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Tenant & Community Engagement Strategy

2021 - 2026



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Foreword

I am delighted to present Woven's **Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy for 2021 – 2026**.

This **Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy** feeds into Woven's Corporate Strategy for the period and, specifically, helps the Association to meet its corporate Aim - '*...involving our customers and stakeholders, we will create sustainable and thriving communities...*'

To that end, this document has been developed following consultation with tenants, board members and staff, led by our Homes & Communities Team. It builds on, and supersedes, our 2018 Community Involvement Strategy, setting out a genuine commitment to deliver on our **Vision** of improving **Homes, Lives and Communities**.

Implementation of this strategy will provide Woven tenants with a real opportunity to influence the decisions that affect them through a range of involvement opportunities and mechanisms to help support, develop and enable effective engagement.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Woven's Community and Housing teams and all the tenants who have engaged with us, without whom this would not be possible. They have been instrumental in successfully initiating, developing and actioning the engagement strategies past and present.



Darren McKinney
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Introduction

This Strategy sets out Woven Housing Association's commitment to engage, listen and respond to the voice of our tenants and those living in the communities within which we work. The Strategy has been developed against a backdrop of significant challenge, which all social housing providers have been presented with over the past 18 months, as we like our tenants have had to respond to the pandemic. We know that the Covid whilst catastrophic for many, also brought staff and tenants closer together, we have learnt new ways to communicate, to understand and to support each other. It is with this new level of cooperative working that we have set out our 2021 to 2026 strategy

Our previous Community Involvement Strategy was launched in May 2018, and over the past three years we have learnt through and with, our tenants that having effective tenant and customer engagement improves the way we design and deliver our services.

The 2021 - 2026 Strategy sets out to build on what we have achieved and develop a new strategic direction for Woven tenants and the communities within which we work.



We seek to engage in ways which enable our tenants to develop their skills and supports our commitment towards co-regulation, shaping, designing and scrutinising our services.

The Community Team working with Tenants, Partners and their colleagues here at Woven Housing Association, have worked hard in achieving the targets set over the past three years. Working together, they have written the new strategic framework for engaging tenants and communities to ensure that together we can deliver homes and services where tenants not only feel safe, and secure but where they can build visions for their future. On that basis I thank the team, their colleagues and particularly our tenants for their input and hard work, and look forward to seeing us realise the new targets together.

It is only by working together and strengthening the relationships we have built that we will succeed in achieving our joint aspirations.



Deborah Wooderson

DIRECTOR OF HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Where are we now?

A recent review of our current tenant and customer engagement strategy highlighted that whilst we have achieved much over the last three years, we need to improve our engagement arrangements if we are to meet our own ambition to develop effective co-regulation and strengthen the voice of our tenants.

Woven Housing Association has always been fortunate in having a number of tenants sit on the Board. There is also a tenant forum whose Chair sat on the Board until her term was completed and now sits on the Housing Management Committee. However the remit of the forum has been limited and the group has found it difficult to be representative of the wider tenant base, primarily because of the geographic spread of the Association.



On that basis time has been spent over the past three years on developing more localised groups who represent local views as well as look at the wider work of the Association.

Much training has been undertaken with tenants across our housing base to ensure they are more equipped in understanding the role and functions of Social Housing, preparing them to be able to participate with greater confidence and understanding.

This has led to some excellent consultation with regard to our Asset Management functions and several starter scrutiny exercises.

This commitment of times and resources is already showing a marked difference in how we have delivered some of our services and the new Strategy intends to build on these foundations.

In developing this Strategy we have actively sought the views of a wide range stakeholder's on their aspirations for the future direction of tenant and customer engagement. The finding from these conversations have helped inform this Strategy and will contribute to developing a strong culture of engagement across the organisation.



Context

A Tenant Participation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2020 sets out clearly how *“Social Housing Providers should shape their services to reflect their tenants’ views and also help tenants and other service users to become more involved by :*

- Regularly seeking the views of tenants, being responsive to and considering those views;
- Offering tenants a menu of participation activities so that they can participate as individuals, within formal or informal group structures or as specialist posts;
- Providing opportunities for tenants to scrutinise the services they receive and the decisions that impact them;
- Providing the appropriate training and support to tenants and staff to encourage, promote and provide the skills required to make participation an integral part of the organisation; and
- Developing relationships and engagement opportunities for tenants and others within the community or those whose role has an impact on tenants e.g. other government departments or housing organisation.

