



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Tonic's community-led approach is integral to our business model. Engagement with and active involvement from our residents sits at the heart of Tonic's operations.

Our staff, board and volunteers understand the issues LGBT+ people face through our own lived experience and we also gain insight through work with community networks, partner organisations and directly with service users. Tonic's Community Panel also provides critical direction and scrutiny of the organisation to the board.

This policy details the approach Tonic takes towards engaging with residents so they can positively develop, improve and scrutinise our organisational direction and strategies, and have a demonstrable impact on their housing and living environment. This policy adheres to (and goes beyond) the responsibilities of a social housing provider as detailed in the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard.

Terminology

'Resident' refers to anybody living in our housing; 'Tenant' refers to residents living in rented accommodation.

Involvement and empowerment

We will support residents to be effectively involved and ensure their involvement is meaningful and purpose-based. Our on-site presence in our schemes is to understand and learn about our residents, and to develop a culture of mutual trust, respect and understanding between residents and staff.

We will seek to involve residents in a wide range of areas that are responsive to the changing needs of the residents and business, including on deciding and reviewing:

- Policies, procedures and strategies
- Housing-related services and housing management functions, including the setting of service standards
- Events to be delivered on-site

- Local offers for service delivery
- Tonic's wider strategic priorities and direction
- Proposals for change (e.g. change to management structures or the landlord)
- Rent, service charge and Management Fee increases

We acknowledge that some residents do not wish to get involved and respect their right not to do so. We will provide formal involvement methods, whilst promoting maximum inclusion through other less formal methods.

Tonic will provide a range of accessible involvement opportunities to achieve this, such as planning workshops, focus groups, surveys (e.g. annual surveys, service specific surveys), resident panels, armchair consultation and scheme walkarounds. We will provide a range of online and offline methods of involvement depending on the wants and needs of our residents.

Tonic will allow residents to regularly review and scrutinise Tonic's performance. This scrutiny mechanism may be extended to allow residents to apply to become shareholders and board members in the future. Tonic will consult with residents annually on the best way of involving residents in the governance and scrutiny of Tonic's housing management service.

Encouraging resident-led participation

Tonic will support residents looking to take on management responsibilities within our schemes. We may also support residents in taking over other management responsibilities, such as the management of our community areas or the management of communal maintenance and repair services. We will support the formation of resident panels, scrutiny groups, repairs and maintenance committees or groups focused around a specific issue. Where residents would like to lead but do not have the necessary skill set, Tonic will work with residents to develop these skills, providing training and support where necessary at little or no cost to the resident.

Reporting

Tonic will publish an annual report to be made publicly available, which includes information on repair and maintenance budgets as well as other key statistics such as complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints.

Further detail on how we communicate with residents individually and otherwise is covered in the Resident Communications Policy.

Complaints

Tonic will create a range of ways for residents to express dissatisfaction or make a complaint and will provide clear information on the process of dealing with them. Complaints, as well as any action and further communications will be logged and stored on our CRM systems. Tonic's approach will be clear, simple and accessible and complaints will be resolved promptly, politely and fairly. This is detailed more in our Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Equality and diversity

Tonic is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion because we believe it is the right thing to do. We are committed to treating all residents with fairness and respect.

We will go out of our way to remove any barriers faced by residents in involvement and engagement capacities. We will seek to create opportunities for working with residents that are appropriate and suitable to the individual needs of our residents, including making reasonable adjustments where needed. For more information please refer to Tonic's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Policy review

This policy shall be reviewed at least every 24 months by the Board, and will be revised to take account of changes in legislation, resident feedback and best practice.

Signed 20th March 2023