

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Resident involvement is central to Westcountry's culture. It is about resident's working in partnership with Westcountry at all levels, to improve services, understand and meet the needs of our communities, and to achieve value for money. To attain this we acknowledge that all staff have a responsibility to listen to and respect residents' views on matters that affect them.

Our core values for involvement are:

- Residents have the right to influence the way in which Westcountry provides services to them and be consulted widely about our policies and how we work.
- Residents have the right to participate in the way Westcountry is governed, to be consulted about how Westcountry sets standards for its services and to participate in the management and maintenance of their homes and other initiatives.
- Residents have the right to form groups and associations to have their collective voice heard and for their views to be listened to, on issues that affect them.
- Residents have the right not to become involved in Westcountry's activities.
- Residents have the right to equality of opportunity.

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1 The objectives of this policy are to:

- place resident involvement at the heart of all Westcountry's activities;
- make available a variety of ways in which residents can become involved in the operations and governance of Westcountry in order to work constructively together; and
- feed back and widely distribute information on why and how decisions are been made, to a level of detail agreed with service users.

1.2 This policy applies not only to Westcountry Housing residents but also to any individual who receives a service from an employee of Westcountry Housing

2. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER POLICIES, INCLUDING:

- Service standards
- Estate Management
- Complaints, compliments and comments
- Equality and diversity
- Community Cohesion
- Racial harassment
- Resident involvement Expenses
- Accessible information policy

2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with our resident involvement strategy 2009 - 14. This strategy aims to support and encourage resident involvement at all levels of our business by setting specific strategic objectives

3. POLICY AIMS

3.1 Every resident will believe they can make their voice heard, on their terms and they will be listened to and their opinion taken into account in the decision making process at every level within Westcountry

3.2 Resident will be involved in strategic decision making on their own terms and all residents will be aware of how and why decisions have been made

3.3 Westcountry will be the landlord of choice locally for all minority and diverse groups within the population

3.4 Resident Involvement opportunities will be assessed by residents as well as staff to be good value for money and to produce effective positive outcomes for all residents

4. POLICY OBJECTIVES

4.1 In order to achieve this we will;

- Offer a range of opportunities to allow a large and diverse range of residents to be involved on their own terms if they wish to
- Ensure all groups and activities have a clear purpose outlined in a terms of reference
- Enable all staff at all levels of the organisation to be committed to resident involvement and clear about its importance by providing appropriate training and support to enable them to deliver our policy and strategic objectives.
- Maintain and develop efficient and effective services to residents by reviewing policies and working practices with them
- Implement a code of conduct for all active residents to ensure a high standard of involvement is maintained and enforce an agreed procedure should any resident breach the code of conduct
- Continually improve the quality and range of information provided to residents, and to provide opportunities for residents to be involved in producing this information.
- Ensure no resident feels unable to have the opportunity to get involved, by offering both financial and practical support
- Ensure there is sufficient support and resources for effective involvement.
- Seek to provide opportunities for residents to gain new skills and improve their quality of life through increased opportunities to return to work
- Enable residents to have ownership of their communities and work alongside Westcountry to make them desirable places to live
- Seek to continually improve these opportunities as outlined in our resident involvement strategy

5. Review and Monitoring

5.1 We will work with all our active residents to carry out an annual review of all activities, achievements and to assess the impact these have on the

quality of the service provided to all residents.

- 5.2 In agreement with residents at this annual review and activities or groups not able to demonstrate positive outcomes or good value for money will be ended.
- 5.3 Following this review and in consultation with residents we will produce and publish an annual impact assessment report and a statement of priorities for resident involvement for the coming year.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 We recognise the existence and importance of the different ages, races, genders, cultures, abilities and lifestyles within the service user population and will strive to ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged as a consequence of its activities.
- 6.2 Throughout its Resident Involvement activities Westcountry is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all persons and undertakes to deal firmly and promptly with any cases of discrimination or harassment.