



North Devon Homes Customer Involvement Strategy 2022—2025



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Introduction

The customer voice is central to how we design and deliver services in homes and communities.

To do this, together with customers, we have included a number of ways to understand what our customers are saying to us so that your voice is heard from their home right through our organisation up to our boardroom; 'Front Room to Boardroom'. This ensures your customer voice and opinions are heard and listened to by all of our staff, managers, directors and board members.

In 2020 we signed up to deliver the National Housing Federations 'Together with Tenants Charter' and been heartened by the Governments Social Housing White Paper (2020) that follows the direction we have set.

This Customer Involvement Strategy establishes how we will continue to develop and include customer's recommendations, thoughts and ideas detailing our approach to co-designing the strategy.



Vision

Our vision for the next three years is to continue to place customers at the heart of our decision making. Like many organisations we have increasingly used IT over the past couple of years in our customer involvement activities which is both unique and this presents opportunity.

Our investment in new IT systems and digital communications will continue alongside our community landlord approach providing many ways for customers to talk to us; as every customer voice is important.

We will build back our community based work again visiting neighbourhoods to have local conversations and events seeking your views around what matters to you in your homes where you live and in your communities.

What does Front Room to Board Room look like?

Key to our Customer Involvement approach is partnership working with customers, managers and directors equally working together to co-design services for the future.

Customer Board Partnership



Our Customer Board Partnership is key to linking Customers directly to Board members with this panel being part of the organisations governance structure (see Annex A)

The panel has five customers, one of whom is the Chair, complemented by senior managers and meets every 6 to 8 weeks reviewing and inspecting every aspect of the business; Health & Safety, how satisfied customers are, how we are performing, future pressures on the business, value for money on the services we provide and what customer consultation we have undertaken.

Customer Board Partnership Chair

“The Customer Board Partnership pulls together the information gathered from the various customer groups; this ensures that the board of NDH have a view directly from customers when making the important decisions that directly affect our homes.

Customers, Board members and staff are present at these meetings, to discuss the findings. It is both challenging and exciting to know that you are helping to drive change while bringing the customer voice to the heart of the decision making process.”

Scrutiny Panel



Our Scrutiny Panel is made up exclusively by customers, one of whom is the Chair, who review examine and inspect various areas of the business in depth developing reports on their findings and recommendations.

The panel can request to see any data relating to an area of review, invite managers to join them and commission larger surveys from wider customers to be undertaken to support their reports which then forms part of the Customer Board Partnership meetings for discussion and agreed actions.



“Scrutiny is about making things better for everyone, supporting the community and working together to deliver positive changes.”

Scrutiny Panel Chair

Health & Safety Customer Partnership Panel



It is important to us that customers feel safe in their homes and neighbourhoods; in 2021 this customer led panel was developed with 11 Customers, one of whom is the Chair, working alongside our Health & Safety Manager.

[Video link here](#)

The panel undertook extensive training to understand Health & Safety requirements for customers and North Devon Homes, more recently the panel have begun to work in our sheltered schemes reviewing and inspecting Fire Safety.

The Customer Chair of this panel attends the Customer Board Partnership meetings to review their recent activities and discuss their findings and/or arising actions.



Health & Safety Customer Partnership Panel Chair

I am very excited to be a customer involved North Devon Home Health and Safety Partnership. The aims of keeping people safe in their homes is an important role for all of us and as a fantastic group of customers we work really hard to achieve this. Knowing we make a difference to peoples safety let's us work North Devon Homes in a positive way and cooperative way.

Fresh Ideas Group

Fresh ideas is a group of customers that come together a few times a month together with managers who will share ideas and ask for opinions from a customer perspective over a variety of areas for example; policy changes, letters and leaflets for customers, newsletters. Together with managers they support us to deliver messages and communicate with customers in a way that they clearly understand.

The activities of the group are fed back and overseen by the Customer Partnership Board

Customer 2 Customer



These are customers with a long standing background and commitment to Customer Involvement who elected to act as independent advisors to any customers. The group and NDH recognise sometimes customers feel more comfortable talking to a fellow customer to discuss a topic, for example how to downsize, who they should approach with a problem or how they report an issue.

