

5. Resident involvement: our menu of involvement



This document is available in other languages, larger text, Braille and on audio cd or cassette.



The decisions that we take to develop our services can have a real impact on your home and neighbourhood. This is why we go much further than carrying out ordinary market research to find out what our customers want from our services. We are continually striving to improve our services or develop new ideas to benefit residents and communities. Residents are often the people with great ideas so we work with you at every opportunity when we are planning improvements. We also try to involve tenants and other residents in helping us to make business decisions and we consult widely when we consider making changes to our services.

This leaflet explains why you might want to get involved and outlines the many opportunities that are available through our 'Menu of Involvement'.

Why get involved?

People get involved for many reasons.

You may be concerned about your home or the service we provide and have ideas for improvements.

Perhaps you want to tackle problems in your neighbourhood like vandalism or a lack of play facilities.

You might want to meet neighbours through social activities or have an idea for a project that could benefit your community

Or you could go further. Some tenants help to manage the direction of the Association by becoming shareholders or by joining our Board. Some groups of tenants can even take over direct management of their homes and services they receive at a local level.

Others prefer to limit their involvement to filling-in satisfaction surveys.

There are lots of ways to get involved and we try to ensure that there is something for everyone.

Benefits & Outcomes

Through our Resident Involvement Impact Assessments, we make sure that everything on the menu of involvement is achieving benefits for everyone who takes part. So if you really want to know why it's worth getting involved, take a look. The reports are available on our website or printed on request.

Your Menu of Involvement

Satisfaction Surveys

We regularly use a postal questionnaire to ask about your overall satisfaction with our services and to test how well a specific service, such as repairs, is working. Measuring our customers' satisfaction is a very important way of measuring the success of our business. We analyse the information we receive and use the results to help us plan for the future. So, if you don't get involved in any other way, please complete this questionnaire when you receive it. Your answers will be taken very seriously.

Complaints and Compliments

We are always interested in hearing from you about how satisfied you are with the services you receive and when something goes wrong, we want the opportunity to put it right and to learn from any mistakes that have been made so that we can avoid future failures. We have a clear and open policy and procedure for dealing with any formal complaints

that our customers make. We also look closely at successful complaints, particularly if a problem or failure in service has happened more than once, so that we can consider making any improvements that would prevent future problem. Similarly, if some of our services work particularly well, you don't have to wait until we send a survey in order to tell us. Compliments obviously make staff feel good and motivates people to continue to improve! But that's not all, we like to spread any good ideas across the organisation so if we exceeded your expectations by doing something particularly well...Please tell us!

Sharing your views, being well-informed, monitoring and improving services...

Beech Focus

This is a group of tenants that looks in detail at the Association's policies, procedures, performance and the information that we provide to residents. Beech Focus is open to all Beech Housing Association tenants and is a genuine opportunity to have your say about the work the Association does and to help improve our services.



We recognise that people's circumstances, needs and preferences differ greatly, so you can choose how, when and where you get involved in Beech Focus and the particular service areas that interest you. We then record this information on our database, together with any other specific needs that you tell us about. We use this information to involve you in the way that you prefer.

• Meetings

If you prefer to talk things through, discuss ideas and listen to the opinions of other tenants and staff, you can attend Beech Focus meetings. These happen regularly most months throughout the year. Staff from Beech regularly attend the meetings to present information to tenants, to get feedback and answer questions.

• Postal, Website & Telephone Involvement

If you find it more convenient, you can take part in Beech Focus by post, email, through our website or by telephone. We send you questionnaires, which give you the chance to comment about proposals to change or introduce important polices or services at the same time as the tenants who attend the meetings.

• Beech Focus Readers

We produce a lot of information for tenants, leaflets, posters, standard letters, rent statements and so on. Beech Focus members receive drafts of these and make valuable suggestions to make sure they are easy to read and free of jargon. Once documents have been read, the final versions are marked with the Beech Focus stamp of approval.

• Working Parties

These are a great opportunity for you to get involved in some depth in a particular issue or aspect of the work we do such as how we carry out repairs or let properties or how we achieve value for money in the Association's work. These groups vary in their activities and objectives but are often focused on developing improvements to services. Some of these working parties focus on Housing Group issues and some are focused specifically on Beech Housing Association services.

