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| Participation Strategy |
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| Policy Author: Jo Gallagher | Policy Valid From: 30/06/2022 |
| Policy Approved Date 24.6.22 | Policy Review Date: 30/06/2025 |

# Policy/Strategy Control Statement

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| 1 | Document Title | Participation Strategy |
| 2 | Date of Document (Created Date) | May 2022 |
| 3 | Service Lead | Joanne Gallagher |
| 4 | Author | Jo Gallagher |
| 5 | Date Approved and approved by who i.e. Service Delivery Project Board, Executive, Group Board, etc. | TBC |
| 6 | Date last reviewed | May 2022 |
| 7 | Amendment record | Amended dates |
| 8 | Next review date (Planned review Date) | 30/06/2025 |
| 9 | Staff Consultation | Colleage Voice Group – May 2022 |
| 10 | Other Services Consultation | N/A |
| 11 | Customer Consultation | Consulted with involved residents March and May 2022. |
| 12 | Equality Impact Assessment: insert priority as agreed with E/D team, Insert date copy of EIA sent to E/D team. | Approved |
| 13 | Confirm that document meets current legislative requirements | Yes |
| 14 | Further Information/Comments | N/A |
| 15 | Sign off of statement by Author and Service Lead (name and date): | Gavin Sargent, National Customer Engagement Manager. |

# Policy Applicable To

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| Business Area: Places for People  Applicable to: Places for People |

# Amendment Sheet Record

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Revision Date | Description of Changes | Approved By | Date Approved |
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# Please summarise the current policy requirements and how this is changed in the new policy.

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| The Housing Scotland Act (2001) requires us to have a regularly reviewed Strategy.  Places for People will adopt this best practice in Scotland and will apply this across the UK. |

# Please explain the reason for changes/improvements/new policy.

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| To combine two previously separate strategies into one, incorportating the Customer Voice Promise whilst meeting the regulatory requirements The Housing Scotland Act (2001). As part of a holistic approach to customer engagement strategy across all our operating areas. |

# Please explain any new actions required to put the policy changes into practice.

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| None |

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# Our Commitment

Places for People is passionate about putting people first and at the heart of everything we do. Our services directly affect our customers, their homes, and communities and we will involve our customers at every opportunity to help shape these services.

This Strategy sets the standards on how we will facilitate effective participation.

Places for People is committed to:

* Looking for new ideas and better ways of delivering an excellent service, utilising and promoting resources such as Tenant Participation Advisorty Service (TPAS, England) and Tenant Information Service (TIS, Scotland)) for training, advice and support;
* Consulting customers and taking their views seriously by listening, valuing and acting upon feedback and experiences when making decisions and improvements wherever we can, to become a better landlord;
* Developing and maintaining effective and inclusive opportunities for participation and methods to scutinise our services, including new ways of involving customers to give them a range of options to suit them;
* Benchmark against industry best practice, and ensuring we comply with applicable regulations including the [Housing (Scotland) Act 2001](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/09/15487/11221) in relation to participation;
* Involve customers in measuring performance against applicable regulatory requirements, including the Scottish Social Housing Charter in line with the Scottish Housing Regulator, and the Together with Tenants Charter;
* Developing and maintaining an effective relationship with the Boards;
* Developing and supporting resident groups where required;
* Compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully taking account of individual needs;
* Investigating and implementing a broad range of tools and methods to overcome barriers faced by minority groups and ensure inclusion for our diverse range of customers taking into account diversity, linguistic and literacy barriers, poverty and cultural sensitivity.

# Consultation Standards

Consultation means putting proposals to customers, giving them enough time to respond as they wish, listening to and taking account of their views and explaining the reasons for our decisions.

# General Standards

* Use the most appropriate methods to suit the task;
* Listen to people and treat everyone with respect and politeness;
* Publish and keep accurate records of the consultation;
* Assess the effectiveness of the consultation.

# Standard 1 – be clear and honest about consultation

We will have clear service standards and guidelines, and will be honest about what we can and cannot do, so our customers know what to expect. We will be clear about the effect of any financial or legal restrictions.

# Standard 2 – be clear about the purpose of the consultation

We will tell customers:

* Who we want to be involved in the consultation and why they have been chosen;
* What may change as a result of the consultation;
* If anything cannot be changed – we will be honest;
* All the steps we will take to involve customers;
* When and how any final decisions will be made and who will make them;
* Details of the person or team managing the consultation;
* How we will feedback on the outcome of the consultation;
* How to complain about the process.

