

TENANT ENGAGEMENT, INVOLVEMENT & INFLUENCE POLICY

Version	1	Approved by	Tenant Panel
Date last approved	N/A	Effective from	03/12/2024
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Consultation	Tenants' Panel	Date of next review	03/12/2027
Equality Impact Assessment completed		Yes (see section 8)	

1.0 Introduction and aim

- 1.1 Eldon Housing Association seeks to ensure that it understands and is responsive to the views, aspirations and priorities of its tenants, regarding how their homes, services and neighbourhoods are managed and maintained. Key to this is to provide a wide range of opportunities for engaging with and involving our tenants, so that their voices are heard, understood, and used to inform and influence what we do and how we do about it.
- 1.2 This policy has been co-produced in conjunction with Eldon Housing's Tenant Panel. It sets out Eldon's principles and commitment to tenant engagement, involvement and influence, based on the aspirations of panel members, senior staff and the association's Board.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to embed tenant engagement, involvement and influence at the heart of Eldon's activities; creating and maintaining strong and trusting relationships, where tenants feel that our offer and opportunities for involvement and influence are sincere and meaningful, and that their input is encouraged, supported and used to make a real difference.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This is a cross-organisational policy, which extends opportunities for tenant engagement, involvement and influence across the association's operational and governance activities. It is relevant to the association's Board, employees, contractors, and all tenants of Eldon Housing and their respective advocates, where assistance is required to enable and support their involvement.

- 2.2 The nature of Eldon Housing's work means that we are often involved in wider community activities, which brings us into contact with other organisations that operate in those communities and provide services to our tenants. We will aim to engage and work collaboratively with these organisations to help improve the quality of life of our tenants and the communities they live in.

3.0 Definitions

For clarification, the definitions set out in appendix 1 apply to this policy. These definitions were considered by and agreed with Eldon Housing's Tenants' Panel.

4.0 Legal and regulatory obligations

This policy aims to ensure that the Association meets its statutory and regulatory obligations to engage with, consult and involve its tenants in accordance with the following:

- Housing Act 1985 (S105, as amended)
- Equality Act 2010
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 2024

5.0 Linkage – other relevant documents that support delivery of this policy

- Eldon Housing's strategic aims and objectives
- Eldon Housing's Tenant Engagement, Involvement and Influence Strategy 2024-27 (yet to be developed at the time of writing this policy)
- The National Housing Federation's (NHF) Together with Tenants Charter
- Eldon Housing's Tenants' Charter

6.0 The Policy

- 6.1 The principles and approach set out in this policy aim to give tenants a recognised voice and say in how their homes, services and neighbourhoods are managed and maintained; enabling them to scrutinise, criticise and challenge what we do and how we do it, hold us to account, and influence decisions and continuous improvement.
- 6.2 Our approach to tenant engagement, involvement and influence is based on the following principles:

Clear about what and why: We will have a clear and shared understanding amongst our tenants, staff and Board about why we're involving tenants, what we want to achieve and how we aim to achieve it, along with having the right structures and resources in place to help us do so.

Everyone's welcome: We recognise that all tenants have something to contribute and will support them in doing so wherever we can; continuously seeking to identify and encourage new voices to join in and play a part in shaping the services and community we all share, identifying and removing barriers to engagement and involvement and creating real and accessible opportunities that meet the diverse needs of our tenant profile.

Building trusting and respectful relationships: We seek to develop open, honest and collaborative relationships, where tenants, staff and Board members respect each other's viewpoints, priorities and experience; are willing to share (non-confidential) information; and feel comfortable and confident scrutinising, questioning or challenging what they see, read, hear or experience and suggesting new or better ways of doing things.

Encouraging, enabling and supporting: We will invest in our tenant engagement and involvement activities, committing funds, time and resources to help tenants develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to be effective in the activities they choose to engage with. Along with establishing an appropriate system for recognising, rewarding and/or reimbursing tenants for the time they give.

Open to learning and improving: We will take time to listen to and learn from our tenants; respecting their views and lived experiences; understanding their priorities, concerns and aspirations; and making sure they are considered and used, wherever possible, to adapt our services, address local issues, and improve the way we operate.

Sharing outcomes and impact: We will put structures in place to help us monitor, evaluate and review our tenant engagement and involvement activities, to ensure they remain accessible, fit for purpose and provide good value for money, not just in terms of what they cost to resource, but the improved efficiency and social value they add to our business, our tenants and their communities. We will then share the impact with our tenants, staff, Board and other stakeholders.

What matters is what works: We recognise and appreciate that despite the best efforts of Eldon Housing and its involved tenants, some engagement and involvement activities may not be as popular or successful as others, or add the value originally intended. Where this is apparent and if necessary, we will be bold enough to end them, learn from them and move on to identify more suitable and popular alternatives.

