How we keep you informed

The Charter measures how good we are at keeping customers informed about our services and decisions. We will provide you with good quality information that is informative and easy to understand through our:

- annual Customer Performance Report
- annual Assurance Statement
- homelife Magazine

- consultation outcome reports and “You said, We did” statements
- complaints performance reports
- letters
- our website www.homegroup.org.uk
- twitter - Home Group @homegroup
- **Formal and informal consultations**

When we consult with customers we aim to:

- Describe to customers affected by the proposals the reason for the proposed changes, options that are being considered, and how the changes will affect customers
- Agree a timetable of key events including consultation periods, meeting dates feedback methods and timetables with Registered Tenant Organisation and other groups of customers
- State clearly how and within what timescales customers can make their views known
- Provide contact details of the lead colleagues who are dealing with the consultation
- State how and by whom the final decisions will be taken

- **Providing feedback**

You have told us that you would like to receive feedback in the following ways:

- letter
- email
- you said, we did reports
- newsletters
- meeting face to face
- charter Performance Report
- our website

PART THREE

16. Resources

- **Expenses**

Customer involvement is vital to support us to deliver and design services that are customer focused and promote continuous improvement. We appreciate that our customers must be supported when they give up their time, experience, ideas and share skills – so we ensure that all out-of-pocket expenses are paid to customers. Out-of-pocket expenses which are reimbursed against receipts are not generally liable for taxation and should not affect your benefits, if being claimed.

The payment of out-of-pocket expenses is set out in Home Group's Involvement and volunteering policies are available on request or at www.homegroup.org.uk/getinvolved it includes: transport; child care; taxis; provision of teas / coffees / lunches; training; attendance at conferences, briefings and seminars. If you have specific needs, we will do our best to support you to become involved.

- **Lead Engagement Advisor for Scotland (LEAS)**

The LEAS is a dedicated resource for Scotland. Supported by the Business Commercial Team and wider Engagement Team. Customer involvement is recognised as an essential activity across Home Group. The LEAS is available to support, train and assist customers to feel empowered to share what is important to them. The LEAS will also ensure that training is available for colleagues on scrutiny initiatives and participation activities, and working to meet objectives in improvement and action plans. The LEAS can be contacted at eveline.armour@homegroup.org.uk or on 0191 731 1892.

17. Registered tenant organisations and local groups

You can get involved in your neighbourhood. We work with Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) and attend meetings when invited. We consult with RTOs on any proposals that affect their members and take account of customers' and RTOs' views. We keep a list of all RTOs and this is available for public inspection on our website and within our offices.

If you don't have an RTO in your area, we can help and support you to develop a local group.

Where there are local tenant and resident groups in our neighbourhoods, groups can apply to become RTO. If you would like to set up a group, then we can help.

There are advantages to becoming an RTO including:

- The right to be consulted over any proposed changes to your housing service
- The ability to raise issues that affect your neighbourhood with Home Group Scotland
- To benefit from networking with other RTOs throughout Scotland
- An administration set up grant
- Independent support and advice from TPAS (Scotland)

18. Register of Tenant Organisations

Home Group Scotland manages a register of all the RTOs registered with us. The register is open for public inspection by any member of the public at our local offices and is available on our website. The criteria for registration of a tenant organisation is at the end of this document in appendix 2.

19. Training for colleagues, involved customers and Board

We are committed to providing training for colleagues, involved customers and Home Group Scotland Board. Colleagues and other agencies will provide training for Viewpoint Team members, Customer promise assessors, and other involved customers and colleagues. Training for colleagues will be included on agendas as part of an ongoing process, in addition to specific updates for changes in legislation etc. Training may also be carried out by external agencies e.g. Tenant Participation Advisory Service or Scottish Housing Regulator and includes attendance at briefings, seminars and conferences.

20. Customer Involvement Budget

An annual budget is allocated for customer involvement. The budget funds several activities including:

- viewpoint team meetings
- customer promise assessments
- open house meetings
- registered tenant organisation setup support grant
- charter performance report
- community fun days
- performance updates
- customer satisfaction surveys
- funding customer places to relevant conferences
- customer out-of-pocket expenses
- RTO grants

Customer Involvement Action Plan Year 1 (2021-2022)

Agreed by Scotland Viewpoint Team January 2021

Customer involvement action plan 2021 – 2022

Charter and performance management – communication and reporting

What will we do?	How will this be achieved?	Lead	Charter Outcome	When will we do it?	Target Outcome
Charter report for customers	Customers involved in design and content of charter report	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcomes 2, 3 and 13	31 st October 2021	Customer focused report Increased customer involvement in performance reporting and scrutiny
Quarterly performance report	Standing item on Viewpoint agendas	Business Commercial Analyst	Outcomes 2 and 3	Q1 Aug 21 Q2 Nov 21 Q3 Jan 22 Q4 May 22	Increased customer awareness of quarterly performance 2021-2022

