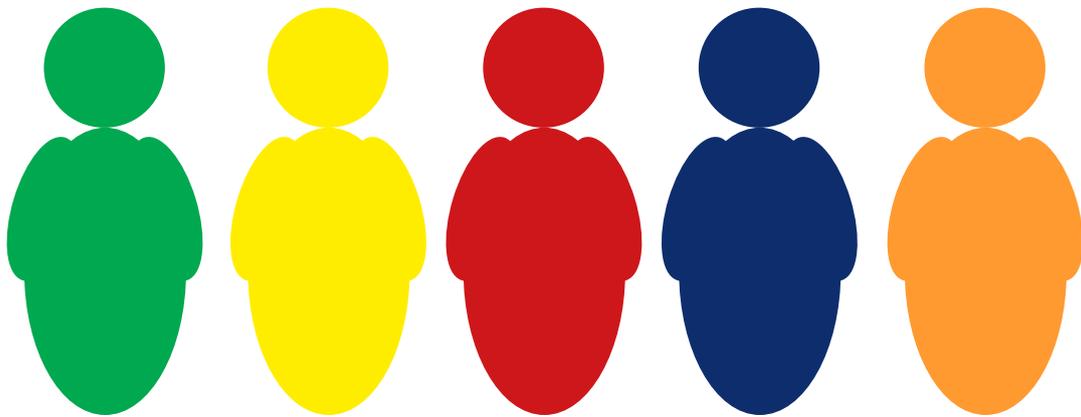




Elim Housing Group

Resident Engagement Strategy 2017 - 2019



This strategy sets out Elim's approach to resident engagement.

It is a strategy for the next two years. We believe this is long term enough to see real change and allow for meaningful engagement whilst remaining short term enough to make sure of its relevance within a rapidly changing sector.

This strategy is aligned to our 2017-2022 Business Plan which aims to support our purpose, "that people have an affordable home and to enable them to build their lives and develop independence".

The way we engage with you and the opportunities set out in this strategy are as much about encouraging you to understand the changes that are taking place in the social housing and in the property market as a whole. We want to make sure that all our residents can feedback on and influence the services they receive from us, but we also want our engagement to focus on promoting positive change and helping individuals to overcome difficult financial and social circumstances that might prevent them from achieving aspirations and considering new housing options when the time is right.

This strategy was developed using best practice guidance, feedback from residents and input from our Housing & Customer Services and Support Services teams.

What resident engagement means at Elim

The way that we engage with you is important in defining our relationship with you. We see engagement as a two-way process. We can't actually engage with you without listening to you. On the other hand, tailoring our service to your needs is important to us but unless we can gather feedback effectively, we'll be missing out on valuable insights into how to deliver and continuously improve your service and information.

Resident engagement describes how we provide you, and all other residents regardless of tenure, with the opportunities to understand how our business works and what living in an Elim property can mean for you. It is also the opportunity for you to give your views, help set priorities and work with us to improve our services.

It is about working together to put you at the heart of service delivery and giving you opportunities to directly affect the way that services are received, improved and developed.

We recognise that many residents will only stay in an Elim property for a fixed period of time so we also consider that resident engagement is about creating opportunities for you to develop skills and achieve your aspirations.

Resident engagement includes activities such as consultation or feedback on provision of services, telling us what is important to you and helping us shape the information we provide. It is not about individual issues such as a disagreement with a neighbour or an individual rent issue.

Why resident engagement is important to Elim

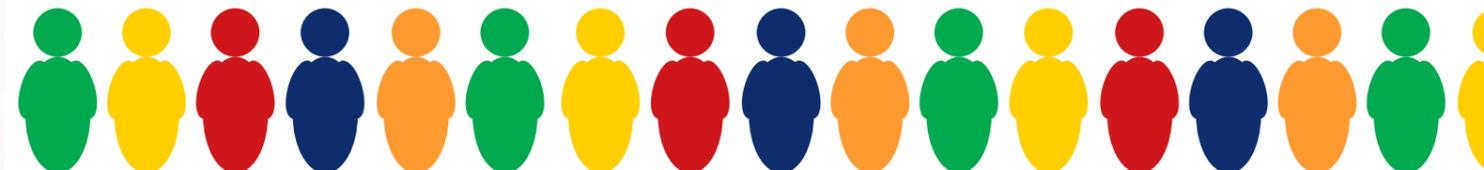
We believe that resident engagement:

- Helps us to understand what services are most important to our residents.
- Helps us to communicate key business messages to you so that you can understand our vision and the context in which we create our policies & procedures.
- Helps us to make good decisions and use our resources wisely on services that will deliver the greatest benefits to you.
- Will allow us to change our relationship with you so that we can empower you to become less reliant on our services as appropriate.
- Encourages tenancy and licence sustainment leading to improved performance in key areas such as arrears and the condition a property is left in when a resident moves out.
- Will help Elim become the landlord residents want to live with.
- Will help Elim be an organisation that others want to partner and work with.
- Makes good business sense and that's why it is included in our business plan targets.

