

Tenant Engagement Policy

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Department Owner: Director of Housing

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Manager

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VERSION CONTROL

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REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

OWNERSHIP

The owner of this Policy is the Director of Housing.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since its foundation, the work of Respond has been underpinned by the core values of community development. Addressing issues of social exclusion and inequality is an essential feature of our housing management, maintenance and service delivery. Using participatory methods to empower tenants and staff we encourage positive interaction and active tenant engagement, at all times considering our core values and corporate objectives. Our work is more than housing provision, it's concerned with the rights of tenants and communities to be involved in decisions that affect them.

1.2 We strongly believe that tenants should have the opportunity to engage in services which affect them and the communities they live. This Policy sets out how Respond will support the Tenant Engagement Strategy, Together we are Stronger 2022, which offers a diverse range of methods and opportunities for tenants can engage.

1.3 The Policy firmly places tenants at the heart of our services. We recognise that collaborating with tenants and stakeholders in the co-creation of current and future practice and the continuous examination of our services is essential if we are to adapt, strengthen and improve what we do and deliver.

1.4 To deliver this we need to actively listen, we need to understand and learn from the tenant voice. This is our most powerful tool for bringing about transformational change and service improvement in a positive, planned, and proactive way.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1 The purpose of the Policy is to develop a clear framework that provides for tenant feedback opportunities and enables tenants to engage with Respond at various levels about the services we provide and the key decisions we take.

2.2 Respond places tenant engagement high on the agenda as involvement with tenants and key stakeholders is fundamental to delivering the objectives in the Tenant Engagement Strategy. It is important that we get the balance right between our caring and compassionate values and the delivery of a professional,

efficient housing management and maintenance service that offers value for money.

2.3 The Policy seeks to ensure that Respond is fully compliant with section 3.2.3 of the Housing Agency Regulation Office Performance Standard Requirement, December 2018 relating to Tenant Engagement.

2.4 The Policy builds on existing tenant engagement activity across key frontline services such as property inspections, repairs, planned programmes and estate management.

3.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

3.1 This Policy applies to all tenants. We believe tenants have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them, and we recognise the value that tenants can have on the continuous improvement of services.

3.2 Engagement with tenants will reflect diversity, taking account of family type, age, ethnicity, mental and physical health, as well as the changing demographics which will impact on the future needs and priorities.

3.3 Respond is committed to maximising opportunities to engage and consult with tenants to influence, improve and enhance the delivery of services. Respond will be flexible in its approach to tenant engagement, adopting different methods to reach all tenants, building capacity and ensuring services and priorities continue to reflect the current and future needs of tenants.

3.4 Optimising the use of our community buildings and ensuring tenants have access is essential for the delivery of tenant engagement.

3.5 The provision of financial assistance and other resources will be made available to deliver on agreed priorities.

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF POLICY

This Policy is designed to meet the following objectives:

4.1 To ensure tenants have influence over key services that directly affect them.

- 4.2 To consult, engage and communicate effectively with all tenants.
- 4.3 Enable tenants make their views known, through a variety of methods.
- 4.4 Demonstrate how learning from engagement has been applied into shaping services.
- 4.5 To share performance information with tenants on a regular basis and enable continuous performance improvement.
- 4.6 Enable inclusive engagement, taking account of accessibility, disability or language factors.
- 4.7 To ensure the equal treatment of all tenants.
- 4.8 To ensure a culture of respect where tenants feel empowered to participate and be heard.
- 4.9 Develop and value honest, respectful and fair relationships by setting safe boundaries for tenants and staff alike.
- 4.10 All staff involved in tenant engagement will be clearly working to the wider values of the organisation.

5.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Our commitment to pro-active tenant engagement begins with the Board. The Board strive to ensure tenants are at the heart of the organisation. Operational responsibility for tenant engagement is held by the Housing Department. The department is led by the Director of Housing and supported by the Head of Tenancy Management, Tenant Engagement Coordinator, Customer Service Centre, Housing & Asset teams.

5.2 Respond encourage all staff to be part of the tenant engagement journey and will introduce metrics to track and ensure that we are living our promise to tenants to engage, consult and communicate. Our focus will be on the quality of outcomes rather than just the quantity of tenant engagement activities.

5.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to actively encourage the development of closer working relationships with tenants and to develop an improved understanding of tenant need and priorities.

6.0 POLICY IMPEMENTATION

6.1 Respond currently engage with our residents in a variety of ways ranging from one-to-one meetings, estate clinics, by phone, by letter, through the customer services centre, national & regional Tenant Fora, residents' meetings, meetings of interest groups, estate events etc.

6.2 Going forward, we will develop further ways of engaging with our residents with an interactive element to our website, development of our tenant portal and through our annual tenant satisfaction survey.

6.3 The approach will vary, tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of tenants. It is our intention to be innovative and ensure that we meet the needs of our tenants in ways that best suit them.

6.4 We aim to actively engage with tenants in developing and maintaining key organisational policies and seek to continuously improve its tenant engagement, consultation and communication process.

6.5 Opportunities for tenant engagement in areas such as housing services and delivery including any new means of participation that may broaden engagement are continuously sought to improve involvement.