- 6.3 To underpin and demonstrate our commitment towards our principles, Eldon Housing will:
 - 6.3.1 Work with our tenants to explore and consider the extent of engagement, involvement and influence they wish to have and agree the methods to be used to achieve their aspirations.
 - 6.3.2 Expand our tenant engagement and involvement activities, creating and offering a wide range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to give feedback and become involved in scrutinising and influencing our strategies, policies and services.
 - 6.3.3 Explore, consider, and remove any barriers that could prevent tenants from engaging and becoming involved in our activities.
 - 6.3.4 Develop our approach and activities at a pace that best suits the tenants involved in them.
 - 6.3.5 Provide and promote a clear structure for the flow of information and feedback between the different tenant engagement and involvement activities and the association's Leadership Team, Board and Committees.
 - 6.3.6 Provide accessible support, training and resources to tenants who wish to become involved and/or implement tenant-led activities. This includes the reimbursement of legitimate expenses incurred by tenants when engaging in our involvement activities, provided that prior approval of the expense has been agreed with an Eldon Housing representative.

- 6.3.7 Be open and transparent with our tenants, providing access to the information they need to understand our performance against our responsibilities and targets, so that they can confidently and effectively scrutinise, challenge, and hold us to account.
- 6.3.8 Regularly consult with tenants to ensure we are providing services that meet their needs, taking their views into account when making decisions that affect their homes, schemes or neighbourhoods and the care and other services we provide.
- 6.3.9 Listen to our tenants and provide clear explanations in instances when we are unable to act on their feedback.
- 6.3.10 Keep our tenants informed and updated on the association's progress and performance, and other relevant matters that may be of interest.
- 6.3.11 Develop, implement and promote a strategy and delivery plan for meeting the aims and commitments of this policy.
- 6.3.12 Monitor, review and report on the effectiveness of our tenant involvement activities and the impact they have on our services, standards and neighbourhoods, as well as the personal benefits gained by the tenants who become involved.
- 6.3.13 Meet the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (as set out in Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Technical Requirements and Tenant Satisfaction Measures: Tenant survey requirements) and use survey results to inform and guide continuous improvement.
- 6.3.14 Provide appropriate training to all staff, so that the association's commitment and approaches to Tenant engagement, involvement and influence are understood and recognised as an integral part of everyone's job.

Tenant consultation

- 6.4 In addition to our tenant involvement and engagement activities, Eldon Housing has a responsibility to consult tenants on proposals that may substantially affect them. To help achieve this, we will:
 - 6.4.1 Engage and consult with tenants, at the earliest opportunity, on specific matters or significant changes that affect where they live, the services we provide or the future direction of the association.
 - 6.4.2 Give tenants affected by our proposals clear, relevant, and transparent information on those proposals, which sets out the actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) in the immediate and longer term.
 - 6.4.3 Allow tenants adequate time to seek advice, consider and respond to our proposals.
 - 6.4.5 Take time to carefully consider feedback from tenants (and/or their nominated advocates), recognising and responding to any risks, sensitivities and/or other implications that may not have been previously identified.
 - 6.4.6 Provide clear and timely feedback to tenants on the outcome of engagement and consultation activities, demonstrating how their feedback was considered when reaching a decision and providing clear explanations in instances where we are not able to act on it.
 - 6.4.7 Produce and make available a clear and easy to follow procedure for tenant

consultation, to help ensure that the above commitments are enacted efficiently, effectively and in compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations.

- 6.4.8 Provide guidance to tenants on their right to appeal or complain if they feel that a formal consultation has not been carried out in accordance with this policy and the association's tenant consultation procedure.

7.0 Policy exclusions and parameters

- 7.1 Eldon Housing does not currently have places for tenants on its Board; although, this may be an area that the Board will consider in future should tenants indicate a desire to become involved in the overall governance of the association. Eldon Housing does, however, have places for tenants on its Quality Assurance Committee, which consists of Board members and reports directly to the Board. It is intended that spaces for tenants on the Quality Assurance Committee be filled by nominations from Eldon Housing's Tenants' Panel.
- 7.2 Eldon Housing reserves the right to withdraw its support for and recognition of tenants' groups, and/or exclude individual tenants from engaging in its involvement activities, if their behaviour is considered to be dishonest; persistently unreasonable; offensive; discriminatory; threatening; intimidating; disruptive; or of a nature that could affect or prevent other tenants from staying or becoming involved, or have a negative impact on the association's reputation and/or the credibility of its engagement and involvement activities. This includes unacceptable behaviour towards Eldon Housing staff, contractors and others acting on the association's behalf.
- 7.3 Decisions to withdraw recognition and support or exclude a group or individual from engaging in the association's involvement activities will be made by the association's Head of Housing, Care and Support, who will write to the Chair of the group, or the individual concerned, to explain the reason/s for their de-recognition or exclusion from the association's involvement activities. Any individual or tenants' group excluded from the association's involvement activities has the right to appeal, in writing, to the association's Chief Executive.

