



## **NLM Housing Association**

# **Tenant Engagement Strategy February 2022**

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## **1. About NLM**

NLM is a not-for-profit organisation which seeks to provide outstanding customer service. Managing over 1000 homes in 5 Local Authority areas across Northeast London, we build thriving neighbourhoods and work tirelessly to transform the lives of our residents. We are also an outstanding developer, sweating our assets and consistently building new affordable homes for a diverse range of people. Currently we are developing 160 homes for rent and shared ownership in our area of operation.

NLM operates in the capitals most vibrant cultural and artistic places, as well as being on the doorstep to central London. The Association has a voluntary Board with wide range of expertise, including a number of housing professionals. The Board is responsible for the overall policy and strategic direction of the Association and approves all policies. NLM is one of the top performing Housing Associations within its peer group. Our Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) place us on the top quartile among all Housing Associations operating in London with excellent KPI's.

NLM is a founding member in the creation of the 'North River Alliance (NRA)' and 'Build London Partnership (BLP)' alliance. Over the years both NRA and BLP have established themselves as successful development alliances in London. NLM was always in the forefront of engaging tenants in consultation and empowerment programmes.

### **1.1 Our Mission and Values**

#### **Our Vision**

To make a positive difference to our resident's lives through the provision of quality and affordable homes to those who are in need.

#### **Our Mission statements.**

To provide quality homes and services, strengthen and build communities and improve the lives of our residents.

#### **Our Values**

- Valuing people
  - Take our customers into the heart of all we do
  - We go extra mile to ensure excellent service delivery
- Taking Responsibility
  - We do what we say – deliver our commitments
  - Ensure we invest in the potential of our organisation
- Acting with integrity
  - We believe and practice in being fair and ethical
  - We proactively do the right thing based on values and ethics
- Working together
  - We listen to what our tenants, customers and stakeholders want

- Trained and enthusiastic staff supported by a committed and knowledgeable Board

- Being Innovative
  - Think consistently of ways to improve and add value
  - Raise standards and provide equality of opportunity for all.

## **2. Our Commitment to Tenant Engagement**

One of our Corporate Objective is ' Put our residents at the heart of what we do', and it is only achievable if we become a listening organisation, we are keen to listen to our tenants and there are mechanism in place to influence our decisions based on tenants feedback.

We recognise that good tenant engagement can bring benefits not only to our tenants and residents but also to our organisation. Tenant engagement ensures that we develop policies and services that meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and residents, creating genuine opportunities for them to influence decisions and increase levels of satisfaction.

It is widely acknowledged that when tenants and residents know that they can genuinely make a difference, influence decisions and feel listened to that they feel valued and more willing to be involved. This in turn leads to better working relationships between staff and tenants helping to promote positive two way communication and respect between NLM and our tenants and residents.

### **2.1 Principles for Tenant Engagement**

NLM is committed to promoting meaningful tenant engagement and improving the service our customers receive. Our principles reflect on the following aspects

- Trust, respect & partnership
- Sharing information and ideas
- Setting the agenda together
- Openness and accountability in decision making
- Allowing full time for consideration
- Recognition for Tenant Organisations
- Good working relationships
- Providing resources for Tenant and Resident Groups
- Encouraging engagement

### **2.2 Benefits of Tenant Engagement**

Tenant engagement is a way for NLM and our tenants to share information, ideas and work together to improve our services. There are many benefits to getting involved with shaping the service you receive e.g.

- Influencing decisions that affect your housing services;
- Promoting better communication between tenants/residents and staff;

- Developing your skills and knowledge of the services you can expect to receive;
- Meet new people, share ideas; and
- Increase satisfaction levels within your home and community.

### **3. Consultation on ‘Tenant Engagement Strategy’**

#### **3.1 Consultation**

NLM is keen to build upon the strong and successful tenant participation. Ongoing consultation with our tenants will take place, inviting all tenants from our tenants groups and tenants associations. We will review the outcomes of these consultations and understand the issues which matter to our tenants most.

#### **3.2 Key Feedback received from tenants**

Key feedback from our consultation during last five years

- Scrutiny panel is interested to monitor more KPI's on performance.
- Accountability is essential. Tenants are pleased to note commitments from senior member of staff attending scrutiny panel meetings .
- Tenant Representatives are essential in our communities and we should work to recruit more.
- Communication is important and they would like more information through emerging technologies and social media.
- Working together and linking with other Tenant Groups to ensure that what they are doing connects through the structure.
- Keep promises and ensure that actions agreed at meetings are completed.

