



Poole Housing Partnership Ltd

Resident Involvement Compact

**Formal Agreement
2008 - 2010**

Introduction

Joe Logan, Chief Executive of Poole Housing Partnership:

"The quality of housing management services has a real impact on people's lives. From doing repairs, putting in new kitchens and improving estates to helping people manage household finances, taking care of the environment and strengthening a feeling of community, it is really important that we deliver the best possible services.

"You are the best person to help us to focus these services so that we get them right first time. You can help us improve the way they are delivered - ensuring that across Poole, we deliver a high quality service at as low a cost as possible."

Bill Constance, Chairman of Poole Housing Partnership's Board of Directors:

"Residents in control - that's the principle that the Board of Directors has been behind since the formation of Poole Housing Partnership. One third of Board members are residents, ensuring that what you want is central to the Board's direction.

"PHP is acting in partnership with residents now more than ever. We want to put more power into your hands, and improve services in line with what you want. In recent years, we have been successful at getting more involved with you. We hope this will continue, so that all residents will feel able to have their say in a way that suits them."

Helen Ross, Chairwoman of the Housing Strategy Panel:

"Being the Chair of the Housing Strategy Panel has been a great opportunity to be at the forefront of involvement with PHP, changing and improving services. We've got more choice about involvement than ever before, and we can all get involved, directly with PHP or through local resident representatives.

"PHP are listening to us, and improving as a result. We want to see this continue, and this means we need to tell what PHP what we think."

Elaine Atkinson

Signatures

The Formal Agreement

This Agreement sets out the way that Poole Housing Partnership commits to engage, involve and consult residents about services and communities. The agreement is between tenants, leaseholders, Poole Housing Partnership and the Borough of Poole.

The Formal Agreement forms part of the Resident Involvement Compact package, which also includes the Resident Involvement Strategy (containing the Resident Involvement Action Plan) and YourPHP, an easy to read summary of the Compact.

For the purposes of this Agreement, tenants and leaseholders of Poole Housing Partnership will be referred to collectively as “residents”.

The Formal Agreement:

- Is written according to standards set out by the Government and national best practice, but mainly from consultation with residents across Poole
- Gives the principles of involvement
- Details the core standards of our commitment to you, including our financial and resource commitments
- Describes how you can solve a dispute about being involved
- Will be reviewed fully in three years time

The Resident Involvement Strategy:

- Aims to be an accessible document for involved and interested residents and staff
- Gives the principles of involvement
- Details the process of consultation leading to the Strategy and Compact
- Describes the ‘menu’ of involvement
- Includes the Resident Involvement Action Plan for the next three years

YourPHP:

- Aims to be a simple-to-follow document, summarising the key points of the Compact
- Describes the issues on which residents can be involved
- Details the key service standards you can expect
- Includes a one-page summary of the Resident Involvement Action Plan

Aims

- To continuously empower residents to shape the services they receive, by consulting to provide a flexible range of ways to deliver effective resident involvement
- To embed resident involvement as part of the culture of Poole Housing Partnership
- To ensure high satisfaction for residents with the participation structure
- To support the wider objective of developing strong communities
- To ensure all sections of the community have their voice heard, especially under-represented groups such as youth

Objectives

- To ensure that residents are involved in an appropriate way such as in:
 - Service Contract letting
 - Neighbourhood improvements
 - Policy and procedure development
 - Sustainable community development
 - Changes to the way services are provided or financed
 - Service and performance monitoring
- To consult upon any significant change in the way that housing management service is delivered
- To increase the number of residents able to engage with us at a level and in a way that suits them, up to half of all residents by 2010
- To involve residents to reflect the diversity and geography of Poole Housing Partnership's communities and housing stock, including hard-to-reach groups such as young people
- To continuously review and improve the opportunities and scope of resident led decision making
- To review and meet training needs for both residents and staff to enable effective resident involvement
- To make all staff responsible for promoting and encouraging resident involvement in a formal context, through job descriptions, one-to-ones and Employee Development Interviews
- To work closely with the Borough of Poole and other local partners in developing strong communities by empowering local people to have a greater voice and influence over decision making, and promoting the opportunities for residents to shape and support those communities