Whichever method you choose to take part in Beech Focus...

- We will ask you about your specific interests and only involve you in consultations that you have expressed a preference for
- You will get the chance to receive detailed information, ask questions, raise issues and make suggestions
- You will have a good chance of winning prizes of shopping vouchers as a reward for your time and efforts
- You will receive regular reports on how you have influenced Beech by getting involved. We do this through Beech Focus News, which is a regular newsletter circulated to all Beech Focus members (whichever method they choose to get involved)

Beech Focus has an Agreement, the content of which, was decided by its members. The Beech Focus Agreement sets out its aims and some basic principles for how the group will run and how Beech Focus and Beech staff will work together to achieve its aims.

Beech Focus offers a great opportunity to learn more about how Beech works so that you can be better informed and feel more able to influence things.

Remember... "knowledge is power"!

Local Focus

Scheme or Project Meetings & Area Forums

Our regional teams are committed to being responsive to local needs. To achieve this, we regularly hold local meetings. These are usually aimed at improving communication within a housing scheme (e.g. supported housing projects) or to bring a group of residents together to discuss issues that affect all residents within a particular area. Where possible, we develop regular forums for a specific neighbourhood, aimed at discussing issues that are of particular importance to the area and attended by local management staff.

Informal Neighbourhood Events

As part of our approach to developing neighbourhoods and improving communication in an informal way we often arrange fun days and other community consultation events aimed at everyone in a neighbourhood. These are a great way of breaking down any barriers and can often lead to deeper involvement with long lasting outcomes.

Neighbourhood Links

Sometimes people prefer not to join groups but to work together with the Association as individuals to benefit their community. This could involve acting as a link between your neighbours and the local area team. You could become a named contact, learn more about the Association and help your local housing team keep in touch with your community.

We offer opportunities which meet the diverse circumstances and interests of residents

Beech Sheltered Focus

The Sheltered Focus Meetings aims to bring residents together from all sheltered housing schemes (including Xtracare schemes) to discuss issues that affect all sheltered housing residents. Two separate meetings held at sheltered schemes, one in Manchester, one in Wigan & Leigh. The meetings are held every 6 months and include a buffet lunch to encourage more social mixing. The meetings are social and enjoyable but also very productive. The agendas are agreed with residents and



have covered issues such as repair priorities for vulnerable tenants, the scheme manager's role and the needs of people who use mobility scooters. Members of Sheltered Focus have also been involved in recruitment of staff and helping the Association to prepare for supporting people inspections.

Young Peoples' Residents Forum (YPRF)

This group is for young people aged between 16-25 years old, who live in Beech properties or receive support from Beech, either in shared housing with project staff on site or 'floating support' once they have moved into their own flat. The Young Peoples Residents' Forum has its own committee and constitution and is supported by staff from Beech. The YPRF has allowed Beech to listen to young people whom they house and support and help them to develop projects that bring benefits to all their members. Meetings are kept to a minimum and a variety of less formal methods are used to keep in touch, make decisions and plan activities. The group has been highly successful in winning bids for funding from a variety of sources and has been able to organise and deliver fun days and informal training sessions on healthy cooking, money management. There have been successful trips out to take part in energetic and healthy activities. They have also developed an exciting project to provide safe home access to computers & the internet for all their members, together with training and a website.

We are always happy to develop new opportunities aimed at meeting the needs of specific sections of the community like the two examples above. If you have an idea for a specific group to involve people, please get in touch.

Improving your environment and social life

Support for 'Community-minded' people

If you are an individual with practical ideas about how your community could be improved and projects that could benefit everyone in your neighbourhood or wider, we want to work with you. You might have ideas that, with a bit of support from others, could by improve the environment or help more vulnerable community members, improve communication or community spirit or even get rid of a problem that has been affecting lots of your neighbours.

We can help you:

- Provide information & advice
- Help develop your ideas & make a plan
- Involve other neighbours
- Help to find the funds that might be needed

If you have great ideas, share them with us and we'll try and help you to make them into a reality.

Tenants' and Residents' Groups

Some people want to organise themselves into groups such as tenants' associations or groups. These often tackle a wide range of issues, not just things to do with the housing service we provide, and can involve people from the wider community in addition to tenants of Beech. Residents' groups can be a powerful force in their local community, acting as a pressure group to improve services provided in the area and accessing funding to deliver projects.