During the past three years we have worked closely with external agencies seeking to develop our engagement processes by drawing on their experience and expertise. With the assistance of Supporting Communities we have undertaken a range of tenant training as well as sought their expertise in helping tenants review the outcomes of our previous Strategy.



Why do we need a strategy?

We want to create an approach to involving and engaging tenants where their view will help drive forward service improvements. This Strategy therefore takes what we have learnt from the events of the past 18 months and sets out a fresh approach that provides a new range of engagement options, including a greater use of technology so that we can be agile, flexible and positively respond to both external and internal challenges

We will ensure that all of our engagement opportunities are fully accessible and inclusive as we provide opportunities for tenants to provide feedback and engage more easily with us.

We intend to provide clearer routes into involvement and evidence how we have improved services as a result of tenant and customer feedback

If we are to meet our aspirations for co-regulation we need to develop more scrutiny opportunities and publish our finding and actions so we are more accountable to our tenants.

We will push ourselves to instil a culture change across the organisation to support our customer first approach to tenant engagement in all aspects of our work.

We will also seek to ensure that the work we undertake with our tenants is reviewed externally and one of our strategic aims will be to ensure we work towards achieving the Tenant Participation Standards soon to become a baseline for Housing Associations to understand, deliver and review their involvement of tenants in the development, delivery and monitoring of services.



People

Working for people, with people, through people

In order to benefit from the rich diversity of tenants, Woven will engage with a different range of communities, incorporating their knowledge, skills and experiences, with a focus on improvements our services.

Woven will do this by offering a range of opportunities to engage, from surveys and local tenants groups through to reviewing policies, scrutinising services and tenants representing their schemes on the Tenants Forum.

Training will be developed to support Tenant Engagement, empowering tenants to enable them to participate fully.

Objective

To develop a range of opportunities for Tenant Engagement, supporting those involved, and providing clear feedback, in order to improve services.

Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Maintain registrar of tenants interested in Community Involvement Activities & engagement opportunities	TEO	Spreadsheet developed All homes & communities staff update registrar Survey participants to raise awareness of opportunities to be involved	Y1 Y2-5 Y2-5	
Review menu of involvement annually to ensure a relevant and overarching approach to TE.	TEO	Meet with tenants and review involvement opportunities identifying gaps Host annual tenant conference to review tenant participation opportunities ie Regional Panel, Editorial Panel, scheme walkabout, mystery shopping, Community Activities, Surveys and plan programme, reporting to SMT Continue to provide training and support tenants	Y1 Y2-5 Y3-5	
Recruit tenants for editorial panel	CIO*	Tenant information session to agree format of bi annual newsletter Pilot newsletters/annual evaluation Tenants involved in producing tenant newsletter	Y1 Y2 Y3	
Identify key demographic areas to establish regional panels	TEO	Establish 2 regional panels and pilot projects to build capacity Identify demographic areas to establish further & review activities Continue to support, build capacity & evaluate groups	Y1 Y2 Y3-5	
Survey schemes to identify plan of local community support available	TEO	Tenant survey carried out on scheme piloted with 4 schemes Identify support groups, community groups specific to area New tenant booklet designed Reviewed & updated, identify new schemes to complete	Y1 Y2 Y3-5	



Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Establish protocol on new sign ups working with Housing Officers to engage new tenants to create positive connections from the first impression	TEO HO	Agreed protocol with housing officers outlining benefits of tenant engagement	Y1	
		All tenants receive information on 'tenants ways to participate' Attend new tenant information/Meet & greet sessions	Y2-5	
		Monitor tenant registrar to evaluate progress with a view to 20% increase per annum	Y2-5	
Consult with active tenants to recruit and promote scheme walkabout	TEO HO	Identify tenants, create calendar of scheme walkabouts	Y1	
		Complete training Complete scheme walkabout and report results to tenants	Y2	
		Results promoted on Website and social media	Y2-6	
Recruit and support the Reading Panel to review policies and de-jargon/proof-read docs	TEO	Establish calendar of policy reviews	Y1	
		Recruit tenants. Complete training	Y2	
		Support tenants with policy review & report to HMs	Y3-5	
Explore digital opportunities for meetings to support hard to reach tenants, providing all abilities with the tools to connect	H&C	Identify resources needed for tenants to participate	Y1	
		Recruit participants, evaluate programme	Y2	
		Maintain quarterly meetings with tenants	Y3	
Develop training suite to support tenants to build online capacity to increase communication	TEO	One to one support to 20 individuals Group training sessions open to all tenants	Y1	
		Review training needs to identify if we continue or provide new course material	Y2-5	
			Y3	

*Editorial Panel supported by CIO

TEO - Tenant Engagement Officer, CIO - Community Involvement Officer(s)

HO - Housing Officer(s), H&C - Homes & Communities team

Quality

Driving continuous improvement across all our services

We will ensure that tenants take a lead role in assessing and examining our housing services in a clear and open manner.