6.6 Respond will offer practical solutions to ensure tenant engagement is available to as many tenants as possible, and to ensure a true reflection of identified tenant need.

6.7 Respond will identify and improve methods of communication for hard to reach groups. This will be achieved through building strong, positive relationships with tenants and stakeholders alike.

6.8 We will be proactive in implementing this Policy while acknowledging tenant engagement is at all times optional for any tenant.

6.9 A record of all tenant engagement activity will be recorded on CRM and the relevant property file on Active H.

7.0 CUSTOMER CARE

7.1 Respond is committed to social justice, equality and inclusion and committed to being non-judgmental. We foster an ethos of openness, inclusiveness and a commitment to working with difference in the provision of a comprehensive service for all.

7.2 This Policy will be accessible and available to all tenants and stakeholders on the Respond website and an overview will be included in the Tenant Handbook.

8.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every two years or will be amended to take account of any external regulatory changes, external market changes or internal organisational change as necessary. All policies are presented to the relevant Respond Sub Committees for consideration and review prior to being recommended to the Board for approval.

9.0 POLICY SCHEDULE

A Policy schedule is maintained by the Compliance Department with input from all of the Heads of Department. It includes the owner's names, dates for review and versions of documents held as current and operational within Respond. This schedule is presented to the Community, Support, Research and Advocacy (CSRA) Committee and the Finance Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) for review on a regular basis.

The current Policy Schedule is available at:

<X:\Policies and Procedures\Policy Schedule\Respond Global Policy Schedule>

10.0 IMPACTED DEPARTMENTS

This Policy impacts all departments as tenants are the core of the organization and central to everything we do. Primary responsibility will be with the Housing Department to lead on tenant engagement.

11.0 REPORTING, MONITORING AND KPI'S

10.1 Respond are responsive to the changing environment of social housing. We

are committed to developing good standards of practice to meet the needs of tenants. This includes capturing and reporting on key data. This Policy will comply with current regulatory requirements detailed in the Housing Regulator’s Performance Standard.

10.2 A summary of the current Regulatory requirements in relation to tenant engagement and communication are summarised below:

The following indicators will provide the structures required to implement our tenant engagement Policy. These will be reviewed in line with the launch of the Tenant Engagement Strategy: -

Key measures
1. No of active tenant groups established and meeting regularly and with terms of reference in place 2. No of informal tenant engagement activities with a focus on high quality outcomes 3. Percentage of tenants undertaking pre-tenancy training 4. Production of an annual performance statement for tenants 5. Tenant Satisfaction with Opportunities for Engagement (annual survey & at estate level) 6. Tenant survey action plan and Tenant Engagement strategy milestones 7. Position statement against Housing Regulator’s summary requirement. 8. Tenant Insights – real time feedback & input on repairs, complaints & tenant experience

12.0 RELATED POLICIES

- Strategic Plan 2019 to 2023.
- Communications Strategy.
- Asset Management Strategy.

- Together we are Stronger, Tenant Engagement Strategy 2021.

13.0 REFERENCE

- Respond Tenancy Agreement.
- The Performance Standard and Assessment Framework for the Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies in Ireland, December 2018 – S 3.2.3
- Together we are Stronger, Tenant Engagement Strategy 2021.
- Tenant Survey Action Plan.

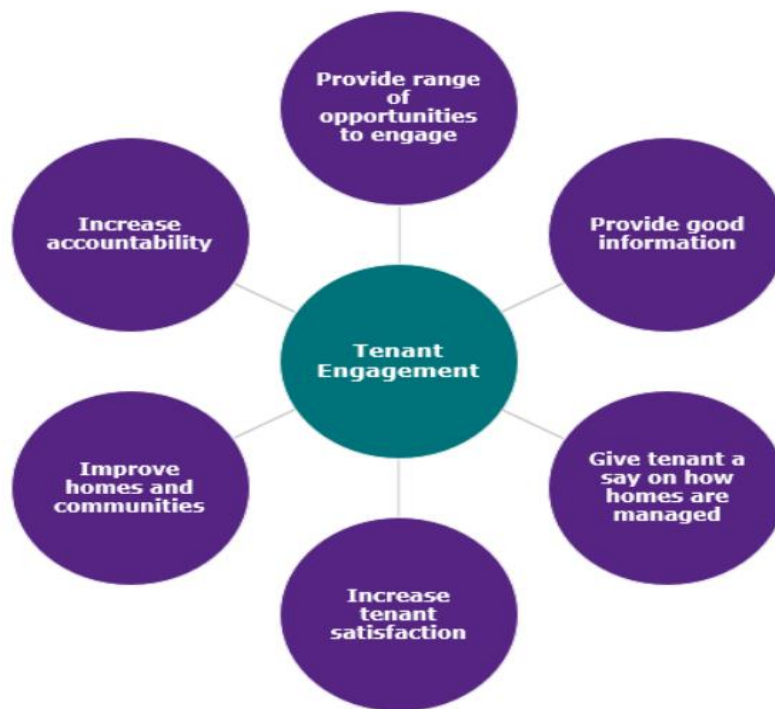


Fig 1 – Tenant Engagement Overview