

National Tenant Engagement Standards (Setting the standard for effective engagement)

Foreword

This document is a summary of the review of how BCT presently meets the new TPAS National Tenant Engagement Standards and considers what some of our next steps will be. This review was carried on 19 August 2016 and it is likely that many new engagement opportunities will directly result from the service changes which will take place from 3 October 2016.

1. Engagement Strategy

Building the right foundations is critical for effective engagement.

Tenants and stakeholders need to influence your business plan so your involvement priorities can flow from it. The principles under this standard are designed to help you make the most of your tenant involvement strategy by ensuring tenants are involved in the key issues and objectives affecting them and the business.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have Tenant Board Members.• Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel has presented its first review to Board.• The STAR Survey 2014 highlighted a range of areas where tenant's expectations in relation to performance were not being achieved.• BCT's Community Engagement Strategy is in place.• BCT's vision is to 'ensure tenants have a key voice and role in decision making'. Staff support this ethos through operational activities, for example engagement with the sheltered courts around changes in service delivery.• There is a Tenant Engagement and Community Development plan which is regularly reviewed.• The Participatory Budget has been monitored by the Participatory Budget Steering Group which was made up of Board Members, tenants and other stakeholders.• Feedback from our customers is very important and we have used this feedback as part of the recent service reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The new BCT Housing Management Team will have engagement and involvement objectives.• The new Volintas customer satisfaction tool will provide more effective customer feedback.• Analyse the results from the STAR Survey 2016 will provide up to date customer feedback.• Plan a timetable for Tenant Scrutiny.• The performance management framework and reporting will involve Tenant Board Members.• The new Neighbourhood Officers to have local Community Budgets.• We will review the Community Engagement Strategy as part of developing Thriving Communities Strategy.• Engagement plan and progress to be reported regularly to Performance Committee.• Review of services and customer access.• We will create a new engagement structure which will lead to increased community participation across the estate.

2. Resources for Engagement

Identifying the right support to put in place to enable effective engagement.

As the saying goes, ‘you’ve got to invest to gain’. Planned investment is essential to reap all the rewards that effective engagement can bring.

Meeting this standard ensures that your tenant involvement supports you to focus and maximise your resources and makes sure you’re effective in delivering your essential outcomes.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide transport for tenants or reimburse fuel costs to those who use their own car. We will also pay for child minding and care expenses (which must be from a registered child minder or care agency). In addition, we offer extra assistance for those with mobility difficulties as well as providing training. • To help create an informal, friendly atmosphere we provide refreshments at our meetings where we ensure that everyone’s views are valued and respected. • BCT has been accepted by the ‘Learn My Way’ Partner Centre. As part of our digital offer two tenants have been trained as digital champions and they are supporting other tenants to develop their IT skills. • The Tenant Scrutiny Panel was developed by officers and tenants who worked with independent consultants (TPAS) to develop BCT’s bespoke scrutiny model. Training was provided to tenants as part of this process. • The Communications Group has been supported and has received training which has aided the development of BCT’s newsletters and Annual Reports. • The Participatory Budget has supported a wide range of community projects and initiatives over the past three years. These projects and initiatives are regularly monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our bottom up approach will enable and ensure effective engagement. The new Housing team will visit every tenant each year. Part of this visit will be to hear their views and encourage their involvement with BCT. • Promoting and supporting engagement will form a part of the new Housing Management service through their job descriptions and at the team induction. • Promoting and supporting engagement will be included in staff inductions. • We will hold sessions with the Executive and Management Team to explore further how engagement opportunities can be utilised. • We will continue to create learning opportunities. • We will hold a ‘Techy Tea Party’ as part of supporting and rolling out our digital offer to tenants. • We are in the process of developing Tenant Ground Maintenance Inspectors. An initial pilot will be carried out and reviewed to enable an effective model to be developed for Byker. • Review of TARA Groups moving forward to a new structure for Byker. • We will involve our older persons and ethnic minorities groups as we move forward to a new structure for Byker. • We will involve tenant’s in future environmental investment.

3. Information and Insight

Commit to gathering, using and providing the right information.

To ensure your engagement is fully maximised you need to ensure you're accessing the right information, at the right level, at the right time, from the right people and in the right way.

This is all tough to get right. Follow these principles to be smarter at profiling so that the information you gather truly reflects your tenants, leaseholders and communities.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A part of the development of the BCT Community Engagement Strategy tenants told us that they wanted us to talk to them face to face. • The STAR Survey 2014 told us that a large percentage of our tenants are digitally excluded. • We have been working with partners to train tenants to become Digital Champions and for them to train other tenants to use digital platforms. • We have used the STAR Survey and community consultation events as some of our main independent engagement methods. This has been supported by the independent research carried out by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. • Our contractors have also carried out a number of satisfaction surveys capturing tenant's opinions. • Contained within BCT's Annual Equality and Diversity Report is a range of profiling information regarding BCT tenants. Awareness of this information helps us to understand the makeup of the community. • Tenants have attended conferences and tenant training events to learn and gain inspiration from others. This has included supporting Tenant Board Members through training provided by TPAS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with tenants and other stakeholders to address digital exclusion issues across the estate. • We will undertake a new initiative to review the BCT newsletter to try to understand how we might evolve the newsletter, encourage more tenants to make use of the publication and accordingly hear BCT's messages. • We will carry out a review of the information which we presently have on our website as part of preparing for the implementation of new services in October. • We will seek to make more use of the social media's to promote the services which BCT provides. • We will review this year's engagement plan and plan for the next year. • Benchmarking of engagement actions to be reported to Performance Committee. • Through listening to our tenant's views and be seen to act on them. We will look to promote a 'You Said: We Did' message to encourage our tenants to gain an awareness and confidence in BCT as a product. • We have reviewed the effectiveness of a number of social return on investment tools. We need to do more work around this area to make effective use of this tool. • Carry out a review of services and customer access.

