

Customer Voice and Influence Policy

2. Policy statement..... 3

3. Policy aims 3

4. Policy..... 3

5. Involving customers..... 3

5. Standards & Performance Monitoring 4

5.1 Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 4

6. Customer Voice and influence 5

7. Governance Structure 6

Customer Services Committee..... 6

8. Equality Analysis 7

9. Statutory and Legislative Framework 7

10. Links with other policies & documents..... 7

1. Policy information

Date of issue	August 2024
Replacing/Updating	NEW
Review Date	March 2027
Drafted by	Cathy Biggs
Contributors	Scrutiny Panel, Customer Services Committee, Customer focus group, SLH managers
Responsible Director	Executive Director of Operations
Circulation List	ELT, Neighbourhoods, Customer Services Committee,

2. Policy statement

We are committed to delivering excellent, customer services that achieve high satisfaction. It is important to us that our customers have a strong and influential voice in shaping and monitoring services.

We will strive to increase the numbers and diversity of our involved customers so that the customer voice is increasingly representative of all our customers.

3. Policy aims

Our vision is to deliver great homes, strong communities, and bright futures. Our customer voice policy, will help us achieve this through engaged and included residents who can access a range of services to support their health, wellbeing and economic aspirations.

SLH will demonstrate its commitment to customer involvement by enabling them to engage in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods shape our service delivery and ensure their voice is heard.

This policy sets out how SLH will engage with our customers and gather customer feedback.

4. Policy

Customer engagement is essential, it enables us to understand our customer needs, helping to improve and shape our services. It holds us accountable to our customers and helps us to be more effective.

Engaging and listening to our customers is a key part of how SLH complies with the Regulators Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

Many customers are interested in knowing about and influencing the work that SLH does, and enjoy the opportunity to get involved and make a difference.

SLH will actively seek to provide opportunities to hear from a diverse range of customers through formal and informal means, engage with them and openly and thoughtfully consider their feedback.

5. Involving customers

Customers benefit from getting involved and engaging with SLH as it:

- enables them to hold us to account for our services
- provides the opportunity to influence policies so that they meet the needs of customers
- can deliver improvements in services and see the difference they make
- can result in an increase in customer satisfaction
- gives the opportunity to build skills, knowledge and understanding knowledge about housing and the wider work we do
- enables a better understanding of policies and their impact on communities
- provides the opportunity to work on projects that improve communities
- Influence policies and services

- Achieve Value for money (VFM) by directing services to the right people, that meet their needs

Gaining views and involving a diverse range of customers in our work is vital for SLH to understand their needs, expectations and aspirations. SLH will work with its customers to review and change the ways to get involved to ensure it is offering the right levels of involvement to benefit them and the organisation

5. Standards & Performance Monitoring

5.1 Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

The changes, which are a result of the landmark Social Housing Regulation Act, come into effect from 1 April 2024. They will apply to all social landlords, including councils and housing associations.

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so they can access services, raise concerns when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.

Under the new standards landlords will need to:

- ensure tenants are safe in their homes
- listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly to put things right
- be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect
- know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them
- collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs

SLH will listen and gather feedback and satisfaction in a number of ways:

- Customer Satisfaction surveys (a range of telephone surveys, texts, formal and informal gathering of feedback)
- Focus groups
- Complaints and compliments
- Through visits and onsite feedback
- Online social media
- Ad-hoc neighbourhood events

SLH will monitor satisfaction through:

- KPI's and OPI's that are reported to the customer services committee and SLH board
- Reports to Leadership team
- Annual report

6. Customer Voice and influence

SLH promise to hear the customer's voice and deliver meaningful engagement, we will seek and value the voice of customers and ensure customers feel listened to on the issues that matter to them.

We will deliver on this promise, by

- Ensuring customers have a wide range of opportunities to be involved – providing a range of meaningful engagement activities that will enable and empower customers to feedback on services. New technology will also be used to provide a greater choice in how feedback can be shared and we will learn from best practice to keep improving customer engagement opportunities.
- Showing customers how they have helped improve services – listening to customer feedback and learning from this where things could be better. SLH will share where it has made changes following customer feedback and consultation. This will be on the Group's website, newsletters and as part of an annual report.
- Being transparent and enabling scrutiny of its performance, policies, standards, delivery and complaints – sharing performance information and providing opportunities for customer scrutiny exercises on issues that are important to them.
- Supporting and building capacity for our engaged customers – providing support and resources to enable them to be as fully engaged as possible, for example arranging training, covering travel costs and expenses, support in learning new skills or further developing existing skills.
- We will also take positive action to support diverse groups in being involved by assessing the accessibility of involvement opportunities to ensure there are no barriers. Involvement opportunities will be evaluated to ensure appropriate representation of tenants with protected characteristics or valuable lived experience in the subject matter.
- It is important we engage with younger people, to gather their views about our services and the communities that we support.
- Where customers are keen to increase their level of involvement we will support them in taking the next step, should they wish to progress to being a Customer committee or Board member.

