



Policy Name	Customer Engagement Strategy
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Linked to other Policies	G21 – Customer Care Policy G22 – Tenant Participation Policy Knowes Housing Association Ltd Marketing Plan
Consultation	Staff, Residents

This document will be made available in different languages and formats on request, including Braille and audio formats.

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Our Vision, Mission and Core Values	3
3.	Aims & Objectives.....	4
4.	Benefits of Effective Customer Engagement	6
5.	Keeping Customers Informed - Methods of Communication	6
6.	Wider Action	9
7.	Connecting with the Community in Non-Housing Activities	9
8.	Consulting with Customers	10
9.	Monitoring and Improving Customer Engagement.....	10
10.	Summary	11
11.	Resources	12
12.	Equality, Inclusion & Diversity	12
13.	Review of Strategy.....	13

1. Introduction

The Scottish Social Housing Charter, Outcome 3, focuses on customer participation. It states that “Social landlords must manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with”.

In addition, Regulatory Standard 2.4 sets out the requirements that “The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions”.

Knowes Housing Association Ltd understands the importance of customer engagement and providing residents with the opportunity to participate and influence the decision-making process through a range of activities. Our ‘customers and community are at the centre of everything we do’ and by taking their views on board we will be able to adapt and improve our services which will benefit our customers and the Association.

This strategy demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that customer engagement is a central element across our services and that customers are able to engage with Knowes HA at a level best suited to them.

This Customer Engagement Strategy runs from May 2024 to May 2027. The Strategy is not static and should evolve, grow and develop over time, and be adaptable to recognise any changes in the socio-economic situation within our society, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Our Vision, Mission and Core Values

OUR VISION IS TO

“Shape the future of housing and improve the quality of life in our community.”

OUR MISSION IS TO

“Provide good quality affordable homes and services which meet the needs and aspirations of the community we serve, to ensure customer involvement in

current and future housing and to drive positive change in our local community and environment.”

OUR CORE VALUES ARE

- *Respect and Equality of Opportunity*

We treat everyone with respect and recognise and respond to their individual needs.

- *Customer Focussed*

We ensure that our customers and community are at the centre of everything we do.

- *Communication*

We communicate effectively with our customers and colleagues.

- *Continuous Improvement*

We are committed to reviewing, developing and improving all of our services and processes.

- *Honesty and Professionalism*

We behave in a professional manner and act with honesty and integrity.

3. Aims & Objectives

Effective customer insight and engagement is closely linked to improving customer experience by taking account of our customers' and other stakeholders needs, views and preferences. We aim do this by:

- Encouraging a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between customers, stakeholders, Committee Members and staff, working together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.
- Seeking our customers' views on all aspects of our service provision and ensuring that feedback is used to influence and continuously improve services.
- Using a variety of communication methods to consult on our services and policies.

- Complying with all relevant legislation and good practice.
- Providing written information in a clear and user-friendly format, using plain language and where requested, we will provide information in alternative formats such as audio, large print, braille etc.
- Delivering excellent performance and being recognised for this by regulators and strategic partners.
- Ensuring that Committee Members, staff, our Customer Working Group and the wider community are aware of the Association's commitment to customer engagement and recognise the benefits.
- Ensuring that Committee Members, our Customer Working Group and the wider community have access to training and resources to enable them to participate in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring that Committee Members, our Customer Working Group and the wider community have access to the information they need to participate effectively.
- Increasing customer involvement throughout Faifley, Duntocher and Clydebank through our newsletters, website, social media, surveys and by word of mouth.
- Implementing the Customer Engagement Strategy to enhance participation in Faifley, Duntocher and Clydebank.
- Supporting residents' groups (in kind and financially). The Association will provide a meeting room, administration assistance, tea and coffee and travel/ childcare expenses, where required.
- Promoting our commitment to equalities, ensuring that it underpins everything we do and that we are an inclusive organisation.
- Using customer feedback to influence and continuously improve our services.
- Providing relevant information and communicating clearly with our customers, stakeholders, Management Committee and staff.
- Engage with Elected Members that represent our community in ways in which we enhance our reputation, business needs, whilst also managing any enquiry made on behalf of customers within defined timescales.

4. Benefits of Effective Customer Engagement

- a. Effective engagement provides the Association with opportunities to make informed decisions in relation to both policy and practice, based on customers' needs and expectations.
- b. By listening to our customers, we will improve our services, identify problems and find solutions early. Engagement enables customers to exercise more control over their housing and related services.
- c. Customer engagement is a continuous process where information and ideas are shared.
- d. The customer relationship will be improved as customers will feel more valued which in turn will create higher levels of customer satisfaction.
- e. Good practice in engagement removes barriers to effective participation and protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of the following characteristics: race, gender, disability, age, religion & belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity, and marriage & civil partnership.