4. Influence and Scrutiny

Creating appropriate and effective levels of influence and scrutiny to drive business performance.

Enabling scrutiny and influence at a strategic and operational level will help you review your processes, streamline your services, systems and documents and ensure tenants have an accountable role in their landlord's decisions, performance and conduct.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bespoke BCT Tenant Scrutiny model was developed in partnership with tenants and TPAS. TPAS provided independent advice support and training to the involved tenants. The resulting Tenant Scrutiny Panel is transparent and considers value for money issues. • At present tenants are confused about who BCT are and what our relationship is with YHN and NCC, so it is presently very difficult to encourage tenants to get involved with BCT as they do not understand who we are. • Where BCT has had direct control of service i.e. tenant communications we have been able to work closely with the tenants from the Communications Group to influence and improve our tenant communications. • The Tenant Scrutiny Panel reviewed BCT's performance information as part of understanding how BCT operates and is performing. • The STAR Survey 2016 has seen an increased return rate which will help us to independently understand how we are performing. • Through the Tenant Scrutiny Panel there is the opportunity for independent tenant led scrutiny however it has proved to be very difficult to recruit and retain an effective scrutiny panel and the model we are presently using is under review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation through Tenant Scrutiny Plan/ Performance Committee. • We will look for opportunities to enable a critical friends approach to be taken which will lead to new scrutiny opportunities. • We are presently looking at a proposal which TPAS have put forward which may help us to achieve this. • Review of TARA Groups moving forward to a new structure for Byker. • Engagement plan and progress to be reported regularly to Performance Committee. • As part of the Ground Maintenance Inspectors pilot we will be working with tenants to review the team's performance and look for areas where future improvements can be made. • We will carry out a review of the complaints policy to ensure the policy is effective and is creating a learning culture. • Use the information captured in the complaints log, combined with performance management information to help shape service delivery.

5. Community Engagement

Using a range of methods for effective wider community engagement.

These principles are about working with communities to understand the issues they feel are a priority and find solutions with the community for long term sustainability. It's about being creative in empowering and supporting communities to develop their capacity and address issues that are wider than just 'housing'.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a community engagement plan which is regularly monitored and updated. • Activities carried out by groups like the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and the Communications Group are clearly linked to supporting the organisations objectives. • The Participatory Budget Steering Group, which is made up of Board members, tenants and other stakeholders has allocated funding to support BCT's Vision. • The Participatory Budget has been targeted at a number of key themes including; Safer Neighbourhoods, Health and Wellbeing, Skills and Employment and Young person's activities. This has fitted well with BCT's Vision to 'maximise access for local people into employment, training, health and education opportunities' • All tenants were consulted with as part of BCT's proposed service changes. The resulting main service changes will take place in October 2016 and this brings with it real opportunities to further develop a bottom up approach to engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear plan around scrutiny and the services to be reviewed. • Engagement plan and progress to be reported regularly to Performance Committee. • The new Neighbourhood Officers approach will support the community and stakeholders to work more closely with BCT. • Engagement plan and progress to be reported regularly to Performance Committee. • Plan a timetable for Tenant Scrutiny. • We will involve tenant's in future environmental investment.

6. Valuing Engagement

Measuring the effects of your engagement adds value to your organisation, stakeholders, communities and individuals.

Whether you're a tenant or landlord it's important that you are able to understand and show the value of your tenant involvement and community development so you can arrive at cost-effective solutions for your organisation and your community and ensure continued support for future work.

What we do now	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects supported through the Participatory Budget are funded on the basis that they have clear objectives and all funded projects are monitored against these objectives. • An evaluation is completed at the end of the project to capture what the project has achieved and to identify any learning from the project. • We promote BCT's engagement activities through our Newsletter (which goes to all tenants), within the Annual Report to Tenants, on our website, through press releases and via the social media's. • We have an engagement plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed. • We look to innovatively evolve projects, learning from previous experience and by working with tenants and stakeholders, seek to achieve best value for money in the engagement activities we deliver. A good example of this would be how the Family Fun Day grew year on year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to work with stakeholders to track and evaluate projects which we support. • Engagement plan and progress to be reported regularly to Performance Committee. • Plan a timetable for Tenant Scrutiny. • As a result of the service changes taking place in October we will be in a better position to listen to our tenant's views and be seen to act on them. As this culture of change rolls out we will look to promote a 'You Said: We Did' message to encourage our tenants to gain an awareness and confidence in BCT as a product. • We need some method to assess VFM of all tenant engagement. What we are spending/what are we getting for it, what are the outcomes. We need to build VFM in to performance management for tenant engagement.