Your Menu of Involvement – 21 ways to get involved

Type	Form	Description
Informing	At Home Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly resident magazine providing information on current events at Poole Housing Partnership and publicises services • Letters page and competitions for residents • Resident Communications group provides editorial oversight • <i>At Home</i> can be provided in a range of different formats, including different languages, Braille, large print, audio or electronic
	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects all PHP information together • Dates and events advertised • Residents can carry out business with PHP through the website through forms, payment, etc.
Consulting	Annual Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual survey with questions discussed with resident focus groups beforehand • Easy opportunity for all residents to be involved at least once throughout the year • Collects information about overall resident satisfaction with services • Results improve services and ensure that they are meeting needs of all residents
	People's Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly survey conducted by post, phone or email • Primarily for those with very little time • Topics cover all service areas
	Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups are held as and when required to discuss issues relating to the housing service • Database of interested residents is used to determine invitees. • Focus groups are an ideal opportunity for residents to attend an occasional discussion
Involving	Mystery Shopping Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents check our services by taking on a role in a scenario and evaluating staff response • Any resident can be a mystery shopper, subject to training
	Halo Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many working and focus groups have options for involvement that don't involve meetings • Residents on a halo group receive the agenda, reports and minutes for their group and can send their comments to the Resident Involvement Officer to be added to the meeting's findings • Gives residents chance to have a say on flexible basis

	Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours an estate and brings Local Community Representatives, councillors, police officers, staff, local agencies and interested residents together to solve estate problems • Conducted by the local housing officer • Aim is to improve the environment, reduce crime and design out anti-social behaviour, and to put residents in control of their own estates
	Respectfest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun day for all residents • Brings community together with PHP • Springboard for stronger communities message
	Annual Stakeholder Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to all residents and other key stakeholders • Forum to meet each other and staff, receive information, ask questions and share ideas
Engaging	Neighbourhood Improvements on Council Estates (NICE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows residents to bid for up to a £3000 grant to improve their estate • Encourages residents to work together in their community and provides tangible benefits for being involved • Examples include gardening and garden improvements, lighting, security works and art
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various training sessions provided, ranging from short I.T. taster sessions to full training and personal development courses. • They develop residents' abilities to be effectively involved and are an incentive to further involvement • Can also help people to find work and new careers
	Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular groups consulting on a range of issues • Membership open to any tenant or leaseholder and is not restricted to representatives • Members give feedback on any proposal in a specific area of activity, help draft policies and proposals and monitor relevant service delivery • Examples: Communications, Decent Homes, Disability, Reinvestment, Service Improvement
	Local Community Representatives (LCR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents their street, block or neighbourhood • Work to improve the quality of life for people in their community through liaison with staff and other agencies
	Sheltered Housing Resident Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Sheltered Housing complex has a Resident Association that represents all residents in that area • Run democratically in accordance with aims set down in their constitution • Provide a way for residents to be involved in their community

	Resident Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant and Resident Associations represent all residents in a defined area • Run democratically in accordance with aims set down in their constitution • Provide way for residents to be involved in their community, and committee can represent them to PHP
	Leaseholder Customer Service Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made up of resident leaseholders, elected by all leaseholders, and one non-resident leaseholder • Meets with our Leasehold Services Officer to discuss issues relating to leaseholders and leasehold management, including service charges, maintenance and investment
	Sheltered Housing Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made up of all the Sheltered Housing Local Community Representatives and the senior Sheltered Housing Officers • Discusses housing needs of older people, issues that are common to all Sheltered Schemes and how to improve environment and communities in sheltered housing
	Community Housing Action Teams (CHATs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed by Local Community Representatives, Resident Association representatives, interested residents, Housing Officers, local police officers and councillors • Meet to discuss and resolve issues affecting local area, such as environment, maintenance, crime and anti-social behaviour, and how to improve neighbourhoods
Decision-making	Housing Strategy Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made up of elected tenants and leaseholders from the Sheltered Housing Forum, the Community Housing Action Teams, the Leaseholder Customer Services Panel and special interest groups (such as Focus on Disability Working Group) • Reports directly to the Board. • Monitors work and performance of PHP and agrees strategy, direction and standards of service • Supported by Councillors, Board Members and staff, but residents alone make decisions
	The Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of 15 members; four Tenant representatives, one Leaseholder representative, five Councillors and five Independent members • Responsible for long-term strategic direction of PHP and ensuring management team turns these strategies into reality • Has a dedicated Resident Involvement sub-committee to make decisions and recommendations about engaging residents

Core Standards

The PHP Service Standards for Resident Involvement (see Appendix 2: YourPHP) detail the key messages that residents have identified as standards for PHP to keep. These core standards set out in more detail the commitments that we make to residents in terms of involvement.

