Have Your Say!

IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

HAFOD HOUSING ASSOCIATION
ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Our Tenant Participation Strategy has a ‘Positive Partnership’ at its heart and recognises the significant contribution that tenants and leaseholders can make in helping us improve our services.

This booklet explains all the different ways that you can get involved and ‘have your say’ in how we deliver and improve our services. A range of involvement opportunities exist with options to work with us from home or to join us at meetings. We try to cater for all interests, at a level that is right for the individual, and with a time commitment that matches busy lives.

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A POSITIVE PROGRAMME
Better Homes | Better Care | Better Communities

Finance & Performance Committee
Technical Service Panel

Scrutiny Panel
Service Panels
Tenants Assessors

TENANT SURVEYS • ESTATE WIDE
SERVICE PANELS

Service Panels are a very good way for tenants with a particular interest, or area of expertise, to sit down with senior staff and look in more detail at a specific service area. Two of the panel meetings take place at our head office in Cardiff, on a quarterly basis and run for no longer than 2 hours. The exceptions are Disabilities Matters and Communication Matters. We also provide transport to the meeting venue or we will pay for your petrol if you prefer to use your own car.

We currently have four Service Panels looking at the following areas:

MAINTENANCE MATTERS
We know that a quality and efficient repair and maintenance service is a top priority for you. This panel looks at what tenants have said about this service, the good and the bad. It examines how we deliver our day to day maintenance, planned and cyclical works to see if we can do it better. It considers the performance of our contractors as well as the products and materials we use within our homes.

HOUSING MATTERS
The services you receive from us when you first take your keys, and throughout your tenancy, are vitally important to us. We want you to settle into your home quickly and receive a service that meets your individual expectations and needs.

This panel looks at how we manage our homes and neighbourhoods and includes how we tackle anti-social behaviour. It monitors our site services such as ground maintenance and window cleaning to ensure that these are of the highest standard at the best possible price.

Of course, on occasion there will be problems and the panel will also consider complaints and other feedback received from tenants with view to finding solutions.
DISABILITIES MATTERS

We know that approximately 55% of our tenants, or members of their family, have a disability or are suffering from a long term limiting illness.

We want to be sure that we are providing the best possible service to all our tenants by taking into account your needs. This may include letters using a larger font size, or instructions to our contractors to give you longer to get to the door.

This panel invites members with a disability, and/or their carers, to attend a very informal and social meeting. The panel looks at how we communicate and deliver services to tenants with disabilities. It also provides relevant information on disability issues and signposts tenants to services that enable them to live independently and improve their health and well-being. Meetings focus on specific topics of interest e.g. epilepsy, benefit entitlement etc. and also benefit from guest speakers.

The meeting uses different venues to keep travel distance down and to encourage local attendance. Not everyone on our mailing list attends each session and some members simply use the notes to stay informed.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

Communicating with you in a timely and efficient manner is essential if we are to provide excellent services. We want to keep you informed and up to date as well as communicating with you in a way that suits your needs and preferences. We also want you to be able to contact us quickly and easily.

This panel looks at how we provide information and communicate with you. It asks for your comments on our booklets and leaflets as well as our regular newsletter, Hafod’s Own. It also considers our website content and design, our telephone service, as well as the use of new digital technologies such as housing apps and social media.

As with all our service panels you will consider equality issues to ensure that our services are accessible and inclusive and that no individual is inadvertently discriminated against.
HAFOD CONNECT

This is one of the most popular and flexible ways to get involved with us and you can take part from the comfort of your home! Each year we take a good look at a number of service areas to see how we are doing and how we can improve. By becoming a member of Hafod Connect you will be sent a short questionnaire on a specific topic e.g. repairs service no more than 4 times a year.

You can choose how you submit your questionnaire either by free post, telephone or online. If you want to comment in more detail you can join us at one of our friendly Focus Groups, speak to us in person on the phone, or drop us a letter.

Most importantly, you will always receive feedback telling you how your comments have helped us make positive improvements.

AWARD WINNING AND PRIZE DRAWS!

TENANTS GROUPS

A Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) is a group of like-minded people who have come together to address issues within their own communities. These constituted groups are independent of us although we provide close support. The groups are also eligible for a small grant from Hafod which they draw down on an annual basis.

Our TRAs liaise with us, and other providers, in respect of local services and we attend their meetings when invited. Some host housing and police surgeries. In addition, members of our TRAs join staff on estate walkabouts and at local road shows.

A number of our tenants groups have also been very successful over the years at securing external grants and delivering a wide range of community activities including day trips, community fun days, local training and provision for children and young people.
TENANTS ASSESSORS

Tenants assessors are our ‘eyes and ears’, helping us to gather information and feedback on the quality of our services.

All tenant assessors undergo intensive training which enables them to assess the effectiveness of other housing associations including Rhondda HA, Merthyr Tydfil HA and Cynon Taf Community Housing Group. Their tenants in return are able to comment objectively on our services.

