



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

**tpas**

# National Tenant Engagement Standards

Setting the standard for effective engagement



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# Introduction from the Chair

As the chair of Tpas I am delighted to introduce to the sector the Tpas 'national tenant engagement standards'.

This is an exciting time for Tpas. The pace of political change seems ever quicker and the support and interest to invest in meaningful and sustainable tenant and community engagement is growing.

With these standards, we're bringing together flexible, practical and clear principles of how tenants, landlords and contractors can find smarter solutions to improve services, save money and bring real and long-lasting change to communities.

Tpas's challenge is to make sure not only that we help as many tenants, landlords and contractors as possible to reach and exceed these standards but that we listen to their journeys and continually adapt them to reflect future innovation.

This is not only a challenge but an opportunity too; an opportunity to find ways to adapt our approach and a challenge to foster the innovation and creative thinking from which new insights, ideas and solutions will emerge.

The Tpas national tenant engagement standards offer a blueprint for how an organisation could approach their tenant engagement activity effectively.

Tpas have shared their most valuable asset, their expertise, to produce standards that are relevant to today's operations, as well as strategic planning. I am confident that landlords, tenants and contractors will have no trouble in deploying these standards.

The principles underpinning the standards will help us create a common and achievable goal that tenants, landlords and contractors can work towards. It's not about being prescriptive or fixed. It is about stating clearly that meaningful and flexible engagement is proven to drive business improvement and community development. In uncertain times it pays to focus on the certainties. And that is that tenant and community engagement - done well - helps organisations deliver results.

Effective engagement really is a team sport. We all have a part to play to ensure that these standards are truly valued and referred to as part of our work. It is up to us, and the truly important work that we do, to ensure that we deliver brilliant engagement, as standard.

**John Giesen, Chair**





# Setting the standards: Why are standards important?

Safe, secure housing, at a price you can afford is what everyone needs to get out of poverty. JRF's evidence shows the vital importance of social housing to creating a prosperous and poverty-free UK. We know this both as an independent organisation working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice, but also as a landlord providing housing and care. That's why I strongly welcome the new Tpas Tenant Engagement Standards.

I particularly welcome the fact that the standards link the engagement of tenants with business plan objectives. No social business can flourish without the active engagement of people, and all our experience shows that the people who know our services best are our best allies in developing and maintaining neighbourhoods. The involvement of tenants isn't an optional extra. It is essential for the health of our organisations, and the communities we serve.'

**Julia Unwin,  
Chief Executive,  
Joseph Rowntree  
Foundation**



# 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 from your tenant involvement strategy by ensuring tenants are involved in the key issues and objectives affecting them and the business.





## Building the right foundations is critical for effective engagement

- 1.1** Engagement and involvement objectives link directly to governance and viability and are supported by the organisations management structure. Priorities highlighted through engagement are reflected in business plan objectives, departmental strategies and operational plans for customer facing services.
- 1.2** Engagement is planned to improve services and develop communities and also to achieve transparency and accountability.
- 1.3** Staff, residents and Board (including Councillors) are agreed as to the reasons for, and benefits of, planned tenant, leaseholder and community engagement across the organisation. Expectations for engagement are built into role descriptions and appraisal processes.
- 1.4** The approach to engagement is planned, monitored and reviewed regularly with tenants, leaseholders and communities. Engagement methods used reflect the profile of the organisations tenants, communities and housing types.
- 1.5** Tenant engagement is valued alongside staff and stakeholder engagement.



# 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.





## Identify the right support you need for effective engagement

- 2.1** Sufficient resources are allocated to engagement and reviewed to ensure it is effective in delivering planned outcomes.
- 2.2** Staff development opportunities are made available to enable the delivery of the organisations engagement strategy.
- 2.3** Appropriate levels of support are provided so that tenants, leaseholders and community members can be effectively engaged.
- 2.4** Volunteers are recruited, supported and trained so they can influence, co-design and scrutinise.
- 2.5** Where community initiatives are undertaken, opportunities to develop the capacity of the community are offered, monitored and measured so that projects are sustainable and result in the increased take up of opportunities locally and improved outcomes.