Customer 2 Customer Volunteer

"We find giving our time to other Customers very rewarding. We act as a bridge between Customers and NDH, the enquiries we deal with can often be simple and easy to answer or it can be more complex, like helping someone move to a more suitable home. "

Customer Energy Efficiency Champion

With the reductions in carbon and future changes to homes our new Customer Energy Efficiency Champion will work closely with our staff to build and develop how NDH tackles these challenges and keeps customers fully informed on the developments both in existing homes and our new home building.

The Customer Partnership Board will be given regular updates as this new customer role develops and oversee and inform future focus

Customer Energy Efficiency Champion

As a customer working with NDH I am excited to be involved with this project. Housing needs to be at the forefront of tackling climate change? This will mean improving our energy efficiency of our homes, for us to see the benefit in helping to lower the cost of our energy bills and maintaining our homes to be warmer and comfortable for us to live in.

North Devon Homes customer representation in the Sector

To ensure our involved customers partners are well informed to represent you in the wider sector of Housing we invest in training, provide IT tools they need and support them so they are empowered to have a voice outside of North Devon Homes.

We want our ideas and successes to influence other organisations and to learn what others are doing that we could adapt and benefit from.

Many of them attend virtual events (and where possible travel to venues) with other customers from across the country where they can for example give opinions to Government representatives, the Housing Ombudsman or simply share ideas with customers from other housing organisations and feed back their experiences in the Customer Board Partnership meetings.

The Strategy Aims

Customers have been central in the design of this strategy, our three customer Chairs (Customer Board Partnership, Scrutiny & Health & Safety Customer Partnership Chairs) spent an 'away day' with our Board members and Directors. During this day together they reviewed the strengths and performance of the organisation. As part of this they co-designed; what matters to customers around being involved, what the requirements of the White Paper mean to a new Customer Involvement Strategy approach and our new objectives.

Our 6 principles are:

1) Supporting Customers to Feel Safe in their Home

Feeling safe in your home is very important to us, when you are concerned about safety in your home we will develop and strengthen ways that you can tell us:

- Our Health & safety Partnership Panel will visit sheltered schemes and neighbourhoods to arrange to meet with customers
- We will work with this panel to ensure customers understand forthcoming government legislation and law around Health & Safety and Building Safety.
- We will report improvements and recommendations customers give us on our website, in our Newsletters and Annual Return to Tenants.
- Customers will be central in the co-design of the information we provide to customers and surveys we carry out around Health & Safety.

2) Improve how Customers understand how North Devon Homes is performing

We will work together with customers to ensure our Performance data is line with regulatory requirements, are meaningful for customers and that they inform our governing Board that we are performing against our Service Level Agreements:

- We will share with the Customer Board Partnership our performance data at every meeting
- Publish every quarter our performance on the North Devon Homes website
- Ensure that the information in this performance data is reported every year in our Annual Return to Tenants
- We will involve customers in our policy decisions across the business including for example how we set your rent levels
- We will work with customers to inform our performance indicators and targets

3) Complaints prompt and Fair

We value customer feedback both good and bad, we don't always get things right and when we don't we will try and fix things promptly and fairly, to do this we will:

- Support & strengthen our Customer 2 Customer approach to gain valuable feedback from Customers.
- Make our complaints process visible and clearly accessible for as many customers as possible.

- Report on complaints at each Customer Board Partnership meeting
- Publish complaints and feedback in our Annual Return to Customers and on our website
- Review with customers our Complaints and feedback policies and Self Assessments

4) Respect

We want all of our customers to feel equally part of North Devon Homes and that they are treated fairly and with respect, to do this we will:

- Continue to build on our partnership working with involved customers.
- Deliver our commitment to the National Housing Federation 'Together with Tenants' (see Annex A)
- Review complaints and feedback for respect based issues to tackle unfairness and inequalities
- Undertake a programme of customer care training so that we provide customers with services that suit their needs.