5. Keeping Customers Informed - Methods of Communication

We keep customers informed by providing information through the following channels:

Tenants and Owners Handbooks

Even before a customer becomes a tenant we provide information via our application pack. New tenants and owners are provided with a handbook at the start of their tenancy or factoring service. This provides more information about Knowes, our activities, responsibilities as a tenant or owner, charges and invoices, debt advice and other general information. This is a useful way of us engaging with tenants and factored owners and providing them with useful information and details about their tenancy or factoring service.

Newsletters

One of the most effective ways of engaging with our tenants and residents is through our newsletters. Our newsletters are designed and distributed on a quarterly basis and every household receives a paper copy by post. Our newsletters are an effective way of communicating because we can connect with our customers and build stronger

engagement. We design our newsletter to include a mix of content that will appeal to different interests and age groups and we also include competitions and incentives to increase tenant and resident participation.

Customer Working Group

Tenant participation is an essential part of Knowes' work and it is a priority to keep our tenants and residents involved and informed in decision making. Our Customer Working Group is made up of Knowes tenants and owners that receive a factoring service from Knowes. The Customer Working Group meets with staff members to provide feedback on services and other topics to help Knowes drive for improvements. This provides an opportunity to share knowledge and learn from one another.

Website

Our website www.knowes.org covers a range of information including background on Knowes Housing Association; our services; committee papers and minutes; newsletters; policies; news and events; feedback from satisfaction surveys; general updates and other information. The corporate team manages the website and updates this regularly to ensure that we provide relevant and up-to-date information and documents. We want our website to be accessible to as many people as possible. For this reason we incorporated a speech tool on our website to overcome language barriers. This tool allows users to select their chosen language and any text on the website will be read out loud to them in this language (132 languages are currently available when accessed on a computer or laptop). We can also provide people with documents in a variety of languages, large print, Braille or audio on request. We have also added additional 'Contact Us' pages on our website to ensure that online enquiries are sent directly to the correct department saving time, resources and ensuring that queries are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Letters

We understand that not all of our customers have access to the internet or are comfortable with using it therefore it is important that we still communicate with customers by post too. Letters are sent to customers to notify them about changes to services, updates to their account, funding opportunities, surveys and other general information.

Face to Face Interaction

Knowes' office is in heart of Faifley therefore it is accessible to the local community which is very important. The office is open to the public 5 days per week (Monday – Friday). Customers can make an

appointment and come to our office to speak with members of staff about any queries or issues that they may have.

The Housing Team and Repairs and Maintenance Team also carry out home visits where appropriate to engage with tenants for example to carry out new tenant visits, property inspections and to discuss repairs.

Text Messaging Service

Our text messaging service provides a convenient way for us to communicate with customers and reach a large audience. Messages are sent instantly and are more likely to be read and responded to by customers.

Information Leaflets

Various information leaflets are made available at Knowes' office. These provide our customers with more about Knowes services and services provided by local organisations.

Social Media

Social media is one of the most powerful engagement tools in today's society. We use our Facebook page www.facebook.com/knowesha to engage with tenants and residents, the public and organisations. Our Facebook page can also be accessed via the homepage of our website by clicking on the Facebook icon on the homepage.

Customer Surveys

We regularly send customer surveys to gather feedback and measure satisfaction. Surveys are a valuable tool to measure where we are being successful and where improvement is required. Once the results of customer surveys have been analysed, they will be published on our website and newsletters. Hard copies will be available on request from our office and will be issued to customers who requested a copy in the survey form. We provide residents with at least two weeks to respond to any surveys.

Complaints and Compliments

We take customer complaints very seriously and we use feedback from complaints to learn and improve to avoid similar issues arising in the future.

Complaints data and feedback is published in our newsletters and we have incorporated a 'You Said, We Did' section to show how we approach complaints and lessons learned.

As well as complaints, we also receive compliments from our customers. Compliments are also very important as they provide us with information on the areas that customers think we are doing well. We publish compliments in our newsletters too.

6. Wider Action

Community Support Officer (CSO)

The Association in partnership with 2 other RSLs employs a CSO to assist in tenancy sustainment issues that customers may have. This service is open to both tenants and owners.

Welfare Benefits Advice

Knowes HA in conjunction with Clydebank HA and Dalmuir Park HA have secured funding to provide benefits advice to residents through West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Residents have a dedicated CAB staff member who will be able to provide advice and support through telephone, video and in person appointments.

