

*Creating affordable
homes and empowering
communities.*



Participation Policy For Tenants And Customers

CONTROLLING AUTHORITY: Director of Corporate & Customer Services	POLICY NO: 9	DATE: June 2017
ISSUE NO: 2	STATUS: Final	
AMENDED: General Annual Review	REVIEW DATE: October 2018	



making a splash
in the areas we serve



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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Boston Mayflower is committed to deliver Customer Service Excellence and believes that this is best achieved in partnership with our Tenants and Customers.

1.2 This policy has been created in partnership with our tenants, leaseholders, service users and Boston Mayflower staff to ensure its success.

1.3 All Customers will:

- Have access to high quality information about Boston Mayflower's services and activities and other services available in the area.
- Be provided with regular opportunities to consult with Boston Mayflower Staff for example through community events, open public meetings and questionnaires.
- Have the opportunity to choose the level of participation that suits them best, whether by taking part in a 5 minute telephone survey, a Service Voice, Inspection Group or by joining the Customer Scrutiny Panel. There will be a variety of options for involvement called 'Your Voice'
- Be encouraged to take part in a Rewards system to thank them for their participation efforts
- Be provided with training and development opportunities
- Be encouraged to get involved in the wider community by attending events arranged by Boston Mayflower
- Receive feedback on changes made as a result of their participation
- Be supported to be involved through training, use of translation, braille, loop system, payment of out of pocket expenses and arranging meetings in suitable venues

1.4 Customer participation will aim to:

- Assist in the development of communities and reduce barriers between tenants and other stakeholders
- Improve the management of our housing services
- Give tenants more choice and power over the future of their homes and communities
- Increase Customer satisfaction
- Give tenants the opportunity to be involved in management decisions

- Make realistic and long lasting changes to our tenants and customers quality of life
- Achieve lasting service delivery improvement
- Involve our tenants in scrutinising our performance and our decision making processes
- Provide value for money services that reflect our customers rental payments
- Ensure a fair deal for all our tenants.

2.0 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER STANDARDS

2.1 The legal requirements in this respect were originally set down in the Housing Act 1985 relating to:

- The information to be given to tenants
- Those matters that a Company must consult its tenants on.

2.2 The Localism Act of 2011 established the objectives and certain powers of the social housing regulator.

2.3 The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing 2012 establishes the economic and consumer standards that providers are expected to achieve.

2.4 The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing 2012 outlines the principles of co-regulation.

- Boards and councillors who govern providers are responsible and accountable for delivering their organisation's social housing objectives
- Providers must meet the regulatory standards
- Transparency and accountability is central to co-regulation
- Tenants should have the opportunity to shape service delivery and to hold the responsible board and councillors to account
- Providers should demonstrate that they understand the particular needs of their tenants
- Value for money goes to the heart of how providers ensure current and future delivery of their objectives

2.5 Boston Mayflower will assess its performance honestly and robustly

2.6 Tenants will monitor and scrutinise Boston Mayflower's performance.

- 2.7 Boston Mayflower will support tenants to build their capacity to make co-regulation effective.
- 2.8 Boston Mayflower will use the TPAS National Tenant Engagement Standards as a blueprint for their approach to effective engagement activity.
- 2.9 Tenants who are not happy with the service or approach to co-regulation can make a complaint to Boston Mayflower. Complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly. If a tenant remains dissatisfied after complaining to their provider, they have the right to raise their concern with the housing ombudsman.
- 2.10 The regulator's intervention powers are restricted to circumstances where it is satisfied that the requirements of the 'serious detriment' test have been met.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 *Customer* – is defined as anyone who is a Boston Mayflower tenant, resident, Shared Owner, leaseholder, applicant or volunteer.
- 3.2 *Customer Participation* – is defined as customers taking part in any of Boston Mayflower's events, meetings and/or surveys.
- 3.3 *Tenant* – the holder of a tenancy

4.0 PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

4.1 Information

- 4.1.1 The provision of high quality information is important to ensure tenants and customers are able to participate fully. Boston Mayflower will ensure all information is:
- Relevant by keeping people informed about housing matters which affect their homes or neighbourhoods
 - Easily accessible by making information readily available at our office and other recognized access points
 - Written in a language that is clear, free of jargon and available in other formats and alternative languages where appropriate
- 4.1.2 The Business Intelligence Team will monitor and analyse all customer feedback through an appropriate IT system. From this, the Business Intelligence Team will produce performance indicators for Boston Mayflower staff, for analysis by the Customer Scrutiny Panel, Service Voices and in an accessible, relevant manner for all customers reporting this through Community Chat and the Board's Annual Report to Tenants.

