Strategic Customer Engagement Framework

1. Purpose

Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do, our vision is to positively impact the lives of our social housing tenants. We will achieve this by providing safe, well-maintained homes and delivering customer-focused, equitable and efficient services.

This Customer Engagement Framework establishes the principles, governance arrangements, accountability mechanisms and performance measures through which customers influence service delivery, business planning, strategic decision-making and continuous improvement across ForHousing.

The framework supports delivery of the ForHousing Strategy and ensures that customers have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions, scrutinise performance, challenge services and hold ForHousing to account.

This framework sets out how customers will:

- Influence decisions that affect their homes and communities.
- Shape service design and delivery.
- Hold ForHousing to account.
- Support continuous improvement.
- Inform strategic and operational decision making.
- Influence policy development and service standards.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability.
- Support ForHousing in meeting regulatory requirements.

The framework reflects the principles of co-regulation, recognising customers as partners in shaping services and improving outcomes.

It supports compliance with:

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
- Tenancy Standard.
- Safety and Quality Standard.
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Together with Tenants Charter and Commitments.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

This framework applies to all customer influence activity including formal involvement, scrutiny, complaints, surveys, consultations, operational feedback, community engagement and transactional customer insight.

2. Background

This Customer Engagement Framework sets out:

- The principles of engagement.
- The strategic engagement pillars.
- The customer engagement framework.

- Governance and accountability arrangements.
- Communication and partnership commitments.
- Measurement and evaluation arrangements.
- Independent verification mechanisms.

ForHousing recognises that meaningful customer influence extends beyond formally involved customers.

Customers influence service delivery and decision making through:

- ✓ Complaints and compliments.
- ✓ Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- ✓ Customer surveys.
- ✓ Focus groups.
- ✓ Scrutiny activity.
- ✓ Community engagement.
- ✓ Consultations.
- ✓ Day-to-day customer interactions.

Insight gathered from all these sources contributes to service improvement, operational decisions and strategic planning.

3. Principles of Engagement

Using a strengths-based approach, we work alongside customers and communities to understand what matters most to them, build on existing strengths and ensure their views actively influence decisions. The principles of engagement describe how we will work with customers.

ForHousing's engagement principles are:

Inclusivity	We aim to engage with all customer groups by removing barriers to participation and ensuring that all voices are heard, including those who are not formally involved.
Transparency	We will share information, decisions, performance data and progress openly and honestly.
Responsiveness	We will act on feedback promptly and communicate outcomes clearly. Where changes are not possible, we will explain why.
Partnership	We will work alongside customers as partners and co-creators rather than simply service recipients.
Continuous Improvement	We will use engagement and customer insight to continuously improve services.
Culture and Accountability	All colleagues have a responsibility to involve customers, listen to feedback and demonstrate how customer insight has informed decisions.
Impact	We will measure and communicate the difference customer engagement makes to services, decisions and customer outcomes.
Meaningful Influence	We will ensure that customer views are considered before decisions are made and can be seen to influence outcomes. Customers will receive feedback on how their views have informed decisions, and, where suggestions cannot be implemented, clear explanations will be provided.