Tenant scrutiny is tenant led giving them an opportunity to challenge our performance and to work with us. This will ensure that we provide a quality service and create a culture of continuous improvement.

Objective

Empowering our tenants by opening a range of opportunities for feedback in order to enhance our quality of service that listens to its users.



Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Support the Scrutiny Panel to identify and scrutinise a minimum of two services per year.	TEO All	Review pilot scrutiny exercise	Y1	
		Recruit & train tenants to undertake a minimum of two scrutiny exercises per year, review results with tenants regularly	Y2	
		All staff supporting tenants to ensure information is accurate. final report presented to SMT & Board	Y2-5	
		Results promoted in newsletter, website, local schemes, social media		
Complete annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey	TEO	New Satisfaction Survey agreed & completed with 20% of tenants	Y1	
		Results publicised in Newsletter, website, schemes, social media	Y2-5	
		20% of tenants complete survey per annum	Y2-5	
Complete community surveys on schemes to plan community activities based on the feedback from tenants	TEO	Complete surveys with 8 schemes, feedback to residents & report to HMs	Y1	
		Create database to monitor survey reports ensuring geographical consistency	Y1	
		Review survey content and continue to complete scheme surveys every 3 years	Y2-5	
Complete annual mystery shopping exercise	TEO	Recruit tenants, provide training and plan,	Y1-3	
		Undertake one exercise annually Review process, training and plan future exercises	Y4	



Integrity

Being honest, respectful, transparent and trustworthy in all that we do

Open new lines of communication, such as a newsletter and social media, between tenants and Staff. We will remove barriers to communication, aiming to be more inclusive and understandable. We want our tenants to know that their trust is important but also to foster a mutual respect and honesty between all parts of the Woven Community.

One way of ensuring we are accountable for doing what we say we will do across our strategy is through engaging further with Supporting Communities. We can ensure our all our actions are inclusive and meeting the needs of all our tenants by assessing our performance in line with the new Tenant Participation Standards accreditation scheme. This is a new scheme to Northern Ireland and is a method for social landlords to review their Tenant Participation Strategy, carry out a health check, and ultimately improve the ways to engage with their tenants and residents.

Objective

Improve communication, accountability and transparency between tenants, Woven staff and Contractors helping to facilitate a great relationship between tenants and staff.

Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Register to undertake the Tenant Participation Standards	Dir. H&C	Engaging with the TPS standards and having an action plan to achieve them.	Y1 -5	
Introduce a resident Facebook with translate option to promote inclusions	MCE*	Pilot Facebook page & review operation of working group Weekly posts on Facebook page	Y1 Y2	
Introduce a resident only section on the website to build new connections	CIO CO	Promote tenants section of website & establish working group responsible for overseeing, monitor & review Working group updating website section monthly with activities, information and photographs Recruit Active tenants to update website with monthly activities/ useful information	Y1 Y2 Y3	
Produce an easy read version of this strategy to support our tenants living with disabilities	CIO	Easy read version launched Every new resident receives copy of strategy All tenants have copy of Strategy	Y1 Y2 Y3	
Ensure plain language in all communications	All	Staff review 20% of all resident correspondence with tenant panel to ensure easy read	Y1 -5	
Ensure flyers/leaflets are translated, if required to welcome our varied tenants in their native tongue	CIO	Scope what languages and who needs translated versions Flyers will be translated & distributed Develop/evaluate database of foreign language is maintained	Y1 Y2-5 Y2-5	
Identify every household/ tenants preferred communication method	HO	Establish register containing tenants preferred communication method, format & language Review 25% of registrar to ensure that details are maintained & up to date	Y1 Y2-5	



Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Maintain & update calendar of events on website with a focus on multicultural celebrations	CIOs	Monthly activity calendar updated quarterly	Y1-2	
		Weekly calendar updated monthly	Y3-5	
Publish minutes of resident meetings on website to maintain trust through transparency	TEO	Publish minutes of all tenant meetings	Y1	
		Publish Scrutiny reports	Y2	
		Continue above & promote active tenants with quarterly meet your active tenant bio	Y3	
Pro-actively promote community hubs and support activities that encourage new connections.	H&C	Complete baseline & review resources needed in community hubs involving tenants	Y1	
		Refurbish 20% of community hubs annually	Y2	
		Engage with local community groups/organisations to promote hubs	Y3	
Neighbourly call programme to connect with tenants from the comfort of their own home.	CIO	Establish protocols to support Telephone Call Scheme	Y1	
		Annual review of registrar to ensure next of kin registrar is up to date	Y2-5	
Increase internal communication to instil a sense of togetherness through community outreach	H&C	Monthly verbal update to teams Monthly report to SMT Quarterly report to Director of Homes & Communities	Y1-5	
Provide training and outreach events to improve greenspace usage and sustainability	H&C H&S HoH	Promote environmental pilot projects, partner with environmental group to provide tenant training.	Y1	
		Build environmental projects into calendar working with Contractors and local external charities.	Y2	
		Tenant involvement on environmental improvements	Y3-5	

H&S - Health & Safety, HoH - Head of Housing



Integration

**Embracing diversity, equality and opportunity.
Enhancing inclusive living experiences for all our
customers**

We are delighted at Woven to currently have two shared housing schemes which are funded under the 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy' led by the Executive Office. The vision for the shared housing schemes is that it will become a shared community, integrated with the wider area. The shared neighbourhood will be seen as a safe place where people want to live, where cultural diversity is welcomed and good relations is part of everyday life.

Objective

We will ensure that Good Relations are central to the organisation, facilitating tenant integration within the community. This process will be sustainable, with best practice shared across the organisation and with our partners.

Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Promote shared housing schemes both internally & externally	GRO	Process in place to check viability for shared housing programme in new build developments, Promote/create awareness of the shared scheme and its shared ethos with neighbouring communities, local community and sporting organisations and local politicians.	Y1	
Engage with tenants to identify programmes to build community spirit and encouraging involvement	GRO	Complete baseline survey with all residents. Design programme of activities and ensure feedback is given on a regular basis Ensure workshops continue to inform direction of work.	Y1 Y1-5 Y2-5	
Facilitate Advisory Panel meetings at least 3 times a year	GRO	Representation of tenants of 10% of scheme size on the Advisory panel Panel represents Faith sector, community sector, tenants association, statutory sector, and politicians. Assess membership at year end to ensure good representation	Y1-5 Y1 Y1-5	
Co-ordinate a minimum of 6 programmes to streamline good relations between communities and within our organisation, in order to contribute towards more shared sustainable communities.	GRO	Priorities worked out with Advisory Panel Through consultation identify at least 6 priority areas with support from panel and/or tenants run 6 programmes (6 programmes per year)	Y1 Y1-5	
Training around Good relations and diversity training for staff and Advisory Panels	GRO	Develop & deliver a training plan around good relations and diversity. Evaluate training & adapt as required	Y1 Y2-5	



Action		What will success look like?		Comments
To develop multi-agency partnership working that will support bridging and bonding with tenants and the wider community	GRO	Consult with Panel and community to ensure there is support for a multi-agency event	Y1	
		Plan multi-agency event	Y1	
		Promote annual events.	Y1	
		Evaluate event and replicate, passing on learning	Y1-5	
5 year Good Relations Plan completed and agreed by Department of Communities and Housing Executive.	GRO	Priorities established by Advisory Panel	Y1	
		Draft plan completed	Y1	
		Plan signed off by DoC and HE.	Y1	
Establish programmes delivered with Community Involvement Officers	GRO	Set up meeting with tenants and Community Involvement Officer	Y2	
		Work with tenants within 5 mile radius to pick an activity or programme of interest	Y2-5	
		Carry out at least 1 programme	Y2-5	
Raise awareness of tenant engagement opportunities and encourage tenants to take part in Scrutiny Panels, etc	TEO	Identify with tenants, representatives for panels.	Y2	
		Work with Community Involvement Officer to provide training for representatives.	Y2-5	
		Support representatives in speaking with other tenants to find their opinions, thoughts and feedback	Y2-5	
		Review the dates		
Provide training and outreach events to improve greenspace usage and sustainability	CIT, BS, HOH	As per last action under 'Integrity' plus:	Y1-3	
		Involve tenants in consultation work regarding environmental improvements	Y4-5	



Engagement

Working to develop dynamic services both internally and externally, through teamwork, collaboration and partnership

We are committed to ensuring that we reflect tenants' views and support tenants and other service users to become more involved by developing relationships and engagement opportunities for tenants and others within the community.