Standards for Areas of Involvement

Resident Involvement is expected and welcomed by PHP in all possible areas of service delivery, service improvement and community engagement. This includes the following areas, but we are always finding more:

- Developing the council's housing policy and strategy
- Drawing up and appraising options for housing investment and improvements
- Developing and taking forward the chosen option for investment
- Drawing up the council's capital and renovation programmes
- Developing and implementing regeneration and improvement programmes
- Budgets, finance, rent-setting
- Allocation and lettings policies and procedures
- Anti-social behaviour policies and procedures
- Management of housing services
- Policies and procedures for repairs, maintenance, rent collection and rent arrears, voids
- Tenancy management and sustainability issues, tenancy agreements and conditions
- Housing benefits, debt advice and debt recovery procedures
- Leaseholder issues and charges
- Sheltered housing services
- PHP service and performance strategies; and arrangements for monitoring and reviewing PHP performance, addressing shortcomings and remedial action
- Setting, monitoring and reviewing services, performance standards and targets for housing management and neighbourhood services
- Proposed remedial action if performance on services falls short
- Proposals to contract housing services to other providers including through partnering contracts
- Monitoring grounds maintenance and cleaning standards
- Neighbourhood issues which affect tenants' homes or the management of the housing service
- Equality policies, including race equality policies and policies on racial harassment
- Customer care standards
- Environmental works and estate improvements
- Arrangements for providing information, for tenant consultation and involvement including handling complaints and remedial action
- Sustainability planning and projects
- Developing strong, safe and pleasant neighbourhoods

Standards for Resources for Resident Involvement

PHP knows that promises about involvement need to be backed up with the resources to deliver an excellent involvement service. Therefore we have set out the resources we are committing to support and develop resident involvement.

Staff

There will always be a full-time Resident Involvement Officer to run the service, supported by their line manager as strategic lead. All PHP staff will be aware of and will carry out their responsibilities to involve residents in improving all aspects of PHP services.

Budget

A budget of at least £40,000 per annum will be provided through which the Resident Involvement objectives will be resourced, including (but not limited to):

- Start-up grants for recognised residents' groups
- Support for resident projects
- Provision of a Resident Resource Centre with word-processing, internet, printing, photocopying and meeting facilities
- At least 4 *At Home* magazines per year
- Advice and support, both directly and through membership of groups like the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)
- Tailored training for representatives, resident groups and individual residents, including training jointly with staff
- Payment of resident expenses for being involved so that no resident is out-of-pocket, according to the expenses policy (including stationary, communication, travel and carer costs)
- Making involvement accessible to all, through hire of accessible rooms, provision of translation facilities, etc.
- Innovative approaches to encourage residents to get involved

Standards for meetings

We recognise that although meetings are not the only form of involvement, many residents find them the easiest way of engaging with PHP and making informed decisions. To make sure these meetings are effective, we guarantee that meetings will:

- Have clear objectives and a mandate
- Have a clear action plan to deal with matters arising
- Have measures for reporting back the outcome, including feedback, to residents
- Be publicised effectively and in good time
- Be held at suitable times and in accessible places, to maximise attendance
- Be properly chaired, and conducted in a fair and democratic way so that everyone gets a chance to have their say and is kept informed.

Standards for information

Information is the first rung on the ladder of involvement, and is often as far as many residents want to go in participation. Therefore the timely provision of good quality, accurate and appropriate information is vital in delivering excellent involvement. PHP makes the following commitments in this respect.

PHP information will be:

- Accessible (i.e. in plain language and be available in large print, Braille, cassette, translation etc.)
- Expressed clearly, avoiding jargon and racist, sexist or other biased language
- Of good quality, timely and tailored to tenants' needs.

PHP will distribute, through a wide range of formats, information including (but not limited to) the following:

- Housing strategies, policies and priorities
- Housing investment options and plans
- Arrangements and requirements for delegating housing management, including contracting out of services
- Arrangements for developing and implementing best value, including monitoring and reviewing performance and setting service standards and targets
- Housing management and other relevant local services
- Present and future capital works affecting tenants, their homes and their area
- PHP's race equality and racial harassment policies
- Compacts themselves
- How tenants can get involved in housing management and decision-making and what this will mean for them, including benefits for both tenants and PHP
- Support available to help residents get involved

Standards for Residents' Groups and Recognition

Residents can get involved individually or collectively. Where a group of residents acts on behalf of other residents, it is important that there is a standard to which they should adhere to, in order that relationships between residents, the residents' group and PHP should remain productive. To that end, we set a standard for PHP's recognition of resident groups. The standard is designed to be a minimal burden on residents and exists for their benefit.