4) Representative Customer Voice (Front Room to Board Room)

Our Customer Involvement activities are important being central; to all the decision making processes across the business. Over the next three years we will further embed this by:

- Promoting all of our Customer Involvement opportunities and recruit to our partnership involvement team
- Monitor and respond to difference and diversity of involved customers
- Deliver an increasing wide range of customer involvement opportunities and campaigns
- Be visible in a range of communities consulting at a local level to gather your feedback
- Develop and use technology as a platform to reach our customers who are currently not feeding into our customer involvement work, for example younger and/or working households and families
- Develop a network of locality based customers to champion giving us feedback on local perceptions and issues, for example Grounds Maintenance, cleaning, Anti Social Behaviour and value for money on the services we provide
- Increase and strengthen our Customer 2 Customer approach to gain feedback from customers through customers
- Develop customer ideas and understand different local needs to find ways we can together with you flex services, for example providing services customers can collectively buy into locally through transparent increases in service charges
- Develop 'hot topic' locality based 'pop-up' consultation events both face to face in your communities or by using digital platforms

6) Accountable to all

It is important to us at North Devon Homes that all of our customers are aware of the work that is undertaken within our Customer Involvement Strategy, to do this we will:

- Develop and publish a plan for the work of our involved customers that will include the feedback you have given us
- Report on 'You said we did' when customers have given us recommendations, where actions for improvements occur we will keep you informed on the progress of those actions
- Welcome all customers to be a part of this Customer Involvement Strategy and will publish activities you can be part of to ensure all customers can have their voice heard from 'Front Room to Board Room'
- We will annually review the effectiveness and impact of our Customer Involvement Strategy and publish this on our website



How we will measure our success

We will:

- Report the Customer Involvement activities to the Customer Board Partnership every 8 weeks embed the customer voice across the business through to the Boardroom.
- Ensure our Customer Scrutiny Panel have timely information so they can effectively investigate and inspect performance and report their findings to the Customer Board Partnership.
- Involve Customers in building safety communication and monitoring by further embedding our Health & Safety Customer Partnership Panel including site inspections and local consultation events to collect customers points of view.
- Develop a rolling calendar of customer overall satisfaction surveys and events for example: satisfaction survey; focus groups; door to door, SMS (text), paper mail out surveys on hot topics (i.e. Grounds maintenance and communal cleaning).

- Track customer recommendations and actions reporting to the Customer Board Partnership how customers have influenced decisions on service delivery.
- Improve how we wider customers and NDH staff on what changes and improvements have been influenced through customer recommendations and ideas, for example “you said we did” feedback published in Newsletters.
- Improve and develop the Customer Involvement web site pages to include how wider customers can see what we deliver, get involved and have a voice i.e. access on-line surveys book places at involvement and Tpas events.
- Publish information about our Service Standards (Local Offers) and performance in the Annual Return to Tenants co-designing this with customers.

Further develop focus groups to discuss feedback from surveys, changes in services and Policy reviews to gather customers points of view, recommendations and ideas.

Key Performance targets we will share with customers:		Annual Target
1)	How many customer points of view we have collected.	1000
2)	How many surveys we have undertaken to gather customer satisfaction and points of view.	12
3)	Number of Scrutiny Policy Reviews	4
4)	Number of Customer Board Partnership Meetings	6
5)	Number of Customers Fire Risk Assessments reviews for sheltered blocks and inspections of communal areas	16
6)	Review the effectiveness of the Customer Involvement Strategy with CBP	1
7)	Number of Customer Board Partnership reviews on Customer Involvement Impact Assessment actions and outcomes	4
8)	Number of Customer Consultation Activities	24