As part of our commitment to creating inclusive, diverse and involved communities, we will seek to increase our engagement with the wider community across all age ranges. We will include 'seldom-heard groups'* or those who find it harder to engage. We will work in partnership with our tenants to embed our schemes into the local community making use of local community resources.

Objective

By encouraging tenants to say what services they need and want we can be flexible in order to improve customer satisfaction but also ensure we provide a 'Get it Right First Time' approach to our service delivery. This reduces waste, ensuring a value for money approach is taken towards all aspects of our work .

Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Identify projects to increase community inclusion	CIO H&C	Survey 4 areas to identify a plan of activities	Y1	
		To be involved in 4 community activities annually	Y2	
		Rotate activities across areas	Y3-5	
Increase the number of younger people getting involved aged 17-24 yrs	CIOs	Research areas that we have high numbers of young people living on schemes, survey 25% of those aged 17-24 to identify activities they wish to be involved with.	Y1	
		Identify a 3 year programme involving young people in design of projects.	Y2	
		Deliver & evaluate	Y3-5	
Pilot a new community initiative in partnership with an aged support organisation in area to deliver to tenants	CIO	Identify the needs of older people on schemes	Y1	
		Develop programmes to meet the needs identified	Y2	
		Deliver programme of 3 annual activities specifically for older people	Y3	
Co-ordinate programme for children/young people 0-16 yrs	CIO	Research children/youth projects which can be delivered to promote inclusive youth activities	Y2	
		Involved in 3 youth projects annually	Y3	
		Encourage & recruit members to youth panel, maintain projects	Y4	
Increase opportunity to improve physical health & mental well-being of tenants	CIOs	Annual activity programme to improve physical & mental health.	Y1-5	



Action		What will success look like?		Comments
Increase awareness of support groups/ organisations available to support tenants that need help	CIO H&C	Create database of organisations/ groups across schemes which provide support for tenants,	Yr1	
		Database published and included with new tenancy sign-up. Engage/ organise annual events to host community, statutory support organisations for tenants to attend.	Y2	
		Rotate annual events across the region & evaluate learning.	Y3-5	
Involve partner organisations in promoting services/ support	CIOs	Map all partner organisations & their services,	Y1	
		Design project working in partnership with organisation to deliver programmes to benefit tenants & their families,	Y2	
		Develop programmes	Y3-5	

*The term 'seldom-heard groups' refers to under-represented people who are less likely to be heard by decision-makers. They are often referred to as 'hard to reach' groups, though this term has been criticised for implying that there is something about these people that makes their engagement with services difficult. 'Seldom- heard' places more of the emphasis on us to engage these customers.

Many factors can contribute to people who use services being seldom-heard, including: Disability, ethnicity, sexuality, communication impairments, mental health problems, homelessness and geographical isolation.



How will we monitor this Strategy?

We will monitor our tenant participation activities to make sure they are working well and have an impact on improving “lives, homes & communities”. We will use a number of tools to try and ensure that we provide both quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (quality) information.

Quantitative information will be gathered and presented quarterly to Senior Management Team using the list of indicators shown below:

- **Number of tenants**
- **Number of community activities**
- **% tenants attending activities**
- **Number of new groups/organisations engaged with,**
- **Number of scrutiny activities carried out in 12 months**
- **Actual amount of budget for TP in last financial year**
- **Actual spend for tenant participation in last financial year**
- **Number of regional panel meetings held**
- **Number of editorial panel meetings held**

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- Number of participants attending virtual meetings
 - Number of people downloading information from website
 - Number of newsletters printed
 - Number of policy groups held
 - Number of tenants attending training
 - Number of scheme inspections carried out
 - Number of active tenants
 - Number of active tenants completed induction workshop

We will monitor the quality of activities, measuring each individual community involvement activity by completing surveys with participants and reviewing the results annually. An annual report will highlight how tenant's views have been taken into account in designing future programmes.

Evaluation of tenant feedback will be demonstrated using active tenant bio and shared using the following methods:

- Tenant awards ceremony
- Newsletter
- Website
- Social media



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**tenant &
community
involvement
strategy**
2021 2026

Application to get Involved



We would like our tenants to find it easy to get involved and participate in making decisions, at whatever level they feel comfortable:

- ☐ **Regional Panel**
- ☐ **Active Tenant**
- ☐ **Scrutiny Panel**
- ☐ **Surveys**
- ☐ **Editorial Panel**
- ☐ **Scheme walkabout**
- ☐ **Community Activities**
- ☐ **Other** (please specify below)

Name

Contact No

Address

Email

My relevant interests are:

My relevant skills / achievements are:

I would like to volunteer my time because:

