

Partners For Improvement in Islington Resident Engagement Strategy 2015-17



1. Introduction

1.1 This strategy sets out Partners' proposals for Resident Engagement in 2015-17.

2. Background

2.1 Partners is committed to supporting Islington Council's resident engagement strategy and structures.

2.2 Partners is committed to effective and meaningful engagement with residents to help deliver high quality and continuously improving services.

2.3 Islington Council is currently reviewing its structures for resident engagement. Partners' proposed strategy and structures are intended to complement the Council's proposed new structures.

2.4 Partners has recently reorganised its management structures, including:

- The introduction of the Service Improvement and Engagement Team in Partners SPV. This new team will bring together performance monitoring, service improvement and resident engagement in a more co-ordinated, proactive and professional way. The team will use performance information and customer insight to identify opportunities for improvement, and then work with residents to deliver either business-led or resident-led service improvement.
- The introduction of a new Housing Services Team. Engaging with residents will be a key part of the Housing Services Officers' role.

3. The aims of the strategy

3.1 To increase the profile of Resident Engagement in Partners and make it central to the operation of Partners' services.

3.2 To increase the number and diversity of residents participating in meaningful Resident Engagement activity.

3.3 To increase the effectiveness and value for money to residents of our Resident Engagement activities.

3.4 To increase the percentage of Partners residents who are satisfied that their views are being taken into account by Partners.

3.5 To help achieve Partners' vision to be considered excellent by tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders.

Expected Benefits

- Improved service delivery and value for money
- Better communication between Partners and residents
- Increased resident satisfaction with Partners
- Improved links between Partners and the wider community
- Personal development for involved residents

4. Engagement structures

- 4.1 Partners recognises that residents have a broad range of preferences about the extent to which and the way in which they would like to engage with Partners, and indeed that these preferences may vary from time to time for individual residents. Partners will offer a broad range of opportunities for engagement to reflect this diversity of preferences.
- 4.2 Partners will promote the range of opportunities for engagement to residents.
- 4.3 Appendix A sets out draft descriptions of Partners resident engagement structures and where relevant Islington Council's draft descriptions of its resident engagement structures.
- 4.4 Appendix B is a diagram to highlight the broad range of ways in which Partners will engage and work with residents effectively to deliver high quality and continuously improving services.

5. Partners Resident Scrutiny Panel

- 5.1 In 2013 and 2014 Partners Resident Scrutiny Panel delivered three high quality investigations and reports on:
- Communal Repairs
 - Voids and lettings
 - Leasehold satisfaction
- 5.2 The Scrutiny exercises have contributed to significant measured improvement in performance in 2014-15, for example in void turnaround times.
- 5.3 Partners wishes to build on the success of Partners Resident Scrutiny Panel to date and to make future scrutiny even more effective.
- 5.4 The description of Partners Resident Scrutiny Panel in Appendix A sets out in summary how we aim to work with residents to do this. A more detailed proposal is published on Partners website.

6. Partners Residents (Open) Forum, Focus Forums, Repairs Surgeries and Leasehold Surgeries

- 6.1 Partners Residents Forum has to date had a membership of nominated residents. The two-year term of the latest membership of the Residents Forum ended at the March 2015 meeting of the Forum.
- 6.2 The Council and some of the recent members of Partners Residents Forum have expressed a desire to move away from a membership model to a more open and inclusive model.
- 6.3 Individual residents' issues have been raised at recent Residents Forum meetings and to meet this demand Partners is increasing the frequency of regular Repairs Surgeries and Housing Management Surgeries to every month.

6.4 Partners will:

- End the operation of Partners Residents Forum in its current form;
- Introduce a new Partners Residents Open Forum (described in Appendix A) at the Town Hall every two months;
- Introduce new Focus Forums: one-off open forums on a specific subject. The subject will be identified as an area of interest, whether through other feedback / engagement mechanisms, or because it is an area of our business where we are making changes;
- Increase the frequency of regular Repairs Surgeries and Leasehold Surgeries to every month.

7. Equalities Analysis

7.1 Partners will aim to ensure that residents engaged through these structures broadly reflect the diversity of Partners residents.

7.2 Partners will actively pursue opportunities to identify and engage hard-to-reach groups.

8. Conclusion

8.1 In conclusion Partners resident engagement structures have been developed and improved to increase their effectiveness. Partners' arrangements will complement Islington Council's democratic scrutiny arrangements and resident engagement structures, building on the success of resident scrutiny so far and addressing any issues that have made it less accessible, rewarding or productive than it might otherwise have been.