If you are able to commit time to your local community, then this is the type of involvement for you. It might involve working on a committee as a secretary or chairperson, or you might prefer to just attend meetings to find out what is going on. If you are interested, we can put you in touch with any groups active in your area or offer advice, training and financial support to help you get one started yourself.

We support residents to develop formal groups, we help with publicity, developing constitutions and organising first public meetings to elect their committee. Once established, we help organise annual general meetings, funding applications and helping groups to set up liaison arrangement with other Beech staff. In addition, specific training is organised to assist committee members to improve their skills

Some of the tenants' groups that we support are more interested in improving the community spirit where they live by organising social activities. This kind of involvement is less time consuming than setting up a formal tenant or resident group but can achieve a lot in a short time by working together. Sometimes, social clubs also go on to tackle wider community issues.

We provide grants to gardening and social clubs to help them deliver improvements in their community.

Group Focus

Beech Housing Association is a member of the Beech Housing Group, which also includes Beech Housing Association and Chorley

Community Housing. Some of our resident involvement opportunities are aimed at residents from all the members of the Group. This enable residents with diverse backgrounds, interests and experience to share ideas, influence and monitor shared standards and continuous improvement in services across the Housing Group.

Group Focus is open to residents from across the housing group and works in a similar way to Beech Focus described above, with members choosing their preferred method of involvement. This group looks at issues and policies that are relevant to customers of all the associations of the Beech Housing Group to help ensure sharing of good practice and consistency of approach, better services and higher standards.

For example, this group helps to develop the Group Resident Involvement Statement, which sets out our aims and overall approach to resident involvement. Members of Group Focus are also able to take part in the Impact Assessment Panel, which looks at all the resident involvement we do and reports on how effective it is, including, crucially, Is it Value For Money?

Annual Group Residents' Away Day

This is an event where you can:

- Meet residents from all over the North West to share experiences and ideas
- Increase your knowledge and understanding of Beech Housing Group and meet senior staff
- Learn about service developments and plans for improvements
- Contribute your own ideas about how services should improve and develop
- Make sure your and other residents' priorities are reflected in the Group Business plan

We have different themes every year and we provide a pleasant, comfortable venue with a friendly atmosphere. It's very constructive but it's also fun!

Beech Newsletters & Housing Group Customer Magazine

We produce a regular newsletter for Beech HA and a Group magazine that has news and information relevant to all our customers. You can get involved in either or both of these by giving us feedback when we ask, contributing ideas for articles, writing or being part of the editorial panel, which decides what goes in and when.

Mystery Shoppers & Resident Inspectors

One of the best way of making sure our services meet your standards consistently is to involve you in testing them on a regular basis. Mystery shoppers do this by asking agreed questions to test the kind of responses they receive and whether they meet our agreed standards of service. Resident Inspectors do spot checks on quality by concentrating on physical things such as reception areas, communal areas in schemes or how we are keeping to our clean home standards for when we re-let a property. They also look in detail at how we deliver services and make recommendations on how we could change things for the better from the customers viewpoint. Of course, our staff carry out regular checks but we think involving residents in quality checks will 'keep us on our toes' and will prove our commitment.

Shareholding

You may wish to become a shareholder of the Association – shares only cost £1. The main advantage of being a shareholder is that you will automatically receive the papers issued for the Beech Annual General Meeting including the Association's full accounts (although this information is freely available to any tenant on request). Shareholders are also consulted from time-to-time on specific shareholder issues. Sometimes our tenants would have already been consulted on the same proposals with shareholders having the final say. Sometimes however shareholder issues relate to technical matters relating to changes to the Association's Rules that we would not normally consult with all tenants on. So if you want to be totally in the loop this option could appeal to you. Please note that as Beech is a non-profit making company its shares do not pay any dividends – being a shareholder in Beech is not a way of getting rich quick!

Board membership

If you feel that you could contribute to the management of the Association at the highest level, you might be interested in joining the Board. All members of the Board are volunteers and decide on key issues of the Association's policy, strategy and areas of business. We believe that tenants' experiences and viewpoints are extremely valuable to the work of the Board and we have a number of places on the Board for tenants and a clear 'Residents' Route to Board' policy. We provide training to help you take this step, if you have the time, experience and commitment needed.