# Standard 3 – Provide clear information

* All information will be written in Plain English. This may include letters, website articles, emails, documents, adverts and reports;
* Information can be made available in other forms, including large type, Braille, audio CD, other languages and other methods as developed. We can also arrange face to face meetings and telephone conversations where possible. We will explain how this can be requested;
* We will monitor how accessible the information is through a variety of methods including surveys and face-to-face dialogue.

# Standard 4 – Timescales

Enough time will be allowed for effective consultation before we take any final decisions on service or policy changes. For general guidance the following is set as a minimum:

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| Surveys and other written responses returned to PfP | 28 calendar days |
| Consultation meetings | 14 calendar days |

Discretion may be considered for late responses where reasonable and possible. We will be sensitive to diversity needs and recognise religious/cultural events.

# Standard 5 – Methods of Consultation

A variety of methods of consultation will be used to actively seek the views of individuals, organisations or groups. The most appropriate method/s will be chosen to ensure the most effective and inclusive consultation. This may include a hybrid mix of different methods to suit the exercise.

*Effective consultation and involvement may include:*

## Written consultation – examples include

* Sending written information, such as policies or proposals, directly to individuals and groups, and inviting feedback.
* Using surveys to gather views of individuals or groups.
* Using voting sheets.

## Face-to-face consultation – examples include

* Actively seeking views and feedback through meetings. We will allow time and space for support to be arranged where required.
* Holding meetings, focus groups, forums or panels (regular or one-offs).
* Visiting other groups to present proposals and to get feedback.
* Asking individual customers their views, or encourage to take part, as and when they are seen by staff for other reasons e.g. home visit, coffee morning.

## Digital consultation – examples include

* Online platforms such as forums or social media for feedback or discussion.
* Virtual attendance to meetings, using apps such as Teams, with support if required
* Digital surveys to gather the views of individuals or groups.

Other options

Where the above consultation methods are limiting for some people, we can consider alternative methods and time flexibility where possible, such as telephone consultation and language interpretation. We will make it clear how this can be requested.

# Standard 6 – Feedback

* Feedback on the process and outcome of the consultation exercise will be shared on the [website](http://www.castlerockedinvar.co.uk/customers/get_involved/latest_consultations.aspx) and other non-digital methods where needed.
* Feedback will be clear and accessible, in line with the information standards outlined in Standard 3 of this document.

# Standard 7 – Assessment of Consultations

Each consultation exercise will be assessed to see if it has been effective. We will measure customer satisfaction and take action if we aren’t doing as well as expected.

We may use feedback sheets or surveys at the end of sessions to gather views from the participants on the process.

# Standard 8 – Resources

## Groups

We may fund tenants’ and residents’ organisations, groups and forums which meet the necessary criteria.

## Training

We may fund training and conferences involved customers such as those run by TPAS and TIS, in accordance with individual learning needs and budget availability.

## Meetings

### Room Hire

We will arrange and pay for room hire (with the exception of funded residents organisations). We will use any appropriate available convenient meeting space. Care will be taken to ensure that venues are fully accessible.

### Catering

Basic refreshments will usually be organised for short meetings. Longer meetings may necessitate the provision of food. We will take into account dietary requirements.

### Transport

We will arrange and pay for transport if it is necessary to enable participants to attend. This may include public transport, taxis, Handicabs, and bus hire. We can also pay mileage in accordance with the expenses policy.

### Caring Costs

We will reimburse caring costs (child and other). As a general rule this is for registered care providers only. We will assess the need to provide on-site childcare facilities on a case by case basis and will only use registered childcare providers.

### Staff

Staff will attend if required by a tenants’ or residents’ association.

# Evaluation and Review of Participation Strategy

This will take place at least every 3 years**.** Please forward any suggestions and general feedback to getinvolved@placesforpeople.co.uk

# Complaints

Complaints about any part of the consultation process will be considered in line with the Places for People Complaints Procedure. We will offer support with the complaint and keep you updated on progress and timescales.

Our complaints process is committed to resolving any issues. We publish information about complaints, such as lessons learnt (without customers’ names).

# Contact details

* Email: [getinvolved@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@placesforpeople.co.uk)
* Call: 01772 667 002
* Write: Places for People Group, PO Box 2070, Preston, PR5 9BY
* Website: www.placesforpeople.co.uk
* Twitter: @placesforpeople