The benefits of resident engagement for residents

We believe that resident engagement:

- Creates opportunities for you to develop skills, knowledge and confidence helping you to become more socially, financially and digitally independent.
- Increases your satisfaction with your home and services received.
- Helps you better understand our decisions and how they are made.
- Helps you understand what is required to sustain your tenancy.
- Gives you a voice so that your opinions and ideas can be heard so that you influence service delivery.



We worked in partnership with Bristol City Council and residents at Philips House to install these planters.

Where are we now

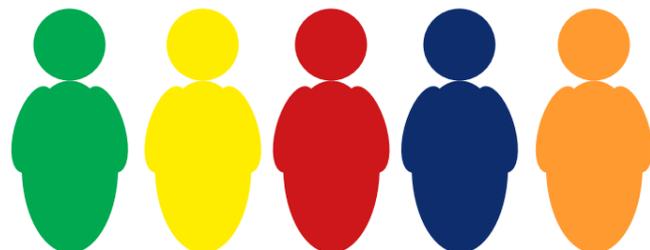
We have been focusing on engaging with residents on day to day services which help them to sustain their tenancy. This includes managing rent payments and arrears, dealing with reports of nuisance or making sure that repairs are completed.

The resident engagement activities which have been ongoing include:

- Satisfaction surveys
- Consultation and introduction of a new cleaning and grounds maintenance service
- Resident Forum
- Social media polls
- Scheme specific projects and engagement
- Resident profiling
- Key information leaflets
- Resident involvement in recruitment processes in support services

We have also continued with a number of other activities which are forms of resident engagement but are not always recognised as such including:

- Our approach to customer service and communication.
- Providing new resident information packs and handbooks.
- Completing and learning from new resident visits and exit satisfaction surveys.
- Providing clear and easy to understand Tenancy, Licence and Lease agreements.
- Sharing information about procedures such as how to report repairs or give feedback.
- Maintaining an up to date website with relevant information for residents.
- Sharing information and news with residents through the Elim e-news bulletin and social media accounts.
- Providing an easy way to give us feedback.
- Promoting opportunities for you to interact with the Elim board.



“At Elim we will offer a menu of opportunities to get residents involved in ways and at times that suit them. It is important to us to give residents and staff the opportunity to share ideas, information and look for ways to improve the services delivered.”

Lizzie Aston-Long
Head of Housing & Customer Services





Our aims



We will make sure existing and future resident engagement is recognised and promoted.



We will communicate with you in a way that allows you to stay more fully informed of sector or other changes that may influence you.



We will increase and promote the positive outcomes from resident engagement activities.



We will increase the number of residents able to get involved by increasing the range, location and delivery method of opportunities. This will include an increase in the use of digital channels.



We will provide opportunities which allow residents to develop skills and experience which will help them achieve their aspirations, including greater independence where appropriate.



We will consider how we engage with residents of all tenures across all areas of our business.

Opportunities for engagement

We will offer a range of different opportunities for you to engage with us, influence service delivery and develop skills. Some of these will be available immediately, others will take time to develop with your support.

The time of day of engagement activities such as meetings will, where possible, be varied to allow those working or with other daytime commitments to be involved should they wish to be. Offering out of hours activities will depend on levels of interest and engagement.

Community hubs which make use of existing office locations will provide the opportunity for occasional community events and for you to speak to a member of staff at a more local venue with the potential for other client groups to make use of support project facilities such as IT, food shops or workshops.

Drop in events can be arranged where a venue is available and both demand and attendance are sufficient to justify staff time or costs.

Estate inspections will actively involve residents who will have the opportunity to inform the way their scheme is inspected and will receive feedback on outcomes of the inspection.

Satisfaction surveys & feedback initiatives the results and learning of which will be shared as appropriate, will include maintenance satisfaction surveys, new resident satisfaction surveys, exiting resident satisfaction surveys, STAR surveys (or equivalent), ERFS (Improving your support service) questionnaires and feedback on community events or projects within 1 month of the event.

Resident Forums, currently led by the Head of Housing & Customer Services, will focus on 2 linked topics at each meeting. We will explore ways to make sure that they are increasingly accessible and representative of a range of residents.

House meetings for supported housing projects which give residents living at that project the opportunity to directly influence both their project and the wider support service.

Opportunities for **digital engagement** will be developed over time starting with the introduction of a more interactive website and increasing use of e-mail and text communication.