# 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.





## Commit to gathering, using and providing the right information

- 3.1** New technologies are used appropriately to increase access to information and to provide feedback, ideas and information to be shared.
- 3.2** The organisation understands preferred channels of engagement and links their approach to a digital inclusion strategy.
- 3.3** Appropriate engagement methods are used to gather the right information about customer opinions, needs and wants.
- 3.4** Information gathered through engagement is used to gain insight and influence services and approaches so that they reflects tenant, leaseholder and community profiles and preferences.
- 3.5** The organisation works with engaged tenants, leaseholders and communities to look outward, benchmark, learn and gain inspiration from others.
- 3.6** The landlord applies customer insight and profiling information to prioritise its approach and the allocation of resources for resident involvement.
- 3.7** The changes brought about through engagement are evaluated and shared with staff, tenants, leaseholders, communities and stakeholder organisations.

# 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.







## Tenant scrutiny aims to give tenants more power in holding their landlord to account for their decisions, performance and conduct.

- 4.1** All influence and scrutiny engagement is outcome focused. It is designed to improve services and communities as well as provide value for money and transparency.
- 4.2** Tenants, leaseholders and communities can influence appropriate strategy, policy, standards, approaches and performance targets.
- 4.3** Customer insight information is used with engaged tenants, leaseholders and communities to influence decisions and co design services and approaches.
- 4.4** There is engagement in performance monitoring, learning from performance information and improving performance through effective challenge.
- 4.5** Where appropriate there is engagement to build in area based performance management and approaches that provide area based accountability.
- 4.6** There is a framework for engagement that holds the organisation to account through collaborative yet independent tenant led scrutiny approaches.
- 4.7** There is engagement in understanding, resolving and learning from complaints.
- 4.8** There is clarity about the role of tenant influence and scrutiny within the organisation amongst members of the governing body and senior management team.
- 4.9** Where tenants have the Right to Manage, information is provided about how this can happen and tenants are supported to develop tenant management. Organisations not affected by the Right to Manage are open and receptive to the idea of voluntary tenant management.

# 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'.







## Use a range of methods for effective wider community engagement

- 5.1** Community engagement is planned, monitored and measured to achieve social, environmental and economic outcomes and clearly links to the organisations business plan objectives.
- 5.2** The organisation plans its strategic approach to and delivery of community engagement with tenants, leaseholders and communities.
- 5.3** Community engagement projects are developed with appropriate local stakeholders and designed to meet jointly identified needs.
- 5.4** Community development activity is planned and delivered using the community development values of:
  - 5.4.1** Working with communities to establish needs and design actions.
  - 5.4.2** Developing and utilising the strengths and resources of communities / community members by developing confidence, skills and knowledge.
  - 5.4.3** Promoting fairness and inclusion in all aspects of community work.
- 5.5** The organisation supports bottom up initiatives that will contribute to long term community cohesion.

# 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.







## Measuring the outcomes of tenant engagement

- 6.1** Engagement is planned, monitored and measured and has clear aims, objectives and outcomes.
- 6.2** Monitoring methods and measures of success are agreed with stakeholders in advance of projects or interventions commencing.
- 6.3** Progress is tracked and outcomes are evaluated with stakeholders.
- 6.4** There is engagement in performance monitoring, learning from performance information and improving performance through effective challenge.
- 6.5** Engagement activities result in changes for the benefit of the organisation, stakeholder organisations, tenants, leaseholders and communities. The value engagement has helped to create is reported widely.
- 6.6** Engagement approaches are regularly reviewed using information on the value created through that engagement. Reviews consider methods of engagement, types of projects and interventions and whether successful outcomes have resulted.
- 6.7** Learning from reviews is used with tenants, leaseholders and communities to improve effectiveness of engagement leading to value for money approaches both in the way engagement is delivered and the effect of engagement on services and projects.

# National Tenant Engagement Standards

1

## Engagement Strategy

Make sure your tenant engagement links directly to business plan objectives.



2

## Resources for Engagement

Your engagement has got to be resourced to ensure it is effective in delivering planned outcomes.



3

## Information and Insight

Provide access to information at the right level, at the right time, to the right people in the right way.



4

## Influence and Scrutiny

Ensure tenants, leaseholders and communities can influence appropriately.



5

## Community Engagement

Engage with communities and local stakeholders to develop projects and plans to meet jointly identified needs.



6

## Valuing engagement

Ensure your tenant engagement outcomes will benefit stakeholder organisations, tenants, leaseholders and communities.



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