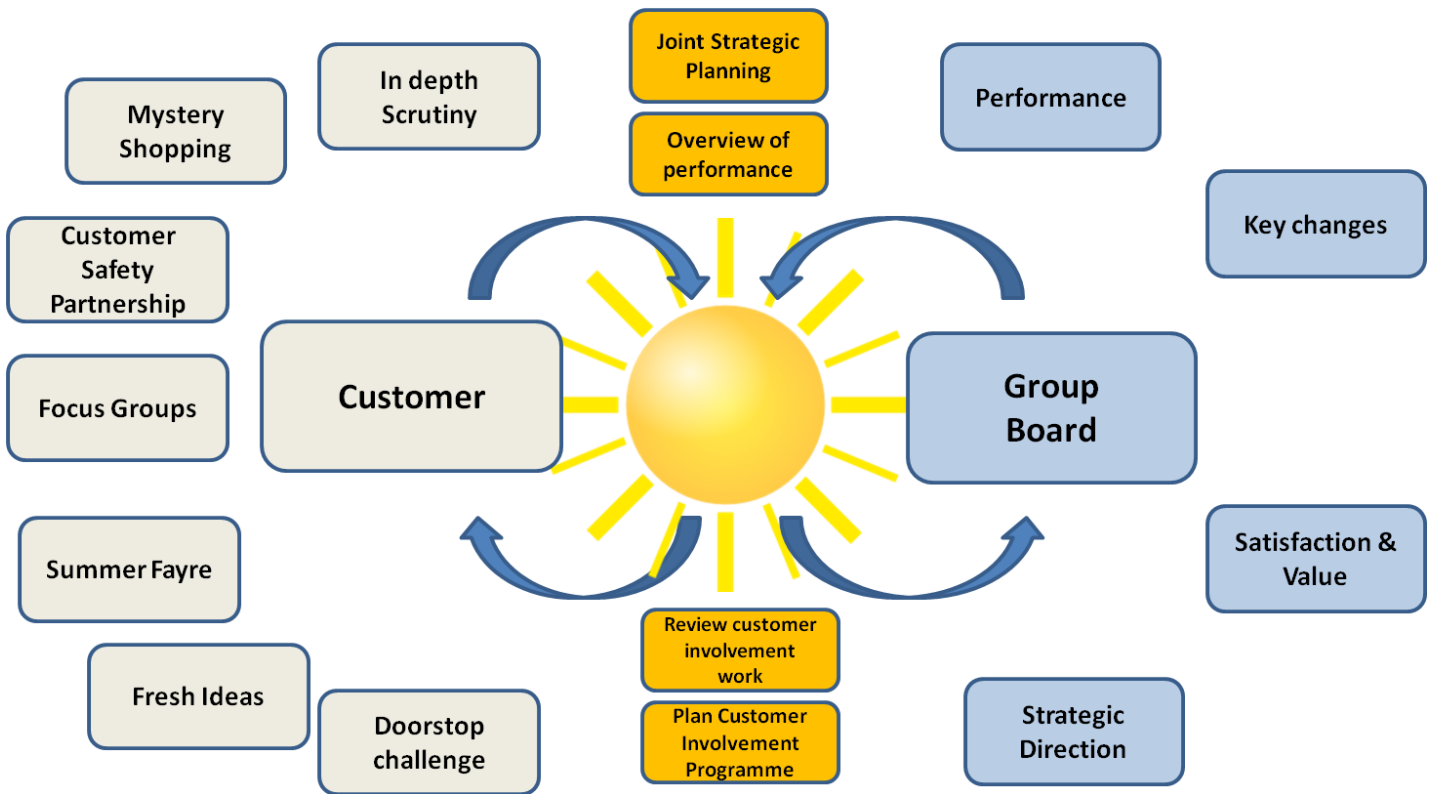
Annex A: Activities to deliver this strategy