Scheme champions who will be able to provide feedback on cleaning, grounds maintenance and communal repair works for homes we manage in their area. This will primarily be through an online feedback system. All residents will be given the opportunity to take on this role where they live and those not interested will still be encouraged to provide feedback to us as required.

Shadowing opportunities can be prearranged for residents who have an interest in understanding how Elim functions and the way we work. These opportunities will be dependent on staff availability and only where the experience will help residents develop the skills and understanding they need to actively engage with us or support a resident in their career aspirations. There are also occasional opportunities to volunteer with us advertised via our website.

Consultation on service charges will take place in January each year.

Publication of our business plan, objectives, values and vision for the future.

Development of a **Leaflet rack** which will be online resource of leaflets and forms which can also be shared in printed format as appropriate providing key information on topics such as succession, gas safety or mutual exchange. There will be opportunities for residents to indicate what leaflets they would like to see.

Support for residents groups which will include recognition of groups set up by residents and consideration of requests for support and attendance by staff where they are invited to discuss specific issues.

We will seek and promote appropriate opportunities for you to **engage with the Elim Board**, its members and committees.

Future aspirations

There are a number of other resident engagement activities we would like to develop at Elim in the future.

We feel it is important to record these now to reinforce the direction of our resident engagement activities.

The areas we would like to consider or develop in future include:

- Developing your role in making sure that we are financially accountable to our residents.
- Incentive / reward scheme
- Opportunity for actively involved residents to visit other Elim properties
- Extending resident involvement to recruitment outside of support services
- Creation of a scheme improvements fund
- Creating more opportunities for residents of different tenures
- Developing our digital engagement activities

Resourcing

Our focus as a landlord must be on helping you keep your home and managing the changes in welfare benefits which may mean we have less resources for some of the opportunities we aim to deliver in this strategy.

We will work as effectively, efficiently and creatively as possible so that we can achieve our aims in a proportionate and sustainable way.

All of our staff have a role to play in delivery of this strategy however, the key roles are:

-  **Head of Housing & Customer Services**
Overall lead for strategy and resident engagement
-  **Head of Support Services**
Lead on strategy and resident engagement within support services
-  **Housing Officers & Supported Housing Officers**
Implementing the action plan and seeing and delivering day to day engagement opportunities
-  **Business Support & Information Officer**
Internal coordination of data about residents and support of activities including facilitation of Resident Forum
-  **Comms Team**
Support with communication for example through website & social media

Inclusion, equalities & overcoming barriers to resident engagement

We recognise that some groups or individuals may be disadvantaged or subject to unfair discrimination or are restricted in the time they have to give to engagement activities due to other commitments such as care giving or working. We believe that this is not acceptable and work to make sure that our policies and procedures are implemented in a way that provides equal and fair treatment to all those we work with.

We will make use of resident profiling to identify those who may need additional support or information and inform the way this strategy is delivered.

We will address potential barriers to resident engagement through:

- Covering reasonable travel costs incurred by you if you attend resident engagement activities.
- Covering reasonable childcare costs incurred by you if you attend resident engagement activities.
- Help you access training or support which will help you participate in resident engagement activities. (This is unlikely to be financial support.)
- Provide a range of opportunities, locations, times and methods for resident engagement. This will include flexibility in appointment/ meeting times and using digital methods to allow engagement outside of working hours.
- Discussing with you additional support needed for you to participate in resident engagement activities and accommodating these where reasonable and possible. For example providing written documents in larger print or allowing a carer or other assistant to accompany you to an activity.

Measuring success

The success of this strategy will be measured through resident engagement with the opportunities.

This strategy will be monitored by the Head of Housing and Customer Services and will be reviewed as appropriate by Elim's Operational Management Team (OMT).

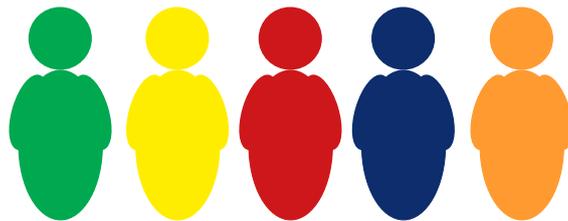
Managers within the Housing & Customer Services and Support Services teams will monitor performance against actions by their teams. Confirmation of the completion of actions will be available to the Resident Forum.

Get involved

The success of this strategy depends as much on you engaging with us as it does on us providing the opportunities.

Please take advantage of these opportunities and share with us your existing knowledge and skills to develop them further and help us to develop our understanding of resident needs and help make Elim the best it can be for both current and future residents.

If you want more information about how you can get more actively involved or have any questions about this strategy please speak to your Housing Officer.



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