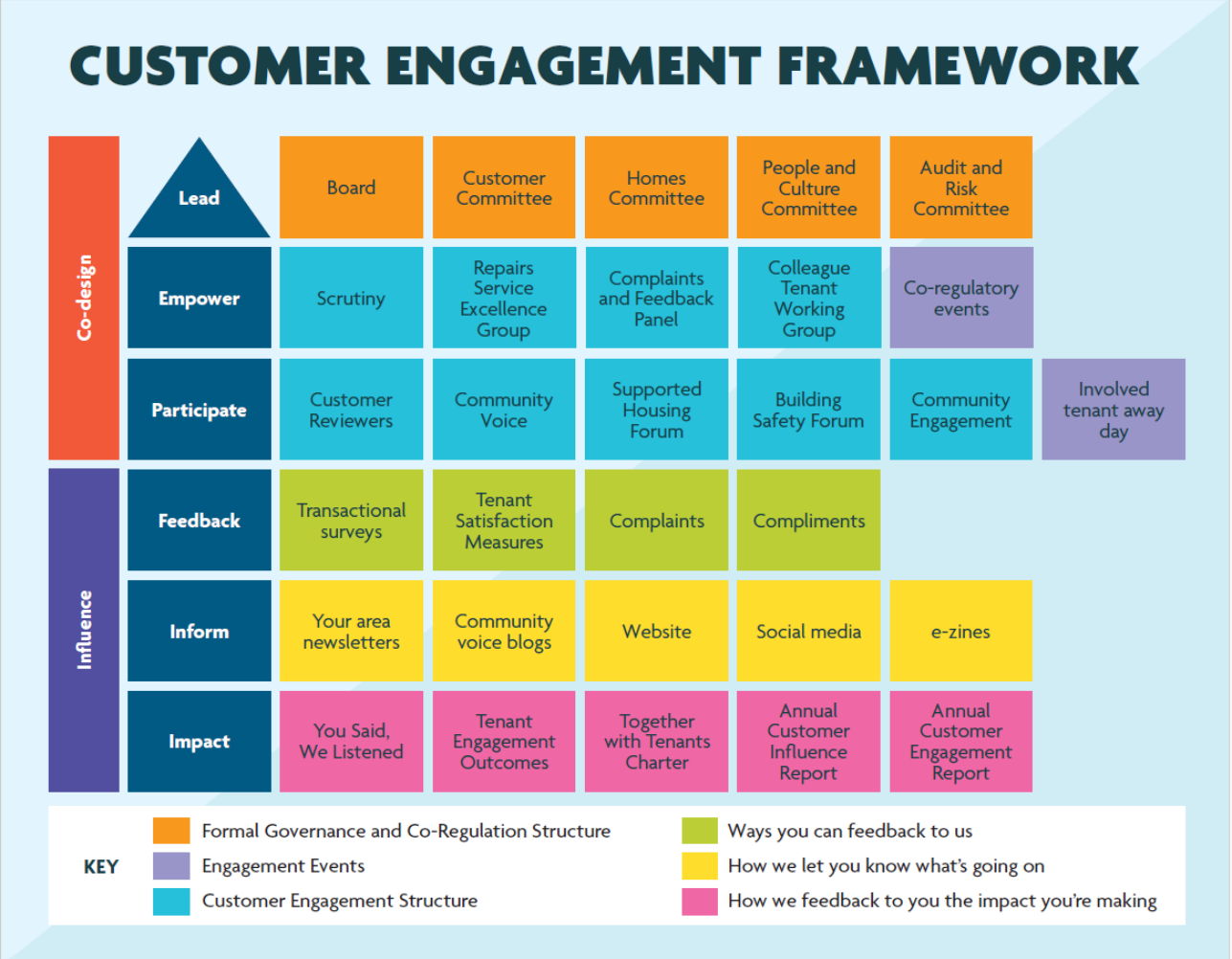
4. Strategic Engagement Pillars

The strategic engagement pillars describe the key activities through which customer influence is delivered and evidenced across ForHousing.

Communi-cation and Information	Participation and Co-design	Customer Insight and Intelligence	Feedback and accountability	Skills and Empower-ment
We will:				
Provide clear, accessible, and timely updates via multiple channels (digital, print, in-person)	Provide a wide range of opportunities for customers to get involved through the formal engagement framework.	Collect insight from a wide range of sources including TSMs, surveys, complaints	Implement a structured feedback loop with measurable feedback opportunities.	Provide training for tenants to participate effectively (e.g., understanding housing policy, budgeting).
Use plain language and where needed provide communication in a variety of formats and languages.	Involve customers in policy reviews, service design, and procurement decisions.	Use data and intelligence to understand customer priorities.	Publish satisfaction scores and service performance metrics.	Utilise specialist organisations, such as TPAS, to support with upskilling.
Ensure that feedback is provided to tenants to make clear the impact that their feedback has had on services.	Offer flexible engagement options (drop-ins, surveys, virtual meetings).	Ensure customer insight directly influences decision making.	Maintain the customer influence log to demonstrate how customer feedback has informed decisions.	Encourage customer champion and customer connector roles.
Publish regular "You Said, We Listened," involved tenant achievements pages, case studies.	Support the co-design of services and policies.	Identify emerging risks and opportunities.	Enable customer-led challenge and scrutiny.	Recognise and celebrate tenant contributions.
Ensure there are clear communication channels between involvement groups and the Governance structure, including Board.	Use insight from other feedback methods, such as surveys and complaints to influence decisions.		Communicate outcomes of consultations, scrutiny and engagement activities within agreed timescales wherever possible.	Support community-led projects and initiatives.
Publish an Annual Customer Influence Report	Monitor participation levels and representation			

5. Customer Engagement Framework

ForHousing uses the following framework for engagement.



6. Governance and Engagement Structure

ForHousing's formal engagement framework is made up of several groups, with links to the formal governance structure.

Board

The Board receives regular assurance reporting throughout the year, including quarterly performance and annual customer insight information.

The Board receives annual assurance regarding:

- Customer Influence and learning from Scrutiny.
- Customer Satisfaction.
- Consumer Standard compliance.
- Complaints performance.
- Performance against this framework in the Customer Engagement report.

The Board will seek assurance that customer views have informed significant strategic decisions, policy changes, service improvements and investment priorities. Board papers will include consideration of relevant customer insight where appropriate.