- 4.1.3 The Business Intelligence Team will monitor and analyse responses to surveys, create reports and feedback to heads of services on a monthly basis on the performance figures and satisfaction levels of customers, highlighting any areas of concerns.

Business Intelligence Team will deliver weekly survey send outs for:

- Responsive Repairs
- Housing Options
- Lifeline (Installations)
- Lifeline (Emergency Response)

Business Intelligence Team will deliver monthly survey send outs for:

- Greenspace Management
- Property improvement works
- Affordable Warmth
- Rent & Income
- Customer Engagement

Business Intelligence Team will deliver monthly surveys face-to-face or via telephone for:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Complaints

The Business Intelligence Team will quality-assess Customer Service by:

- Facilitating comment cards in Reception
- Call listening
- Contact log monitoring

- 4.1.4 The Business Intelligence Team will monitor and analyse responses to additional one-off surveys as requested, create reports and feedback to the relevant head of service.

4.2 Media

- 4.2.1 Boston Mayflower will use a range of media to ensure that information is provided in the most suitable format and will:

- Issue at least two magazines per year providing information on local issues, areas of interest, community activity and our performance
- Provide an annual Impact Assessment on the service which highlights involvement activities, costs and outcomes
- Provide an annual report to all our customers which will give information on our performance

- Provide a comprehensive Tenant's Handbook to all new tenants at the start of their tenancy and update this where necessary
- Provide easy to read information on all of our services that will explain what can be expected from a service, definitions of the service and how to complain if the service fails
- Keep our housing website and customer engagement pages up to date including social media channels.