Contact

If you have questions or would like to talk with Partners about this strategy, please contact Katrina Dalby or Tom Irvine:

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Appendix A: Descriptions of engagement structures

These arrangements will be under continuous review by the Service Improvement and Engagement Team.

Partners will consult the Council and residents as appropriate about any significant changes to the strategy and structures.

Partners Resident Scrutiny Panel

- Carrying out 2-3 reviews of Partners services per year
- Current panel arrangements being reviewed to increase participation.
- Panel made up of up to 8 members selected on their ability to contribute to the work of the panel
- Panel members to be selected through an interview/selection process including residents on the panel
- Working together as a group and committing to agreed level of input are essential
- Panel chaired and assisted by independent consultant
- Supported by Service Improvement and Engagement Team
- Set of six or seven 2½hr meetings for each scrutiny exercise.
- Final meeting of each exercise is with Partners managers to agree recommendations.
- Reports from the Panel will go to Partners Core Group and Performance Review Group (strategic and operational management teams), and summaries to the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee.

Partners Residents Open Forum

- Opportunity to ask questions of representatives of Partners, normally the Service Improvement and Engagement Manager and another manager
- Opportunity to influence service planning and service improvement priorities
- Normally held at the Town Hall, Upper Street
- No set agenda
- Performance summary available
- Open to anyone, no membership
- Hosted by officer of Partners
- Issue-based consultation where appropriate
- Individual issues followed up directly with the individuals raising them; issues of wider interest to Partners residents published on Partners website

Focus Forums

- One-off Forums on a specific subject
- The subject will be identified as an area of interest, whether through other feedback / engagement mechanisms, or because it is an area of our business where we are making changes

- There will be a presentation on the subject by relevant officers, then an open question and answer session
- We will invite questions in advance on the subject, so that they can be addressed at the Focus Forum
- Open to all – residents, Councillors, interested local people
- We will consider ways of using new / available technology to develop these such as on-line questions

Repairs Surgeries and Leasehold Surgeries

- Held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, or Partners offices
- Advance appointment booking through customer services
- Attended by officers of Partners Repairs Team and Housing Management Team respectively

Mystery shoppers

- Group of trained residents who carry out mystery shopping activities
- Can be requested by Partners Scrutiny Panel to carry out work in support of service reviews
- Provide service feedback to help improve usually frontline services as commissioned by Service Improvement and Engagement Team

Residents accompanying surveyors on inspections

- Residents may ask to accompany surveyor(s) from Partners Asset Management Team on inspections.
- May be asked to provide feedback to Partners.

Partners Involvement Register Volunteers

- Residents who are happy to volunteer for a variety of activities providing feedback and support with service improvement
- Residents who are interested can get involved in activities related to service reviews, such as focus groups, readers panels – feeding back on written documents, feedback through surveys etc.
- Register to be refreshed during 2015-16 by contacting residents on the register to ensure they wish to remain, and by promoting to residents not yet on the register.

Resident Focus Groups

- Usually one-off groups set up to provide specific feedback on services.
- May be part of business-led or resident-led service improvement activities.

Multi-media consultation methods

- Consultation with a wider group of residents using a range of methods such as online forms, text messages or emails

Customer Shadowing

- Partners officer shadows real customer interaction with service
- Normally by Service Improvement and Engagement Advisor
- Residents from Involvement Register or trained Mystery Shoppers

Satisfaction surveys

- Postal and telephone surveys (residents may opt out of telephone surveys)
- Regular monitoring of resident satisfaction with a range of services

Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)

- Partners residents are welcome to set up TRAs but these are less common for street properties of the type managed by Partners because of the relatively small number of homes in each property.
- Usually estate based and block based associations
- Operate in a variety of ways
- Represent the views and draw attention to issues experienced locally by residents
- Encouraged to attend Tenants and Residents Panels

Islington Council engagement structures relevant to Partners residents

Housing Scrutiny Committee (Islington Council)

- Attendees: Councillors and Co-opted Elected Resident Representatives, including a Partners Resident Representative
- Partners residents may attend and observe
- Carrying out housing wide scrutiny
- Overseeing resident service review programme
- Receiving reports from resident service review projects and recommending action plans
- Receiving reports from Partners Scrutiny Panel
- Considering key housing issues

Tenants & Residents Panels (Islington Council)

- Area based panels for council tenants and residents
- Consulted on service changes and improvements
- Partners residents may attend these panels, but the agenda are area based and do not include Partners services.

Appendix B: Diagram to highlight how Partners will engage and work with residents effectively to deliver high quality and continuously improving services