Customer Promise

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020 - customer outcome communication	Communication to customers on highlights of survey	Lead Engagement Advisor	All outcomes	April 2021	Communication send to all customers Communication available digitally
Customer Satisfaction/ TPAS health check improvement plan 2021-22	Plan developed to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training and development for colleagues and customers ➤ Vouchers/prizes/ rewards for participation ➤ Improved communication ➤ Increased digital offer ➤ Scotland wide publication ➤ More customer involvement opportunities ➤ You said, we did for every 	Lead Engagement Advisor	All outcomes	Dec 2021	Improvement plan developed and completed -Viewpoint to monitor plan

	consultation event				
What will we do?	How will this be achieved?	Lead	Charter Outcome	When will we do it?	Outcome
Customer Promise Assessments	4 Customer Promise Assessments – neighbourhoods to be agreed by Viewpoint to include Mid-market renting customers	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcomes 1,2,3 and 6	April 2021 – March 2022	Improved customer satisfaction and involvement in scrutiny Quicker resolution of neighbourhood issues
Customer Consultation					
Annual rent and service charge, affordability and value for money consultation	<p>Newsletter to all customers</p> <p>Consultation on anyone@home</p> <p>Promote rent consultation on social media</p> <p>Value for money forum</p> <p>Survey monkey on our website</p>	<p>Lead Engagement Advisor</p> <p>PR & Media Advisor</p> <p>Lead Engagement Advisor / Business Commercial Analyst</p>	Outcomes 13, 14 and 15	<p>Nov 2021</p> <p>Nov 2021</p> <p>Jan 2022</p> <p>Nov 2021</p>	<p>Increased customer understanding of rent setting.</p> <p>Improved understanding of affordability and value for money for customers and Home Group</p>
Summer consultations – themed around 5 year investment and energy efficiency	Advertising meetings across all local authority areas	Lead Engagement Advisor / Business Commercial Analyst	Outcomes 1, 2, and 3	Aug 2021 – Sep 2021	<p>Increased understanding of customers' priorities and views</p> <p>Recommendations for improvement</p>
Customer Involvement Strategy 2021-2024	<p>New strategy produced in line with Scottish Government requirements</p> <p>Menu of involvement activities agreed</p>	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcomes 2 and 3	April 2021	New Customer Involvement Strategy developed outlining customers preferred methods for working with

	Action plan – year 1 agreed				Home Group Scotland
Customer Involvement activities					
What will we do?	How will this be achieved?	Lead	Charter Outcome	When will we do it?	Outcome (s)
Customer Involvement Recruitment (social rent, mid-market renting customers and factored owners)	Community events to engage with and recruit and engage with more customers across different tenures Work with colleagues to increase	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcomes 2 and 3	April 2021 – March 2022	Increase in customers participating in scrutiny activities - giving their views and priorities for improvement
Viewpoint Team	6 meetings per year	Lead Engagement Advisor	All outcomes	May 2021 July 2021 Sept 2021 Nov 2021 Jan 2022 Mar 2022 (dependant on Coronavirus restrictions)	Development of scrutiny to Improve services Greater colleague understanding of Viewpoint team Performance measured against the Charter and customer promise
Equality and Diversity - Life Swap, Role Models and Equality and Diversity Action Group	Recruit customers interested in sharing their stories; becoming role models and developing an equality and diversity action group.	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcomes 1 and 2	April 2021 - March 2022	Priorities for equality and diversity identified Increased offer of involvement for customers from diverse backgrounds Tailored services provided to meet customers' needs.
Scottish Housing Issues - Involve customers in wider Scottish housing issues	Customer delegates at conferences Blogs, case studies, etc. on website, social and traditional media	Lead Engagement Advisor PR & Media Advisor	All outcomes	TPAS conference 2021 CIH conference 2021	Customers develop greater knowledge of housing Improved contact opportunities with customers from other landlords.

Further develop digital involvement	anyone@home my home account Microsoft (MS) Teams training	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcome 2, and 3	October 2021	More customers joining MS Teams my home account and anyone@home
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Building the right homes in the right places

What will we do?	How will this be achieved?	Lead	Charter Outcome	When will we do it?	Outcome
Develop a model to Include customers in new build designs and energy efficiency	Work with Development on a model. Consult through Viewpoint teams and customer promise assessments to develop new opportunities - upskill and recruit customers to help form the standard	Development	Outcomes 2, 3 and 4	April 2021 – March 2022	Evidence contribution in design

Being 20% more efficient

What will we do?	How will this be achieved?	Lead	Charter Outcome	When will we do it?	Outcome
20% more efficient	Maximise digital involvement Reducing travel costs Combining meetings where possible Making efficiencies on telephone calls and postage	Lead Engagement Advisor	Outcome 2	October 2021 Ongoing	Increase number of involved customers Identify key business activities where customers can influence efficiencies (outside involvement)
TPAS (Scotland) accreditation	Work towards TPAS accreditation	Lead Engagement Advisor	All outcomes	March 2022	Achieve GOLD standard accreditation