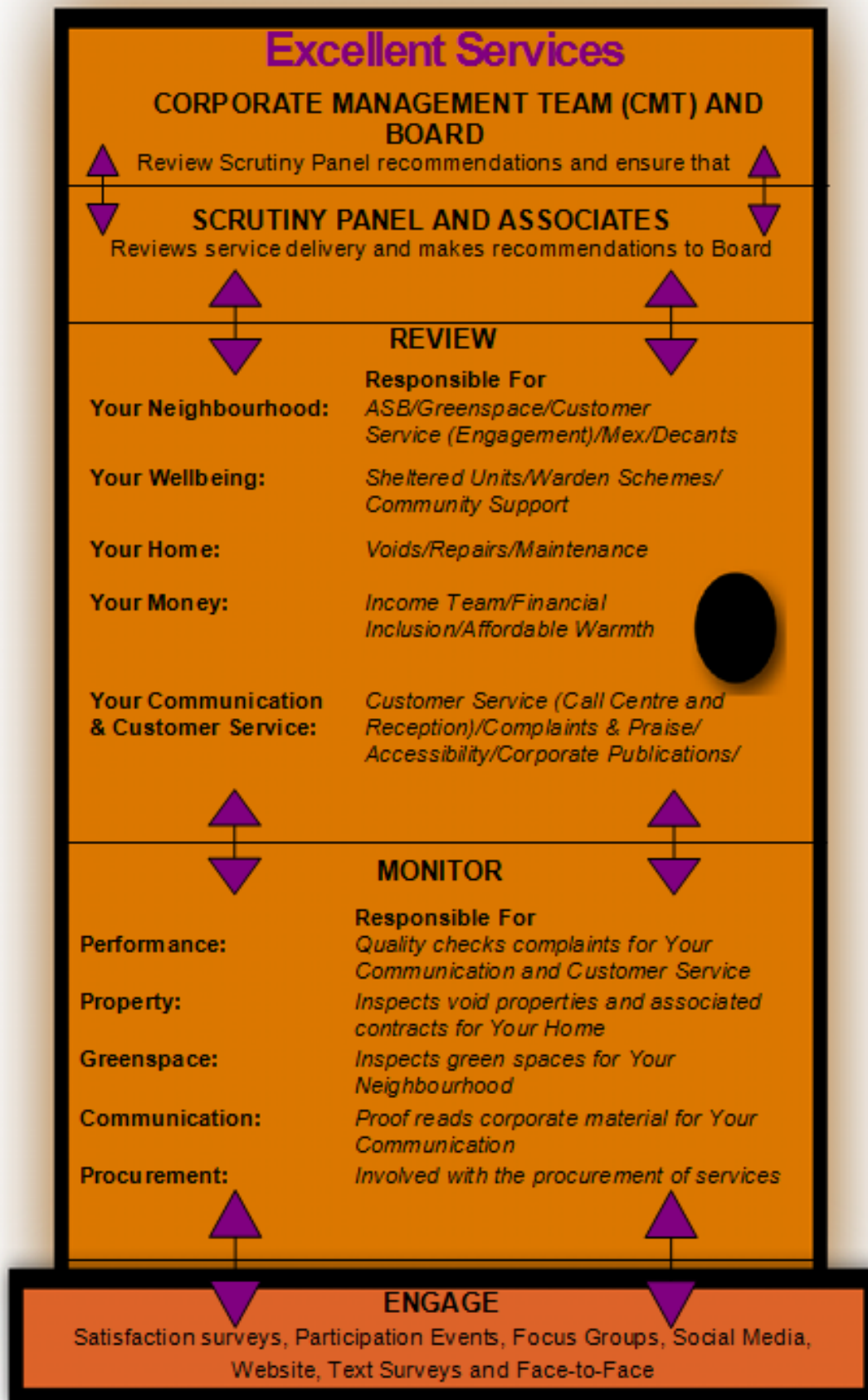
4.3 Consultation and Involvement

4.3.1 Boston Mayflower recognises that it is important to listen, to hear and understand the views of our customers. Consultation and involvement will be achieved in a variety of ways from informal processes where customers can participate without the need to leave their own homes, through to face-to-face discussions at meetings and at various levels within the organisation.

4.3.2 Different ways to get involved include:

- **Customer Scrutiny Panel** – The Panel investigates performance, service and complaints and makes recommendations to the Board on how to improve service delivery. This ensures customers receive high quality services that meet their needs and provide value for money.
- **Associate Scrutiny Members** – This group enhances the Customer Scrutiny Panel by completing research for reviews without having to attend the same level of meetings.
- **Service Voices** – These groups help improve service delivery by monitoring performance and complaint data and conducting mini reviews. They also ensure that services are customer focused and develop and monitor service standards.
- **Local Meetings** - Customers help us monitor our standards by inspecting estates with staff and representatives from partner organisations.
- **Customer Monitors** - These groups monitor our standards by making ad-hoc inspections of service areas.
- **Open Events** – These may include Community Events, Pop Up Meetings, summer fetes and open surgeries.
- **Young Peoples Voice** – Boston Mayflower will develop ways in which to capture children's and young people's views about the area in which they live and their views on Boston Mayflower.
- **Volunteers** – to help out at community events.

- **Surveys** – either conducted over the phone, through the post, face-to-face, on-line or in a tri-annual ‘Let’s Talk’ survey.
- **Focus Groups** – These are groups of tenants and customers with a particular need, problem or geographic location who meet to discuss issues that are relevant to their circumstances or needs.



5.0 BOSTON MAYFLOWER BOARD

5.1 The Board will consist of up to twelve board members (including co-opted members). Applications are welcomed from suitably qualified and experienced tenants who wish to become Board members should there be a recruitment drive. Appointment to the Board will follow the boards adopted recruitment procedure which mirrors that for staff.

6.0 CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION REWARD SCHEME

6.1 As a way of showing appreciation and recognition of the value of Your Voice members and also to help encourage other tenants to join, we offer a Your Voice rewards scheme.

6.2 The scheme offers Your Voice members points depending on the level and type of involvement they participate in. In addition, points are awarded for input and contributions at meetings and open events.

6.3 Members who do not want to take up their reward points can donate them to a nominated charity.

6.4 Points are calculated on an annual basis and turned into a monetary value. Involved customers are then gifted shopping vouchers of their choice.

