



Customer Engagement Guide for Customers

January 2021



We would like to thank all the customers and colleagues who helped to develop this document.

What is customer engagement?

Customer engagement is what we do alongside customers, to shape and improve our services.

We want to know how customers feel about their homes, communities and the services that we deliver.

We want to engage with customers so we can understand and act upon:

- needs;
- wants;
- priorities;
- issues;
- challenges; and
- what is positive and valued.

Customer Engagement has been happening right since the very beginnings of Broadacres, it's not something new. When Broadacres was formed in 1993 it was as a direct result of the majority of customers choosing for their homes to be managed and owned by a Housing Association, following widespread consultation.

Why customer engagement is important:

To be able to provide excellent customer experiences, and to be **the best rural housing provider**, we need to effectively engage with our customers.

Customer engagement is part of our Corporate Strategy and alongside this sits our Customer Engagement Strategy, both developed in partnership with customers and colleagues.

We need to engage with customers to comply with the regulations set out by The Regulator of Social Housing, specifically the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. More information on this can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-involvement-and-empowerment-standard/tenant-involvement-and-empowerment-standard-2017>

We have adopted the National Housing Federation's 'Together with Tenants Charter'. This is a national initiative and a commitment by us to focus on

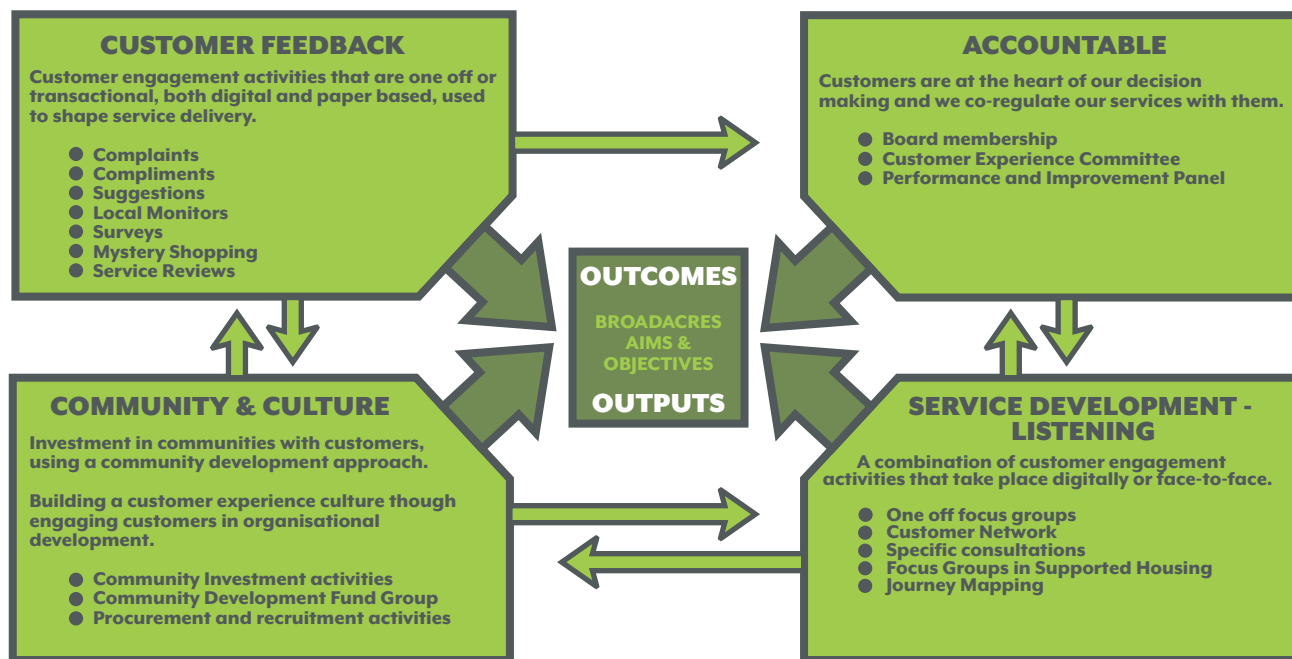
strengthening the relationship we have with customers. More information about Together with Tenants can be found at:

<https://www.housing.org.uk/our-work/together-with-tenants/>

The Customer Engagement Framework

Our Customer Engagement Framework below outlines the different activities that we support to effectively engage with customers. The framework shows:

- how these activities link together.
- the amount of influence and challenge our customers have.
- how the outcomes and outputs from engagement impact Broadacres.



What does customer engagement mean for me?

We welcome new customer engagement. If you are a customer and would like to find out more about customer engagement activities please get in touch with us or have a look at our website for more information:

<https://www.broadacres.org.uk/customer-area/getting-involved/>

Telephone: **01609 767900**

Email: customer.involvement@broadacres.org.uk

What to expect from engagement?