8.0 Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 8.1 The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard (2.1.3) requires registered providers to 'provide accessible support that meets the diverse needs of tenants so they can engage with the opportunities for involvement offered by their landlord.'
- 8.2 Eldon Housing's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement applies to this policy. One of our principles for tenant engagement, involvement and influence is '*everyone's welcome*.' This means that we aim to ensure that the different opportunities we offer are suitable for and available to all tenants, regardless of their backgrounds, personal circumstances and protected characteristics.
- 8.3 We will carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's), prior to introducing and/or commencing tenant engagement and involvement activities to help ensure that, as far as possible, they do not unintentionally disadvantage anyone and proactively assist with advancing Eldon Housing's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Where obstacles to involvement are identified, we will endeavour to make suitable and reasonable adjustments to address them.
- 8.4 We will monitor the diversity of tenants involved in our activities to help ensure that, as much as possible, they reflect the association's wider tenant profile. This will enable us

to identify any specific groups that are under-represented and focus on recruiting their involvement.

- 8.5 This policy has had an Equality Impact Assessment, which identified that it does not intentionally discriminate against, exclude or disadvantage any individual or group, either directly or indirectly. However, the EIA recognised that the association needs to *'Explore, consider, and remove any barriers that could prevent tenants from engaging and becoming involved in its activities,'* which we have committed to in 6.3.3 of this policy.

9.0 Performance monitoring and continuous improvement

- 9.1 This policy will be revised and updated every three years, or as necessary in the event of changes in legislative or regulatory requirements or where areas for improvement are identified.
- 9.2 A review of our tenant engagement and involvement activities will be carried out annually to evaluate the outcomes and impact of those activities, along with any lessons learnt, and the different types of value achieved. The annual engagement and involvement review will be developed in conjunction with Eldon's Tenants' Panel and reported to the Board, following which, it will be promoted and made available to all tenants.
- 9.3 We will consult tenants on the suitability and effectiveness of our engagement and involvement activities, at least every three years, taking their views into account and updating our approaches as necessary.
- 9.4 In addition to any statutory remedies, tenants can seek redress through Eldon Housing's complaints policy should they feel we have failed to make adequate provision for their engagement and involvement, and/or meet the principles and objectives of this policy.

APPENDIX 1

Definitions relating to this policy (see section 3):

The Association	Eldon Housing Association.
Tenants' Panel	An advisory and consultative body, consisting of tenant volunteers who bring a tenant perspective to Eldon's work, and play a crucial role in scrutinising Eldon's performance, supporting improvement and holding the association to account.
Tenant	Any person who holds a tenancy with Eldon Housing and members of their household who are on record with Eldon Housing as living with the tenant.
Advocate	A person named and permitted by a tenant to help them express their views, ideas and/or concerns and support them in becoming involved in the association's activities.
Engagement	How the association communicates and interacts with tenants.
Empowerment	Having agreed responsibility for and/or control over a specific activity or piece of work.
Involvement	Including tenants in activities that help improve their housing services and standards, safety and security, and quality of life.
Consultation	Inviting tenants to comment on proposals on matters that affect them, including any significant changes to the way the association provides its services or is run, and using their feedback to inform and influence decisions.
Co-creation	Joint working (staff and tenants) to design, develop, review and improve policies, strategies, services or standards, or on specific projects that add value to the organisation, its tenants and communities.
Scrutiny	Involving tenants in reviewing, checking and evaluating information and/or data, enabling and supporting them in holding the association to account and making recommendations for improvement.
Inclusive	Open to all - Not marginalising, disadvantaging or excluding tenants from being involved in activities.
Accessible	Making it as easy as possible for people to make contact and communicate, obtain information, attend, and/or take part in activities.
Informed	To be kept informed and updated on matters that affect tenants and/or the way in which Eldon manages and maintains their homes, schemes and neighbourhoods.
Influence	The ability to inform, shape and affect decisions, activities and/or outcomes.
Transparency	Willingness to share information and communicate openly and honestly.
Accountability	Being answerable to tenants and accepting responsibility for actions or inactions.
Collaboration	Cooperating and working together to achieve a specific or shared goal.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Author	Date	Amendment Summary
			Summarise what's changed and why (include section reference – e.g. S5.2 amended to include.....)