7. Connecting with the Community in Non-Housing Activities

We try to encourage community engagement through events as they provide an opportunity to bring the local community together and also help the Association to create stronger relationships with its customers. The Association will aim to arrange events in conjunction with our contractors and other organisations.

Events will include;

- Annual General Meeting (AGM) – The Association holds its Annual General meeting in September each year. The AGM is held in a local venue that is convenient for our Share Members to attend. Annual General Meeting papers are sent to shareholders a minimum of 14 days prior to meeting.
- Bus trip for over 60's.
- Annual Garden Competition.
- Supporting Flourishing Faifley with their community work including continuing to provide them with the land at the Secret Garden, supporting their new Community Hub and providing donations for various community events throughout the year including at Easter, Halloween, and Christmas.
- Attending Faifley Community Council meetings when possible.
- Working with the local schools and early learning centres supporting their events and making donations were required.

- Any agency that holds events within our area that we will support through participation and/or donations including Faifley Upcycling and Faifley Art Group.

To increase and encourage further engagement we offer prizes to those customers who give us feedback through surveys, and feedback to our rent increase consultation each year. Furthermore, we have voucher distributions at Christmas, donations to local schools, and prize giveaways at our AGM.

We will also support local groups in kind such as –

- Providing meeting facilities
- Offering donations
- Arranging transport
- Providing administrative support (minute taking, letter writing etc.)

8. Consulting with Customers

There are certain services which we as a registered social landlord, must legally consult on with our customers. These include policy reviews and annual consultation on rent increases.

There are other areas, which the Association will consult on to ensure our services are continuously improved. To do this we will consult by:

- Sending out surveys to customers. Surveys will either be posted out or emailed to customers using Microsoft Customer Voice.
- Carrying out consultation exercises on proposed repairs and maintenance plans and policy reviews.
- Carrying out focus groups when required.
- Encouraging tenants and owners within the community to join our Management Committee. Our Management Committee meet once a month and members receive an agenda and papers seven days prior to a meeting.
- Encouraging tenants to join our Customer Working Group. Tenant scrutiny is a way of giving tenants greater influence and the ability to hold their landlords to account.

9. Monitoring and Improving Customer Engagement

We will monitor our methods of communication and act where necessary to improve customer engagement and participation. To do

this we will:

1. Carry out a range of surveys to measure customer satisfaction across our service offerings.
2. Ensure that survey questions are relevant to our customers.
3. Publish 3 newsletters annually.
4. Publish an Annual Report which will be included in the summer newsletter.
5. Regularly ask residents how they prefer to be consulted.
6. Provide more opportunities for customers to participate.
7. Ask residents about issues and topics they feel are of interest to them.
8. Consult with residents on key policies.
9. Report on annual rent increase consultation.
10. Hold our AGM each year.
11. Monitor, evaluate and learn from complaints.
12. Report complaints and compliments results to our customers in our newsletters and website.
13. Provide a variety of methods in which customers can communicate with us, especially using digital platforms.
14. Encourage residents to become Share Members.
15. Encourage residents to join the Management Committee.
16. Encourage tenants to join the Customer Working Group.
17. Monitor responses to consultations.

10. Summary

We will produce the following

- Newsletters
- Annual Report
- Tenants and Owners Handbook
- Information Leaflets
- Surveys
- Websites updates
- Facebook updates
- Feedback from Complaints – “You said We Did”
- Consultation exercises

We Will

- Update our website regularly
- Update our social media page regularly
- Prominently display our leaflets
- Publish survey results on our website and in our newsletters
- Provide and publish complaints procedure on our website and in our reception

- Work with external agencies to promote wider action
- Carry out a full resident satisfaction survey every three years, review and publish results and implement changes where necessary

We will also encourage residents to

- Become a Share Member
- Join our Management Committee
- Join our Customer Working Group
- Enter the garden competition
- Contribute to the content of the newsletter
- Suggest ways in which the Association can improve its services to the community by contacting us or providing feedback through surveys
- Contact the Association by email, through our website and customer portal app
- Receive updates on the Association's services via social media platforms
- Respond to surveys
- Attend our AGM

We will use the Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan (see Appendix 1) to monitor activities.

11. Resources

The Association recognises that for Customer Engagement to be successful the correct resources have to be in place.

Engagement activities are taken into account during budgeting. Budgets are discussed with our Management Committee at monthly meetings.

The Association has a full time Corporate Services/Compliance Officer (CSCO) and to promote and encourage residents to participate in the decision making process.