Below are some key pieces of information to help develop an understanding of what to expect from our customer engagement activities:

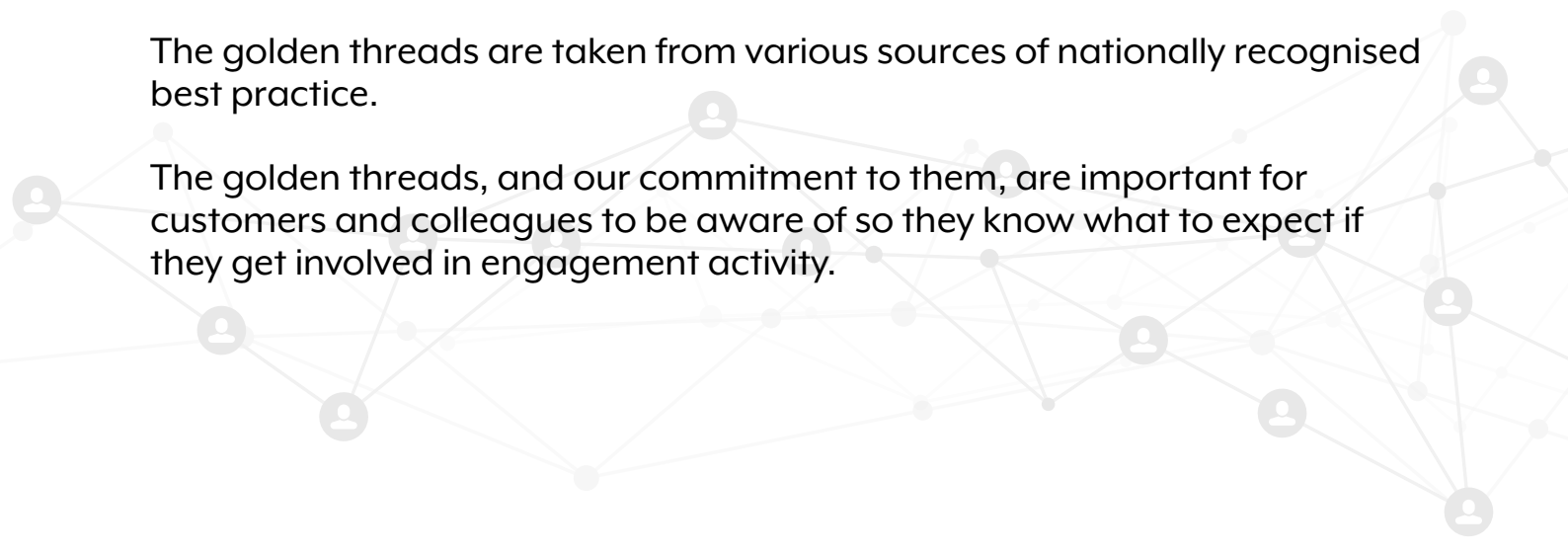
- Our engagement activity is voluntary for customers, except for involvement in our Board's governance structures which are paid roles.
- We provide a range of different engagement activities. This is to make sure that engagement is accessible to customers with different circumstances so they can have an influence at an individual, local, strategic and governance level.
- There is no financial cost to a customer to being involved in engagement activity. We will refund any reasonable out of pocket expenses, or meet any necessary costs in advance, as a result of a customer being involved.
- Where it is needed, we provide support for customers who are involved with engagement activities.
- Participating in engagement activity does not result in customers being treated any more or less favourably, in terms of the services they receive from us.
- All feedback captured as part of engagement activity is valued and no one type of engagement activity is more important than another.
- We proactively target our engagement activities, recognising the needs and views of different and diverse customers, thereby enabling us to capture a cross section of views. We also measure and monitor the diversity of customers who are involved so we can work towards better representation within the engagement framework.

Understanding engagement:

Below are the 8 golden threads that we strive to make sure run throughout our engagement activities with customers.

The golden threads are taken from various sources of nationally recognised best practice.

The golden threads, and our commitment to them, are important for customers and colleagues to be aware of so they know what to expect if they get involved in engagement activity.



1. Our engagement activities have a clear purpose:
 - We take engagement into account when making decisions.
 - We engage with customers about policies or plans when they are at a formative stage.
 - We do not ask questions about issues on which we already have a final view – or are not able to be altered.
 - We do not engage with customers for the sake of it.
2. There is a commitment to customer engagement from the top levels of the organisation. Senior colleagues champion and recognise the value of customer engagement activity and are accountable for ensuring that engagement informs decision making.
3. We are honest about when we are unable to meet customers' expectations during engagement activity– examples of this may be where we cannot do something because it is unlawful, or it would disadvantage or be detrimental to other customers.
4. We provide appropriately timed communication updates to customers and colleagues on the value and impact of engagement, activities including within our annual report and website. Transparency about engagement activity is key to building trust and fostering future engagement.
5. We strive for great quality engagement which is:

Clear and concise – we use plain English and avoid acronyms. We make engagement easy to understand and easy to be involved in.

Informative – we give enough information to ensure that customers engaged understand the issues and can give informed responses.

Timely – we judge the length of the engagement considering the nature and impact of the subject. Engaging for too long will unnecessarily delay progress. Engaging too quickly will not give enough time for consideration and will reduce the quality of the engagement.

6. For complex and wide-reaching issues, we will work with customers across the engagement framework and the wider customer base.
7. We will tailor engagement to the needs and preferences of customers to ensure engagement activity is accessible.
8. We will target engagement activity to specific groups of customers when it is appropriate, i.e. those affected or likely to be affected.

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