#### **3.3 Our Vision for Tenant Engagement**

Improving services by developing and influencing how our services are provided in a meaningful two way process between NLM and our tenants/ residents.

To achieve this NLM will:

*Improve:*

The culture and practice of tenant engagement across our services.

*Promote;*

The range of options available for engagement ensuring our tenants and residents know how they can get involved.

*Develop:*

The current tenant engagement structure already in place and implement new ways to engage with one another.

*Consult:*

Effectively with our tenants and residents in a way that suits them and on issues they care about.

*Support:*

Our tenants to participate in tenant engagement roles and opportunities.

*Communicate:*

Effectively in a way which suits our tenants and residents. Listening to their feedback and suggestions to improve services and how we engage with them at all levels.

*Demonstrate:*

The value of tenant engagement and the effectiveness of our approach through periodic reviews of our methods and outcomes achieved.

#### **4. Engagement Opportunities**

Below displays our current tenant engagement opportunities which will be maintained and developed over the period of this Strategy:

- **Tenant Engagement Register**  
This is a register of tenants who have expressed an interest in engaging with NLM to shape the service they receive.
- **Tenant Representatives**  
These are tenants in our communities who have been identified to represent their community or estate. They are an essential link between NLM and our residents keeping us informed on issues that matter to their community and striving to improve the service they receive.
- **Estate Walkabouts**  
Dedicated time to a NLM estate during which tenants can meet with their Housing Officer, Maintenance Officer and Resident Engagement Officer on site to discuss their area and encourage tenant engagement.
- **NLM Foundation**  
NLM offers small grants from £250 to £1,000 to fund local community projects. This grant supports a wide range of projects contributing to the wellbeing and development of our communities.
- **Satisfaction Surveys**  
NLM carries out tenant satisfaction surveys annually to establish the satisfaction of our tenants. These are published in our Residents Newsletter and Annual Report.

- **Tenant/ Resident Associations & Groups**  
These are both formal and informal groups and associations in NLM portfolios. They represent their local area and its interests. Those setting up a group or association are eligible to apply for a £100 set-up grant alongside support from our staff.
- **Scrutiny Panels**  
A panel of tenants to act as critical friends looking at the services received by our tenants with a view to suggesting improvement. Areas for scrutiny are discussed and prioritised by the Area Panels. Panel will meet with senior staff on quarterly basis
- **Touch Point Surveys**  
These touch point surveys will scrutinise specific areas of service through online polls, text surveys, telephone, face to face and post. Areas of service to be discussed and agreed with tenants and staff. Results will be used to establish satisfaction levels, bring about recommendations for improvement and be published in Resident Newsletter.
- **Housing Committee Engagement**  
NLM has a tenant representative from the Scrutiny Panel at the Housing Committee Level to ensure the link of engagement between Board of Management Committee members and our tenants; *from their front door to our Boardroom.*

## 5. Training and Support

We will support and encourage our tenants in their journey with NLM to shape the services they receive. It is important to build on skills and knowledge to ensure effective participation. This support includes:

- Bespoke training for Scrutiny Panel, Tenant Association, Tenant Groups and Board Members.
- Support and advice for tenants and residents who want to form or maintain a group or association.
- Enabling networking and support between tenants, staff, stakeholders and external agencies.
- Independent and one to one advice.

## 6. Accessibility

NLM aims to make all engagement opportunities available to all our tenants in a way which works for them. Through our engagement structure we aim to have an opportunity suitable for all. NLM will also assist with transport for tenant engagement events, provide refreshments when required and ensure that all our tenants are able to shape the service they receive.

## **7. Dedicated Staff**

NLM currently has one dedicated Resident Engagement Officer within the Housing Department to monitor and ensure the actions required are completed in this Strategy. NLM aims to continue to develop this role providing opportunities to network, promote tenant engagement with tenants & colleagues, share ideas, attend relevant training & conferences and link with external agencies to support this role.

Tenant Engagement is core to improving the services we deliver to our tenants and residents. We will continue to promote this among NLM staff to ensure a consistent culture of engagement between staff and tenants. We will ensure good links between departments to ensure that engagement is effective alongside support from the Tenant Engagement activities. Staff will be provided with relevant training & support, be kept informed and be given opportunities to give their comments and suggestions on business improvement in correlation with tenant engagement opportunities.