How we will get customers involved	what we will do together with customers
Customer Board Partnership (CBP)	Meetings at a governance level every which review with customers satisfaction & key performance data across the business
Deliver customer safety events on schemes and at community events	Working closely with the NDH Health & Safety Manager the H&S Customer Partnership Panel to undertake inspections around H&S matters to engage with residents living in those homes
Undertake to train Customers	Provide training and resources so that customers are empowered and informed to examine and inspect H&S policies and other related documents, including an understanding of the surrounding law.
Publish customer recommendations “you said we did”	Promote the activities of involved customers in newsletters and Annual Return to Tenants, on the website and social media platforms and tell people how they can be involved
Undertake customer Scrutiny Reviews	Scrutiny will undertake to review, examine and inspect related policies and seek feedback from a wider sample of customers through Scrutiny led consultation, reports will go to CBP
Provide customers with training and sector networking opportunities	Facilitate opportunities for customers to engage with other customers within the sector for example attending Tpas events or Housing Ombudsman Tenant consultation events
Promote NDH customer involvement activities within the sector	Share within the sector our model of engagement and Customer Involvement
Report to the Customer Board Partnership the H&SCP activities	The Customer Chair of this panel sits on the CBP and will report to the Board and Managers the recommendations customers have made alongside the status of any actions arising
Improve engagement with Leaseholders	Develop meaningful pathways of engagement with Leaseholders
Customers to engage with the Board	Involve Customers and Chairs in strategic events such as joint away days
North Devon Homes Annual Summer Fayre	Customer representatives will be central to the co-design of this event in partnership with staff
Neighbourhood Consultations	Build back post COVID within Neighbourhood events to include face to face consultation
Customer Focus groups (Fresh Ideas)	The Fresh Ideas group to review key communications & customer facing policy changes with a view to informing on customer perceptions and understanding
Customer surveys and campaigns	With direction from the Customer Board Partnership and/or Scrutiny undertake to run topic based campaigns and surveys across our wider customer base
Customer Consultation for procurement	Consider customer views in key procurement e.g. Cleaning contract
Customer 2 Customer	Support and develop the activities of this group

how we will get customers involved	what we will do together with customers
Annual Return to Tenants (ART)	ART to be reviewed and co-designed with customer focus groups considering the recommendations from the Scrutiny review. All line Managers will work with Fresh Ideas to improve the accessibility of ART
Complaints	Customer Scrutiny Panel to review and inspect the Complaints Self Assessment process and understand the learning from the previous year alongside other informal complaint data for the past 12 months
Service Excellence Plans	Consider Customer Involvement and engagement in Service Excellence planning
Customer Board Partnership annual review of Customer Involvement Strategy	CBP meeting agenda item
Customer Consultation on Grounds Maintenance	Customers to review the customer satisfaction and success of the new in-house Grounds Maintenance service and lead in seeking wider consultation.
Together with customers redesign information provided to customers on how to get involved and what becoming an involved customer entails promoting the notion of Front Room to Board Room	Together with customers redesign information provided to customers on how to get involved and what becoming an involved customer entails promoting the notion of Front Room to Board Room
Further development of the Impact Assessment process	Together with customers review the process of recording and monitoring the influence customers have within the business tracking actions arising and disseminating recommendations to wider customers
Customer Inequalities & Diversity	Customers to review and understand the diversity within our neighbourhoods to ensure we are communicating with everyone at a level that suits wider customers personal and local needs.
Customer Portal	Engaged customers will be central in the development and implementation of a new digital access portal for customers to improve the way they engage with NDH
Customer representation within the Energy Efficiency Agenda	Customers will join NDH Executives within the Advantage South West Partnership on an Energy Efficiency group
New Build Customer Consultation	Customers will look at and review plans for regeneration and new builds having opportunity to make recommendations and to understand consultation feedback
Local Offers (Service Level Agreements)	Customers to steer the Key Performance Indicators and Local Offers through the Customer Board Partnership

Annex B:

North Devon Homes Customer Involvement Model



White Paper Social Housing Nov 2020 - 5 Principles



Together with tenants charter

The Together with Tenants charter aims to strengthen the relationship between residents and housing association landlords.

Housing associations that adopt the charter commit to:



Relationships – Housing associations will treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions. Relationships between residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.



Communication – Residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how the organisation is working to address problems, how the organisation is run, and information about performance on key issues.



Voice and influence – Views from residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform decisions. Every individual resident will feel listened to by their housing association on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.



Accountability – Collectively, residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.



Quality – Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.



When things go wrong – Residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

To find out more about Together with Tenants, visit housing.org.uk/tenants

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