Customer Committee

The Customer Committee's terms of reference allow for up to 10 Independent members who are customers, Councilors or community volunteers. The Committee is part of the formal Governance structure with the Chair of the Committee also being a Board member and members of the Committee sitting on the ForHousing Board, Homes, People and Culture, and Audit and Risk Committees to ensure a customer presence. The Customer Committee has oversight and accountability responsibilities for delivery of the ForHousing Customer Strategy, Complaints and the Neighbourhood and Communities, Tenancy and Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standards. The Committee is also key to ensuring that they hold ForHousing to account on ensuring that the customer voice and influence is demonstrable in how we shape and improve services.

Scrutiny

Our Scrutiny function is an important tool in ensuring accountability and improving services, through independent challenge, review and making recommendations. It includes three roles:

- Scrutiny Partners: The terms of reference allow up to 12 Partners to work with us to set the scrutiny programme based on performance, risk, insight and tenant priorities.
- Core Scrutiny Groups, made up of partners and any customer who wants to participate, customers are recruited at the start of an exercise to form the Core Group. The group works alongside staff to review services and co-produce evidence-based recommendations.
- Wider tenant insight, collected through surveys, calls and focus groups, provides evidence of the tenant experience.

Action plans are co-produced with service leads and Customer Committee are given oversight via their quarterly key activity report. Action plans are monitored quarterly by Audit and Risk Committee.

Complaints and Feedback Panel

The terms of reference allow a maximum of 8 members. The panel has oversight of operational performance by checking performance against targets and undertaking management audits on closed complaint cases. They support ForHousing to undertake the Housing Ombudsman self-assessment, hold us to account for learning from complaints and have oversight of Ombudsman decisions and actions.

Repairs and Maintenance Service Excellence Group

The terms of reference allow for a maximum of 10 members. The Service Excellence Group members hold ForHousing to account for the delivery of the repairs and maintenance and gas servicing and repairs, planned and cyclical contracts. Tenants have oversight of operational performance and support services to improve their communication with tenants, ensure that the contract KPIs are driving the right behaviour and support in procurement specifications for services linked to responsive and cyclical repairs.

Community Voice

The terms of reference do not state a maximum membership number, but a minimum

of 6 is required for quorum. There are three Community Voice groups that operate in our main geographical areas of Fitton Hill, Salford and Stockbridge Village. The Voices monitor local performance (including TSM and transactional KPIs), share local intelligence, co-produce solutions and make decisions on funding allocations through community funding streams.

Colleague Tenant Working Group

The terms of reference do not state a maximum number. The Colleague Tenant Working Group brings the dual perspective of employees who are also tenants. The group oversees delivery of our operational plans and provides insight from working age tenants, supporting inclusive and representative engagement.

Tenant Inspector and Reviewers

The terms of reference do not state a maximum number of members. Current inspector roles include grounds maintenance inspectors and voids inspectors, while tenant reviewers have contributed to quarterly website reviews, go see do asset map development, and reviews of key documents such as letters, policies and procedures.

Thematic Groups

Groups such as the Building Safety Forum and Supported Housing Forum are facilitated within the service area. They provide a safe space for tenants and customers to raise issues and opportunities and support the teams to ensure that all communication is customer friendly.

7. Communication and Working Together

ForHousing is committed to ensuring that customers have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions and shape services. All involvement groups will operate with clear terms of reference and transparent recruitment processes, supported by access to relevant performance information and customer insight.

Customers will have opportunities to influence the delivery of Safety and Quality services, including building safety, asset investment programmes, planned maintenance priorities, customer communication relating to safety matters and compliance with emerging regulatory requirements.

We will create opportunities for customers to challenge, scrutinise and influence decision-making through regular engagement with Board members, co-regulatory events and involvement activities. We will recognise and celebrate the contribution of involved customers, publish customer achievements and regularly communicate the impact of customer feedback through our “You Said, We Listened” updates.

We are also committed to engaging under-represented and lesser-heard groups to ensure that customer influence is inclusive, representative and reflective of the communities we serve.

8. Customer Influence

ForHousing will maintain a Customer Influence Log to record and demonstrate the impact of customer engagement and involvement across the organisation.

The log will capture examples of how customer insight, feedback and challenge have influenced service improvements, policy changes, operational and strategic decision-making, scrutiny recommendations, learning from complaints and performance outcomes. It will provide a clear record of how customer voice has shaped the development, delivery and improvement of services.

The Customer Influence Log will be reviewed bi-annually by the Customer Committee and will inform the Annual Customer Influence Report. The Log will provide evidence of both operational and strategic influence, including policy reviews, service redesign, procurement exercises, investment decisions, business planning activity and learning from complaints.

