



Tenant Participation and Consultation Policy

POLICY NUMBER

POL 05

Purpose of Policy

This policy aims to provide a framework that will enable Derwentside Homes to consult its tenants and provide a reasonable opportunity for tenants to influence decisions that affect their homes and estates.

Policy Statement

Derwentside Homes's Tenant Participation and Consultation Policy will be implemented in line with Derwentside Homes's Charitable Objects and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance.

Derwentside Homes will seek and be responsive to tenants' views and will make available current information about its activities to interested parties. This will enable tenants to take part in any decision-making and provide opportunities for them to obtain knowledge and skills to have an effective role in the management of their homes and neighbourhood.

Derwentside Homes has a Tenant Participation Compact, which has been developed with tenants and provides a framework on which information, services standards and service improvements can be consulted, communicated and agreed.

Derwentside Homes will support Tenants Associations in order to deliver the aims and objectives agreed by the Tenant Participation Compact.

Performance Measures

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord (GNPI 23);
- Number of Tenant Associations supported by Derwentside Homes.

Responsible Officer:	Tenant Resource and Information Officer
Policy Author:	Tenant Resource and Information Officer
Date Approved by the Shadow Board:	
Frequency of Review:	Three Years or as dictated by legislation/guidance
Review Date:	
File Reference:	
Consultees:	LSVT Working Group – Policies and Procedures; Tenants Forum; Staff; Management Team; Derwentside Homes Shadow Board; Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) All active Tenant Associations within Derwentside.

Tenant Participation and Consultation Policy

1 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 Derwentside Homes will ensure that our approach to Tenant Participation and Consultation is in line with section 2 of the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance and we will ensure that responding to tenants' views is an integral part of the culture of our service delivery.
- 1.2 Derwentside Homes is fully committed to effective and meaningful tenant participation and views tenant involvement as an integral part of delivering and developing high quality services that meet customer expectations. Derwentside Homes will consider a range of methods and opportunities to consult and have an agreement developed in partnership with tenants setting out how they will be involved, consulted and informed and Derwentside Homes will show how this will be resourced, measured, monitored and reviewed.
- 1.3 Derwentside Homes will provide support to tenants enabling them to have the knowledge and skills to play an effective part in involvement, management and to help them influence decisions that affect their homes.
- 1.4 Derwentside Homes will offer the opportunity for tenants to decide the level to which they wish to be involved, and will offer a range of options to enable tenants to decide how they want to be involved, what they want to be involved in, to what level of participation and the opportunity to explore new choices which will include but is not limited to:
 - The opportunity to apply to be a candidate for election to the Board of Derwentside Homes;
 - Becoming a member of the Tenants Forum;
 - Becoming a member of or starting a Tenants' Association;
 - Opportunities for one to one contact e.g. Telephone Panels, questionnaires, surveys, tenants choice, complaints procedure;
 - Joining one of our Service Review Groups to develop and monitor the performance of our services;
 - Involvement and consultation on capital and revenue work e.g. modernisations;
 - Participating in Tenant Challenge Days;
 - Attending meetings or drop-in sessions on estates;
 - Attending an Annual Tenants Conference;
- 1.5 Derwentside Homes will at all times offer quality, choice and opportunity, working with all our partners and stakeholders to maximise involvement, consultation and participation in order to:
 - Increase satisfaction levels with our service;
 - Maintain and improve levels of involvement and representation of all groups, including Black and Ethnic minority tenants;
 - Bring about real and lasting changes in the relationship between Derwentside Homes and its service users;

- Ensure participation is a fundamental objective to developing the well being of a democratic, socially inclusive society;
 - Empower communities;
 - Identify barriers to involvement and develop ways to address these.
- 1.6 Derwentside Homes is committed to developing Tenant Participation Compacts at a neighbourhood level and will work in partnership with its tenants and the Tenants Forum to develop them to ensure that local people set local priorities.
- 1.7 Derwentside Homes will ensure that the Tenant Participation and Consultation policy will follow national good practice guidance on Tenant Participation. We will ensure that our “Tenants Charter” which sets out the aims and objectives for involving tenants in improving our services and influencing outcomes will be made available to each and every tenant. Tenants will be involved in reviewing the statement every year to assess impact on services and tenant satisfaction levels.