How we support Residents to get involved

If you choose to get involved with Beech, we want to make sure that you have all the information you need and the opportunity to learn any new skills that will help you, and us, to achieve some outcomes from your involvement. To achieve this we:

- Ask you about your interests and what you would like more information about and provide information in a variety of formats
- Are clear about the skills you might need for a project and offer opportunities to acquire them in a way that suits your circumstances
- Develop projects that are aimed specifically to give residents opportunities to develop useful skills

Making Sure Everyone can get involved

We want to make sure that our involvement opportunities are accessible to all and it does not cost you more than energy and enthusiasm so we aim to ensure that our meetings or events meet our 'Accessibility Standards', which include:

- Ensuring suitable provision for individual needs such as disability access, dietary, language requirements.
- Paying your reasonable expenses such as travel costs, meals & refreshments, carer costs (child or adult) etc

Learning opportunities to increase your knowledge and gain useful skills

We aim to provide good quality information on our services and on subjects that will meet our aims to widen the benefits that we bring to residents. We also want to provide opportunities for you to develop new skills that enable you to get the most from being involved with Beech.

We have a Residents' Learning Plan, which is developed by simply asking residents who get involved, to tell us what they would like to learn more about and how they prefer to learn. Using this feedback, we plan a series of opportunities, covering a wide range of subjects. We use a variety of methods and resources, including some that are provided by Beech and some by other people. All these opportunities are provided free of charge to our tenants and we cover reasonable expenses to ensure everyone can have access to these opportunities.

Our methods include:

- study visits to other organisations
- information sessions & 'distance learning' through postal or email/web
- short 'in-house' courses, designed and delivered by Beech staff
- funding attendance at externally provided courses or conferences
- 1 to 1 mentoring sessions to support learning new skills

The Residents' Learning Plan is updated continually and copies are available from any of our offices or from our website. We also advertise regularly in our newsletters.

Our commitment to inform and consult you

We have an Information & Consultation Framework which goes into detail about how we will provide information or consult you about important issues or changes to service.

The main areas for consultation include:

- Any changes to your tenancy conditions
- Any substantial changes to the management, maintenance, or improvement of your home
- Any proposal to demolish your home
- Any substantial change to services or amenities that we supply in connection with your home
- Changes to our service standards

We will keep you informed about:

- Your rent account
- Our general activities
- Our performance
- Plans for the future direction of the company
- The company's spending priorities
- Development programme
- Maintenance programmes
- Regeneration activity
- Any substantial transfer of ownership or new acquisition of homes
- How resident involvement has shaped our services

Getting in touch

Längüagê Liñè

Head office: 01942 608715

Turner House, 56 King St
Leigh, Lancs WN7 4LJ

West office: 01942 263630

82 Railway Road,
Leigh, Lancs WN7 4AN

North office: 0161 230 4070

Elizabeth House, off Victoria St,
Openshaw, Manchester M11 2NX

Neston & Parkgate office:

0151 353 0917
43 Liverpool Road, Neston,
Cheshire CH64 3RB

South office: 0161 232 6030

Parkway 5, Parkway Business Centre,
Princess Road, Manchester M14 7HR

Bootle office: 0151 284 5756

34 Eleanor Road, Bootle,
Merseyside L20 6BR

ARABIC

هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية
عند الطلب.

BENGALI

অনুরোধ করলে এই ডকুমেন্টটি
বাংলা তে ও উপলব্ধ

CANTONESE

本文件可以應要求，製作成中文
(繁體字) 版本。

FARSI

این مدرک در صورت درخواست به فارسی
موجود است.

FRENCH

Ce document est disponible en français
sur simple demande.

GUJARATI

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી ગુજરાતીમાં
મળી રહેશે.

HINDI

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उपलब्ध है

KURDISH

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کوردی ش دەس دەکەوێت

MANDARIN

本文件可以应要求，制作成
中文(简体字)版本。

POLISH

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany
w języku polskim.

PUNJABI

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ
ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ

SOMALI

Dokumentigaan waxaa lagu helaa Soomaali
haddii la codsado.

URDU

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی مل سکتی ہے۔

VIETNAMESE

Tài liệu này có sẵn bằng tiếng Việt khi
được yêu cầu.