Engaging with communities and partners – work alongside partners and communities to deliver community initiatives based on needs and insight, looking for opportunities to learn from good practice.

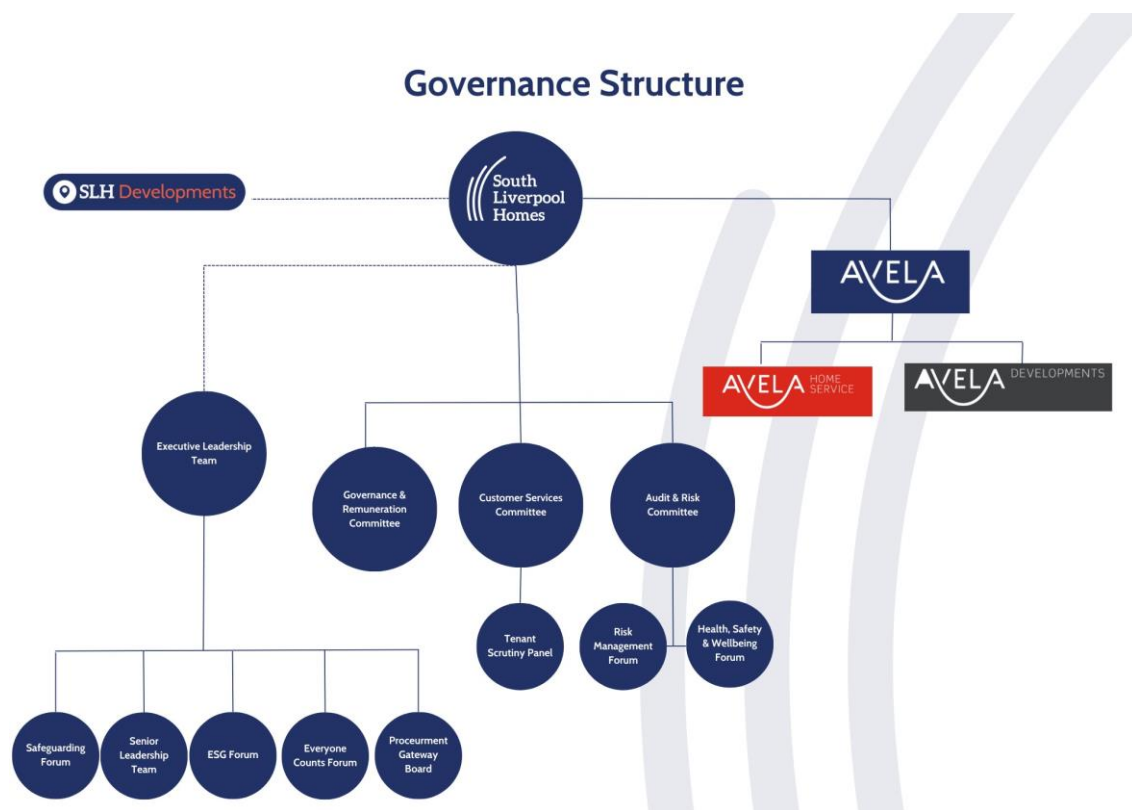
Recognition

Everyone’s time and effort should be recognised and there will be times when we offer incentives or rewards to our customers who engage with us. This would usually be in the form of gift vouchers for those who are actively involved in a project, or entry into a prize draw for gift vouchers for more ad hoc involvement activity. We also offer training and CV development for those who are more regularly involved with us

7. Governance Structure

The Board is responsible for the overall running of the group, making strategic decision at the highest level.

The structure of the organisation is shown below, and shows how the Customer Service committee, which is formed only from tenants who live in our homes, is an integral part of the governance structure. It is supported by a member of the board.



Customer Services Committee

The Chair of the Customer Services committee also attends the SLH Board

meetings to ensure a direct and effective link between the two is in place. The views of the Customer Services committee will be fed into the SLH Board through members attendance and a direct reporting line through the Chair.

Reports related to the Consumer Standards will be considered by the Customer services committee in advance of the Governance & Remuneration committee, to ensure these matters are always considered by customers first.

The Customer Services committee has formal terms of reference and members follow the SLH Code of Conduct. The role of the Customer Services committee is to be involved in influencing decisions about how services are delivered, review policies, provide oversight and review of services, and review key performance indicators and customer feedback. This in turn may result in the Customer services committee commissioning a scrutiny exercise to review services in more detail, to carry out desktop reviews or request mystery shopping. The Scrutiny Panel will report the findings of their scrutiny exercises to the Customer services committee.

8. Equality Analysis

An Equality Analysis was completed when developing this policy to ensure any barriers to the policy are identified and actions put in place to either remove or reduce the impact of any barriers

9. Statutory and Legislative Framework

SLH has developed this policy in line with the regulatory framework and legislative framework.

- RSH Consumer standards
- NHF Together with Tenants Charter
- Government's Social Housing white paper

10. Links with other policies & documents

This policy should be read and will be supported by the following documents:

- Information Security Policy
- Corporate Plan
- Customer Feedback policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policy