2. Outline of Service

- 2.1 Derwentside Homes recognises that involving tenants to help design and improve services that people need and expect will ensure that their services are efficient and effective and respond to and meet the needs of their tenants and customers. Derwentside Homes will use comprehensive, imaginative ways of publicising and providing information on opportunities to get involved through various existing structures and processes.
- 2.2 We will consult tenants on matters of housing management as required by law and will consult other residents and residents organisations as necessary and any views will be taken into account before any final decisions are made by the Board of Derwentside Homes. Derwentside Homes will ensure that consultees will be informed of the results of any consultation carried out.
- 2.3 Derwentside Homes will consult about:
- Standards and services they receive;
 - Derwentside Homes improvement plans;
 - Implications for tenants in relation to service reviews and changes;
 - Matters affecting specific groups of tenants;
 - Matters affecting individual tenants;
 - Policy and procedures e.g. reviews;
 - Derwentside Homes Performance and targets;
 - Service provision and charges.
- 2.4 Derwentside Homes will provide reasonable opportunities for tenants and other residents and residents’ organisations as appropriate to participate in or influence the design and management of the housing and related services. We will encourage and support tenant involvement and will work with tenants in exploring new initiatives and different alternatives for participation. This will include:

- Provision and development of a framework for participation and communication;
 - Support for new and established tenants' groups;
 - Financial assistance;
 - Training and support to allow tenants to take a full and active role in the organisation;
 - Provision of information.
- 2.5 Tenants will hold five out of the fifteen places on the Derwentside Homes Board, which will include an equal number of Derwentside District Council nominees and Independent Members. In order to implement policies and be responsible for local spending priorities, Derwentside Homes may consider the setting up of Local Management Committees with tenants holding at least one third of the places on these committees.
- 2.6 Derwentside Homes will ensure that local tenants' groups meet the recognition criteria to enable them to access the funding as set out in the Tenant Participation Compact and ensure that District-Wide Compact standards are consistently applied and maintained. In addition, local Tenant Participation Compacts may be developed to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities, and where necessary it may also develop service specific compacts, such as sheltered housing.
- 2.8 Derwentside Homes will, in delivering its Tenant Participation and Consultation Strategy, work with all recognised Tenants' Groups, Tenants' Forum, and any other stakeholder groups working on Derwentside Homes's estates to increase representation in areas and groups that are currently under represented such as older people, young people or members of the Black and Minority Ethnic community.

3 Implementation

- 3.1 Derwentside Homes will use different ways of consulting tenants to involve as many people as possible. These will include but are not limited to:
- Producing local newsletters;
 - Carrying out Customer Satisfaction Surveys;
 - Working with Focus Groups for specific service areas e.g. Repairs and Maintenance and Rent Accounting;
 - An annual 'Tenant's Conference and Challenge Day'.
- 3.2 Derwentside Homes will provide appropriate training for tenants' representatives and members of the Board to enable partners to obtain the skills and knowledge to allow them to work together effectively.
- 3.3 Derwentside Homes will ensure that information is provided to tenants about local Tenants' and Residents' Associations as well as other groups that support involvement at local and district level. This information will be provided in the Tenants' Welcome Pack, is available at Customer Service points, on the Web Site and in hard copy in a variety of formats as requested.

3.4 Derwentside Homes in supporting Tenants' Groups will ensure that they:

- Are constituted where applicable;
- Abide by the conditions of the agreed Tenants Compact;
- Receive relevant training to enable them to manage the group effectively;
- Have access to and receive funding where applicable.

For those Tenants' Groups who do not access direct funding Derwentside Homes will assist tenants groups with typing, photocopying and producing newsletters.

3.5 Derwentside Homes will ensure staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively and will train staff as a minimum in the landlord's policies and procedures, equal opportunities and the legal framework for tenant participation and consultation.

4 Consultation

4.1 Derwentside Homes will consult tenants about Housing Management and changes in the company's practice and policy and to this we will consult in line with the arrangements established in this policy. Consultation on this Tenant Participation and Consultation policy will be carried out with:

- Tenants' Forum;
- Tenants' Groups;
- Tenant Management Organisations;
- Staff;
- Board Members;
- Individual Tenants;
- Consultative Fora;
- Advisory Groups;
- Focus Groups;
- Service Review Groups.

5 Review

5.1 Derwentside Homes will review this policy, as a minimum every three years or whenever there are any changes to legislation or case law, taking into consideration good practice and any research that would impact on this policy and/or service delivery, including trends in complaints received by Derwentside Homes. This policy will be reviewed and implemented in line with the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance.

6 Legislation and Guidance

6.1 Derwentside Homes will ensure that its approach to Tenant Participation and Consultation is in line with the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance, Guidance for Charitable Registered Social Landlords – the Joint Guidance – the Charity Commission and the Housing Corporation.

Derwentside Homes will have regard to Derwentside District Council's Homelessness and Housing Strategy in the formulation and implementation of its policies. It will ensure that this policy is compatible with obligations of existing legislation including but not limited to:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Race Relations Act 1976(As amended 2000);
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975(As amended 1986);
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003;
- Housing Act 1996;
- Housing Act 2004;
- Data Protection Act 1994;
- Charities Act 1993.