Where residents' groups have a role in decision-making, they shall be able to show that they are democratic, accountable and have all of the following:

- A written constitution
- Equal opportunities policies (including race equality policies) that are complied with
- Regular elections
- Open financial records (and annual accounts if appropriate)

- Regular meetings, including an annual general meeting that a minimum necessary number of residents attend before the meeting can take decisions and where minutes are taken
- A level of active membership determined by PHP and residents
- Procedures to make sure that information on the group is made widely available to residents and all residents are encouraged to become more active
- Membership clearly open to all residents
- Regular newsletters or other written communications with members

Standards for Monitoring Performance

Commitments need to be backed up by evidence, and these standards are no exception. Residents and PHP will work together to monitor that the standards are adhered to.

We will:

- Assess the results and impact of involvement according to these core standards
- Review policies, practice and performance at regular intervals
- Set clear service standards and targets for resident consultation and involvement
- If service standards and targets are not met, investigate and find remedies
- Look at best practice and evaluate different approaches to resident involvement, in order to remain effective and efficient
- Monitor resident representatives and groups to make sure they continue to carry out their roles effectively
- Monitor equality of opportunity and levels of involvement by all groups, including ethnic minorities
- Assess performance against what other housing organisations are achieving (benchmarking)
- Annually set targets for, and measure, resident satisfaction with opportunities to participate, housing services (including value for money) and their local area

Comments & Complaints

If you feel that this Agreement fails to meet the standards we set for ourselves, in format, clarity or consistency of information, or if you believe Poole Housing Partnership has failed to fulfill our commitments in this Agreement, please contact the Resident Involvement Officer on 01202 264422, or in writing to Resident Involvement Compact, Freepost PHP, or by email to getinvolved.php@poole.gov.uk

This strategy will be continuously reviewed, with new action plans formed for each year. All resident comments will be taken into account in this process.

If you feel this has not solved the problem, please contact the Chair of the Housing Strategy Panel who will take your issue to a meeting of the Panel (to which you will be invited) for discussion.

If you are dissatisfied with the conclusions reached by the Panel, please continue with your complaint by using the Poole Housing Partnership complaints procedure, detailed below.

Comments & Complaints About Resident Involvement Services

We have a comprehensive and objective complaints procedure to deal with instances where a resident feels that they have not received the high quality services they have a right to expect.

If you think that we have failed to meet the resident involvement service standards or did not follow the correct policy or procedure as regards resident involvement, please follow our official complaints procedure.

If you require a copy of this leaflet, please contact the Complaints Officer at Beech House on 01202 264400 and we will send you one. Alternatively you can collect one from our reception at Beech House or download it from our website, www.yourphp.org.uk

Our complaints procedure has three stages. If the issue is not resolved at the first, it progresses onto the second, and if not at the second, then onto the third:

Stage 1: Complaints Officer tries to resolve issue informally with officer involved

Stage 2: Senior Manager carries out investigation into matter

Stage 3: Chief Executive of PHP carries out investigation into matter

If problems remain unresolved at this point, you will need to contact the Local Government Ombudsman – details are given in the Complaints Leaflet.

Mediation

We recognise that sometimes a difference of opinion or judgement will arise between residents, residents groups and/or PHP that are not necessarily appropriate for resolution through the official complaints procedure.

In these cases we would recommend that mediation be used. Mediation will identify common ground between parties and work towards an outcome that all parties can accept. Independent mediators will be used.

Independent Advice

If you would like independent advice on resident involvement, it can be provided by InStep Services, the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) or the Tenants and Residents Organisation of England (TAROE). The contact details for these organisations are given at the end of this document.

Contacts

Poole Housing Partnership

Resident Involvement Officer
Poole Housing Partnership
28-30 Wimborne Road
Poole
BH15 2BU

Tel: 01202 264422
Email: getinvolved.php@poole.gov.uk
Website: www.yourphp.org.uk

Borough of Poole

Housing & Community Services, Civic Centre
Poole
BH15 2RU

Tel: 01202 633430
Email: community.development@poole.gov.uk
Website: www.poole.gov.uk

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)

Free advice for tenants of organisations with membership (currently, PHP are members of TPAS).

TPAS Ltd
5th Floor, Trafford House
Chester Road
Manchester
M32 0RS

Tel: 0161 868 3500
Email: info@tpas.org.uk
Website: www.tpas.org.uk

InStep

Freephone involvement advice line for residents. Also provides tenant training

Tel: 0500 844 111
Email: info.instep@tribalgroup.co.uk
Website: www.instepservices.co.uk

Tenant and Residents Organisation of England (TAROE)

Cora Carter MBE
Federation House
St John's Avenue
Newsome
Huddersfield
HD4 6JP

Tel: 01484 223466/7
Website: www.taroe.org