This approach will ensure that customers are able to see the difference their involvement has made and how their feedback has contributed to improving services, customer experience and organisational performance.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ForHousing is committed to ensuring that customer involvement opportunities are accessible, inclusive and reflective of the communities we serve. We recognise that meaningful engagement can only be achieved when a diverse range of voices and experiences are represented within our involvement structures, through feedback and through activities.

To support this, we will regularly monitor participation and representation across our engagement and involvement opportunities to understand how well they reflect our customer base. Where under-representation is identified, we will take targeted action to engage with customers whose voices may be less frequently heard and work to remove barriers that may prevent participation.

We will provide a range of accessible engagement methods to meet different needs and preferences, ensuring that customers can participate in ways that are meaningful and convenient to them. We will also review diversity and participation information annually to assess progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

Participation and representation will be monitored across a range of demographic characteristics, including age, disability, ethnicity, gender, household composition, tenure type and geography. This information will help us to ensure that customer influence is representative, inclusive and effective, and that the decisions we make are informed by the experiences of the diverse communities we serve.

10. Measurement and Evaluation

ForHousing will regularly assess the effectiveness and impact of customer engagement, ensuring customer views are influencing decisions and driving service improvement. Using information from engagement activities, complaints, scrutiny, TSMs and customer feedback, we will provide assurance to the Executive Management Team, Customer Committee and Board that customer influence is meaningful, representative and delivering positive outcomes. Evaluation will include measures of participation, diversity, influence, service improvement and governance effectiveness.

Participation Measures

Measure	Target
Formally involved customers	40+
Wider engagement participation	Annual increase
Representation against tenant profile	Participation demographics broadly reflect the customer profile

Influence Measures

Measure	Target
Co-designed improvements implemented and shared via the Annual Influence Report	50+ annually
Scrutiny recommendations completed	90%

Perception Measures

Measure	Target
TSM TP06 – Listen and Act	Corporate target

Governance Measures

Measure	Target
Customer Committee assurance reports	Quarterly
Annual Customer Influence Report	Annual publication
Annual Customer Engagement Report	Annual publication
Board assurance review	Annual

11. Risks and Mitigation

ForHousing recognises that effective customer engagement is essential to delivering high-quality services, maintaining trust and meeting Consumer Standard expectations. Poor engagement may lead to weaker customer influence, reduced confidence and less effective decision-making.

Key risks relating to customer engagement and influence will be monitored through performance reporting, governance oversight and regular review of engagement activities. Mitigation actions will be reviewed periodically to ensure customer engagement remains effective, inclusive and responsive to customer needs and organisational priorities.

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Low participation	Limited customer insight and influence	Flexible engagement opportunities and varied participation methods
Engagement is not representative	Decisions reflect only a narrow customer perspective	Diversity monitoring, targeted recruitment and accessible engagement methods
Engagement fatigue	Reduced participation and influence over time	Visible feedback, regular updates and demonstrating impact

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Failure to act on feedback	Reduced trust, confidence and participation	Governance oversight, action tracking and feedback loops
Loss of customer trust	Reduced confidence in services and engagement activities	Transparent communication, reporting and responsiveness.
Customer influence is not evidenced	Reduced regulatory assurance and accountability	Customer Influence Log, reporting and audit trail
Digital exclusion	Some customers unable to participate	Digital and non-digital engagement routes
Poor governance oversight	Weak accountability and reduced assurance	Customer Committee and Board assurance reporting
Skills and knowledge gap	Reduced effectiveness of participation and challenge	Tenant and colleague training and support programmes

12. Independent Verification

ForHousing is committed to continuously evaluating and improving the effectiveness of its customer engagement and involvement arrangements. To provide assurance that our approach remains meaningful, effective and aligned to regulatory expectations, we will seek independent verification and use a range of performance, customer and governance measures to assess our impact.

This will include consideration of customer feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, scrutiny outcomes, learning from complaints and governance assurance activity. Together, these sources will help us understand how effectively customers are influencing decisions, shaping services and holding the organisation to account.

ForHousing has maintained TPAS Accreditation since 2019, providing independent assessment of our customer engagement culture and practices. We will continue to use external challenge, independent assessment and customer insight to drive continuous improvement and ensure that customer voice remains central to decision making across the organisation.

13. Governance and Review

Framework Owner: Director of Central Services
Lead Officer: Head of Community and Tenant Involvement
Approval Route: EMT→ Customer Committee → Board
Review Frequency: Annual
Next Review Date: July 2027

14. Related Documents

- Customer Strategy
- Together with Tenants Charter
- Complaints Policy
- Annual Customer Influence Report
- Annual Customer Engagement Report
- Scrutiny Framework

- Consumer Standards Assurance Framework
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures Framework

15. Framework Outcome

Through this framework, ForHousing will ensure that customer influence is visible, measurable and embedded within decision making, providing assurance to customers, colleagues, the Board, the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing that customer voice actively shapes services and drives continuous improvement.