7.0 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

7.1 For those tenants and customers who wish to be involved with us we will provide the appropriate opportunities for training and support.

7.2 Boston Mayflower will:

- Produce an annual training programme based on the needs identified by customers.
- Enable Board, Customer Scrutiny Panel, and Service Voice Members to attend national, regional and local conferences and Forums, as well other Housing conferences of interest and relevance.
- Develop training and support opportunities for the Customer Scrutiny Panel and Service Voice members on performance monitoring and scrutiny.
- Train all monitoring groups
- Ensure that all Customer Scrutiny Panel members have a yearly appraisal to identify skill and training development needs

7.3 All tenants attending Conferences, Regional Events and Forums, etc., will be briefed on the event before attending and given specific objectives for their visit to gain the most benefit for themselves and Boston Mayflower. Completion of Feedback Forms will be mandatory for all such events for reporting back to Service Voice meetings. This will demonstrate added value and share the learning more widely for the benefit of those that were unable to attend.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

8.1 As a recognized Leader in Diversity we are committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in the provision of housing services and in the employment of staff, contractors and our involved members regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, financial status, marital status or sexual orientation.

8.2 We are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality involvement, empowerment and participation opportunities and equality of treatment for our Your Voice members in all our policies and practices.

9.0 MONITORING

9.1 To help Boston Mayflower to assess Customer Participation process we will monitor the following:

- The number and types of events/groups/meetings held each year.
- The number of participants involved in each group/event.
- The number of responses to surveys received.
- Outcomes from feedback
- The number and types of training opportunities accessed
- Feedback from events/training/meetings obtained
- The types of participants in relation to the customer profile of our tenants.

9.2 This monitoring information will be produced annually as a customer Participation Impact assessment.

10.0 POLICY LINKS

10.1 As tenant and customer participation is an intricate part of all services throughout Boston Mayflower. This policy is linked to all policies relating to services delivered to our customers.

Name of policy

Participation Policy for Tenants and Customers

Provide a brief summary of the aims and main activities of the initiative: (bullet points)

Boston Mayflower is committed to deliver Customer Service Excellence and believes that this is best achieved through partnership with our Tenants and Customers.

This policy has been created in partnership with our tenants, leaseholders, service users and Boston Mayflower staff to ensure its success.

Completed by: Bridget Lloyd, Director of Corporate Services

Date: October 2016

STAGE 1: SCREENING

This stage establishes whether a proposed initiative will have an impact from an equality perspective on any particular group of people or community – i.e. on the grounds of race, religion/faith/belief, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, age, disability, or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

Q 1. Who will benefit from this initiative? Is there likely to be a positive impact on specific groups/communities (whether or not they are the intended beneficiaries), and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’ i.e. will have no particular effect on any group? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

It is intended that all our customers, who so choose, will have an opportunity to participate in a way that meets their needs. For example someone wishing to be involved but prefers to be at home could be involved in the Reading Group.

It is intended that this policy will be equality neutral.

Q 2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on one or more minority/under-represented or community group as a result of this initiative? If so, who may be affected and why: Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality 'neutral'? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

We do not envisage any negative impact within any of our service delivery areas through the implementation of this policy.

We believe that this policy is equality neutral.

Q 3. Is there sufficient data on the target beneficiary groups/communities? Are any of these groups under or over represented? Do they have access to the same resources? What are your sources of data and are there any gaps? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

Whilst the ability to participate is available to all, we recognize that currently there is greater participation from an older age group however we have reviewed customer involvement in order to encourage other groups to take up this opportunity.

Q 4. Outsourced services – if the initiative is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity. *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

This is an internal policy and Boston Mayflower is responsible for its implementation

Q 5. Is the impact of the initiative (whether positive or negative) significant enough to warrant a full impact assessment – see guidance? If not, will there be monitoring and review to assess the level of impact over a period of time? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

We do not perceive any negative impact that would warrant a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Should any negative impacts be highlighted through implementation then both our Policy and EIA will be reviewed.

Q 6. To be completed at six monthly review Detail actions taken to assess the level of impact over a period of time, or to address any gaps in data.

Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality

Annually reviewed – April 2017