Tenant assessors are asked to ‘roll up their sleeves’ and may be involved in any one of the following:
- taking part in mystery shopping
- conducting interviews with tenants
- undertaking survey work
- accompanying housing officers on estate walkabouts

The tenant assessors check that we are following our stated procedures and meeting our service standards. They are able to flag up where we are falling short and make recommendations for change. This involvement option would suit those with plenty of time on their hands. There is the initial commitment required to undertake the training and subsequently a need to put aside time to undertake discrete pieces of work.

"On behalf of Rhondda Housing Association, I would like to thank you for the work you have done and the issues that you have brought to our attention. I look forward to a long and constructive relationship with the tenant assessors."

Stephen Evans,
Director of Housing Services
HAFOD YOUTH PANEL (HYP)

Our youth panel has been established to ensure that young people have a voice with Hafod and that we learn from their experiences.

We want to promote and reward the positive contribution that young people bring to communities. All too often young people are seen as a source of nuisance on our estates and we want to challenge this perception.

HYP meets approximately monthly to explore a range of topics of interest to young people, to provide volunteering opportunities, to assist in organising other tenant events, and most importantly to have fun! HYP young people also have a big role in our Annual Youth Awards helping to select the winners and overseeing the running of the ceremony.

Members need to be aged between 15-21 years, live in a Hafod home and are expected to be a positive role model for other young people. Meetings are held in the evenings during term time at our head office in Cardiff whilst most activities our held over the school holidays. We also run a summer residential which allows HYP members to meet up with other young people from different parts of South East Wales. All costs including transport, refreshments and accommodation are covered when you are participating in any HYP meeting or activity.

If you are a young person who likes to meet new people, is interested in learning new things, and ‘having a go’ then HYP may be for you.
Scrutiny Members are involved in a wide range of tasks including:

• Scrutinising services, identifying and prioritising areas for review
• Assessing Service Review findings as a ‘critical friend’ and making recommendations
• Helping to set and review Service Standards
• Providing an independent check and, if needed, a challenge to the standard of service provided
• Reflecting on performance as part of Hafod’s Self-Assessment
• Contributing to Internal Audit Reviews (where appropriate)

Scrutiny Members are appointed on an annual basis and need to be aged 18 years or over. Tenants and/or leaseholders may sit on the Scrutiny Panel as well as any adult who has lived in a Hafod home for at least one year e.g. spouse, partner or adult child.

This is a high level involvement option and we seek to match individuals with the right skills, knowledge and experience to the demands of the role. A comprehensive induction and training package is provided.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

We want our tenants to possess the necessary confidence, skills, and knowledge to be able to influence decisions at the highest levels. We also want to support the efforts of local people and partners to address neighbourhood issues and create strong and sustainable communities.

This Partnership contributes to our tenant participation and community investment strategies. It identifies needs and priorities for inclusion in the respective action plans, as well as monitoring progress. It also looks at best practice.

Its members are involved in identifying and setting up relevant training, as well as allocating places at suitable networks, seminars and conferences. Members also have a practical role, and assist us to organise our Tenants’ Conference and Volunteers Event.

The Community Partnership will particularly appeal to tenants who are already involved with us in some way, either attending one of our Service Panels, or perhaps working with us out in a specific community. The group meets on a quarterly basis at different community locations.

STILL DECIDING IF YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

If you have read this booklet and decided that none of the previous options are for you. Don’t worry, there are plenty of other options available for you to ‘Have your say’ and get involved. These include:

• Responding to our STAR Customer Satisfaction Survey that you will be issued with every 2 years.

• Responding to satisfaction surveys each time you receive a service from our Maintenance and Anti-Social Behaviour Teams.

• Becoming a Mystery Shopper and testing our internal procedures.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are some frequently asked questions and answers that might help.

Q. Will it cost me anything?
A. No we arrange transport or pay mileage expenses and provide refreshments whilst you’re with us.

Q. How formal are the meetings?
A. Although we send out meeting papers in advance, most of our meetings are relaxed and informal. You don’t need to dress up whether you are coming to St Hilary Court or to any other community venue.

Q. I have small children, can I still be involved?
A. Yes, we help with childcare costs and try to arrange meetings that are school friendly hours.

Q. I have a disability, can I still be involved?
A. Yes, let us know what your requirements are and we will do our best to make sure you can still get involved. We always ensure our venues are accessible to wheelchair users.

Q. I am a leaseholder, can I be involved?
A. Yes, we hold an Annual Leaseholders’ Conference and regular Forum Meetings. You can also join us on monthly site visits.

If you would like to know more about the different ways you can ‘have your say’ and get involved please feel free to contact our Tenant Participation Officer for an informal chat on 029 2067 5800.

We look forward to hearing from you!