12. Equality, Inclusion & Diversity

Knowes Housing Association Ltd is committed to tackling discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status, racial grounds, or grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

Knowes Housing Association Ltd seeks to embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate any unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work.

In developing customer engagement, the Association will take account of the requirements of all tenants, residents, groups who may have an interest in the process.

We will ascertain tenant requirements at the start of a tenancy to ensure that any special requirements are identified.

We will use this information to ensure that we remove any perceived barriers to participation. Such barriers include:

- Methods used for communication – e.g., by relying on IT or focusing only on written communication.
- Physical barriers – inaccessibility of venues, or lack of facilities at events.
- Attitudinal barriers – the ways in which staff approach or respond to groups and individuals and the assumptions made.
- Financial – many equalities groups lack resources, and this can affect their ability to respond.
- Cultural – e.g., using inappropriate facilities or language.

13. Review of Strategy

The Customer Engagement Strategy will be reviewed in March 2027. An informal review of the strategy will take place each year as part of the business planning process.

This strategy links to the following policies and plan:

- G21 – Customer Care Policy
- G22 – Tenant Participation Policy
- Knowes Housing Association Ltd Marketing Plan



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Knowes Housing Association Ltd is a charitable organisation registered under Scottish Charity No: SC027466

Knowes Housing Association Ltd

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Knowes Housing Association Ltd is a registered property factor (Reg. No. PF000201)

**Customer Engagement Strategy
Action Plan 2024-2027**

Aim	Agreed Action	Responsible Person	Priority & Timescale	Outcomes
To seek customers' views on all aspects of our service provision and to use a variety of communication methods to consult on the services and policies of the Association.	Carry out a wide range of surveys including the Resident Satisfaction Survey Promote any areas we wish to consult on in the newsletter and on the website. Find out how customers wish to be consulted.	Corporate Services/Compliance Officer	Resident Satisfaction Survey will be completed by end of Summer 24. Consultation in newsletters throughout the year. Customer views throughout the year by way of satisfaction surveys and newsletter articles.	Resident Satisfaction Survey will be carried out by Knowledge Partnership.
To use customer feedback to influence and continuously improve our services.	Carry out a wide range of surveys including new tenant surveys and new applicant surveys Record all complaints on QL in accordance with the SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure. Publish complaints performance in newsletters and on website.	Corporate Services/Compliance Officer	New tenant surveys will be issued on a quarterly basis and analysis published New applicant surveys will be issued and results will be published on a quarterly basis. Complaints will be logged on QL and assigned to relevant officer for action and response. Publication of survey results and complaints	

			performance will be posted on our website and newsletters.	
Increase the opportunity for customer involvement throughout Faifley, Duntocher and Clydebank.	Publish relevant articles, events planned for the local areas on our website and Facebook page	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer	Ongoing	
To re-establish the Customer Working Group (formerly Scrutiny Panel)	To encourage tenants to join our Customer Working Group by recruiting for new members on our website, Facebook page and in our newsletters.	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer	Continual work on recruitment of members for the Customer Working Group.	
To assess performance against the Charter and collect all relevant information for the ARC.	To put procedures in place to gather and collate all relevant information for the ARC.	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer & Management Team	Assess information on an on-going basis by providing quarterly updates to the Management Committee for each department. Complete and submit Annual Return on Charter (ARC) to SHR by May each year.	All relevant information collated on an on-going basis. The ARC submitted on time and all relevant evidence gathered and filed.

Attract new Committee/Share Members	Encourage new tenants to become Share members at sign-up stage. Regular recruitment drive for new share members and Committee members in newsletters, on website and Facebook.	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer Allocations Officer / Housing Assistant	Ongoing	All Committee places filled and an increase in Share Membership.
To encourage residents to get involved in the social and economic regeneration of our area.	To actively support Faifley Community Council by attending meetings and offering assistance when appropriate. To work closely with the nursery school, and the local primary schools and support inclusive projects.	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer	Attendance at meetings when possible.	Provide feedback to CEO and Management Team
Ensure regular sources of information are made available to customers	To provide information through; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants' and owners' handbooks • Newsletters • Leaflets • Website • Social media 	Corporate Services/ Compliance Officer	Ongoing	All new tenants are provided with a tenant handbook. Information leaflets are provided on a wide range of our services. The website and Facebook page are updated on a regular basis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events 			
Encourage customers to use the Customer Portal	Publicise the customer portal on website and regularly in newsletters. Provide support and assistance to customers who are having difficulty using the Customer Portal.	Corporate Services Team	Ongoing	
Source funding opportunities to assist community with services and events.	Support and apply for funding for various activities.	Corporate Services/Compliance Officer Community Links	Ongoing	