Criteria for registration of tenant organisations (RTOs)

The Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) must have a publicly available written constitution that sets out:

- its objectives and area of operation
- how people can become members of the organisation
- the way the committee will operate
- how people can become committee members/office bearers
- how the business of the organisation will be conducted
- how decisions will be reached democratically
- how funds will be managed
- arrangements for public meetings
- arrangements for an annual general meeting (AGM)
- how changes can be made to the constitution
- its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities
- its commitment to the promotion of the housing and housing related interests of tenants

The aim of this is to ensure that organisations are transparent and have a structure that allows for election of office bearers, gives opportunities for members to express views and ensures that elected officers report to their members. This does not mean that the body has to be a formally incorporated body, such as an Industrial and Provident society. A simple constitution that spells out how the organisation will be accountable to members will suffice in many cases, but where an organisation has access to substantial funds it may be appropriate to look at more formal incorporation.

It is essential that Home Scotland receives a copy of a residents' association's constitution as part of the registration process. Home Group Scotland has a model which any group can adopt as it is recognised that the constitution is a basis for registration. If the constitution does not fulfil the criteria for registration, Home Group Scotland may refuse to register the group. We are committed to working with prospective RTOs to help them meet the criteria for registration.

The organisation must have a committee that:

- (after the first year) is elected at an AGM
- has at least 3 members
- can co-opt others onto the committee during the course of the year
- has elected office bearers
- can demonstrate that decisions are reached democratically
- promotes equal opportunities

The organisation must operate within:

- home Group Scotland's defined areas of operation
- membership of the organisation and participation in its activities must be open to all eligible tenants within its defined area of operation
- The organisation must have appropriate accounting records and present an audited financial statement to the AGM.
- The organisation must demonstrate that it is committed to representing the interests of its members and that, when consulted by Home Group Scotland it can represent the views of its members who are tenants in our defined areas of operation

Application material to be submitted by the tenant organisation to Home Group Scotland:

- a description of the area of operation
- the written constitution
- names and contact details of group/organisation/committee members (identifying the office bearers)

An RTO can be removed from the register in any of the following circumstances:

- the tenant organisation no longer meets the criteria
- the tenant organisation ceases to exist or does not operate
- there is a mutual agreement between Home Group Scotland and the tenant organisation

Removal from the register should take place only after an agreed period of notice. A tenant organisation may appeal against Home Group Scotland's decision to not register the organisation; or remove the organisation from the register. Any appeal will be dealt with under the Home Group Scotland complaints policy. Where internal complaints procedures have been exhausted, a further appeal will be considered by the Scottish Government's Tenant Priorities Team and should be completed within 3 months of the appeal being made.

Glossary

We use key phrases and words in this document and have provided some explanation below. This is not a definitive list, but we hope it might help.

A

Action plan

- A proposal of what we will do, how we will do it, what the benefits are by doing it, and when it will be completed

C

Charter (the)

- A contract, agreement or deed set out by the Scottish Government which all registered landlords in Scotland must follow

CIH

- Chartered Institute of Housing – professional organisation for social housing

Constitution

- The composition or structure of something – in social housing this is the structure of groups

Consultation

- Discussions, talks and/or surveys - often with customers about proposals for change

Customer Involvement Strategy

- A policy or plan that sets out how we will involve customers in a way that increases customer satisfaction, promotes best practice and meets all our monitoring requirements

E

Engagement

- Involving or working with others

F

Forum

- meeting

I

Involvement

- Seeking input, participation, contributions (from others)

O

Outcome

- An outcome is a result we want to happen – the Charter has 16 of these

P

Policy

- A plan, strategy or guideline – that sets out what we are going to do

R

Regulatory

- Controlled, monitored requirements – the rules, what we must do

RTO (Registered tenant organisation)

- An organisation set up to work with tenants towards mutually agreed goals

S

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

- An independent controlling organisation created by the Scottish Government to look after the interests of people who or are or may become homeless.

Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter)

- A contract or agreement that sets out results what social landlords should achieve for its customers – its not about what the landlord does, its about customer's experience of using landlords' services

Scrutiny

- Examine, inspect or investigate in depth – a process expected in social housing to confirm or make recommendation for improved services

Social housing

- Housing provided by a registered social landlord and regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator

Stakeholder

- A person or organisation with an interest in social housing and/or the way it is regulated. e.g. customers, the SHR, homeless people, Police and other service users

Standard

- A level of quality that every social landlord should achieve

Strategic Objectives

- Long term goals - everything landlords do should be contributing towards achieving these

Strategy

- A plan, guideline or policy – a document that sets out what we are going to do

T

Tenure

- Tenancy, lease, occupancy

TPAS (Scotland)

- Tenant participation advisory service – a national independent tenant and landlord advisory service for Scotland