## **8. Evaluation and Monitoring**

### **8.1 Action Plan**

NLM will continually monitor and review the progress and content of our Tenant Engagement Strategy and put in place a realistic and measurable Action Plan which is effective, relevant and achievable. The needs of our tenants, staff and stakeholders may change within the period, therefore the Action Plan may also change.

Our tenants, staff and stakeholders are central to the development, implementation, and review of this Strategy.

### **8.2 Monitoring Results**

We will continue to report progress to our tenants, staff and Board through quarterly report. Ongoing surveys to measure success and identify further engagement.



## **9. ACTION PLAN 2022-2025**

This Action Plan has been created in line with NLM's Vision and aims to achieve meaningful and effective Tenant Engagement for the period 2022-2025.

### **What do we want to achieve ?**

Improve - the culture and practice of tenant engagement across our services.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Staff Training**

NLM will train its current staff on tenant engagement and ensure a key element of new staff induction.

#### **Tenant Training**

We provide bespoke training for our tenants in their journey to shape the service they receive.

#### **Scrutiny Panel**

Maintain the Scrutiny Panel to discuss the service provided in a strategic way strengthening links within the tenant engagement structure.

#### **Committee Representation**

We will maintain tenant representation at Housing Committee meetings ensuring our tenants voices are heard throughout our engagement structure.

### **What do we want to achieve ?**

Promote - the range of options available for engagement ensuring our tenants and residents know how they can get involved.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Digital Engagement**

We will promote digital tenant engagement via our website, email groups, online surveys and social media.

#### **Levels of Involvement**

We will make our level of Involvement available through various avenues - online, leaflet, by telephone, face to face, noticeboards and newsletter. We will continue to review the most effective way to promote and review tenant involvement.

### **What do we want to achieve ?**

Develop - the current tenant engagement structure already in place and implement new ways to engage with one another.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Community Chest**

Encouraging our communities to work together through small grants scheme from £250 to £1,000 from NLM Foundation. Supporting a wide range of projects contributing to the wellbeing and development of our communities.

#### **Changing Locations**

We will hold our meetings with tenants in different areas to encourage engagement between tenant members across our area of operation.

#### **Tenant Representatives on estates**

We will consult with our tenants on the role of a Tenant Representative for their estate.

#### **Estate Walkabouts**

Continue to carry out Estate Walkabouts in identified areas continuously looking at ways to develop this engagement opportunity.

#### **Tenant Associations & Groups**

We will continue to support and encourage both formal and informal tenant groups.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

Consult - effectively with our tenants and residents in a way that suits them and on issues they care about.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Scrutiny**

We will establish areas of scrutiny following feedback from consultations. These areas will be prioritised by the Scrutiny Panel. The outcome and recommendations made available to the Housing Committee.

#### **Engagement**

We will enable our tenants to be consulted in their own estates or home by keeping them informed on tenant engagement activities that they are interested

in. Providing opportunities for them to put forward their comments and suggestions without leaving their home in a way that suits them.

### **Tenant Satisfaction**

Will explore to encourage tenants to take part in satisfaction surveys. Any actions required are made, monitored and evaluated.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

Support - our tenants to participate in tenant engagement roles and opportunities.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Touch Point Surveys**

We will carry out relevant touch point surveys on our services with those customers who have recently used them. Taking their feedback and suggestions back to shape future service delivery.

#### **Keeping up Momentum**

We will aim to maintain and demonstrate a strong representation of tenants and encouraging and supporting both new & current tenants involved.

#### **Tenant Support**

We will provide our tenants with relevant supporting documents, travel expenses, stationary and training to support their role within the tenant engagement structure.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

Communicate effectively in ways which suit our residents. Listening to their feedback and suggestions to improve services and engagement with them on all levels.

### **How are we going to deliver?**

#### **Monitoring Performance**

We will continue to communicate our performance with our tenants. Gather feedback and suggestions from our tenants.

#### **Accountability**

Ensure that senior staff members attend Scrutiny Panels meetings.

## **Interdepartmental Communication**

We will continue to encourage effective communication between all departments which affect the service our tenants and residents receive. Keeping each other informed on upcoming relevant areas for scrutiny & consultation working together to improve customer service.

## **Be Prepared**

We will aim to provide a clear schedule of upcoming tenant engagement events and meetings in advance where possible.

## **Noticeboards**

We will ensure that relevant tenant engagement information is displayed on scheme noticeboards where available.

## **The Update**

We will publish a Tenant Newsletter twice a year.

## **What do we want to achieve?**

Demonstrate - the value of tenant engagement and the effectiveness of our approach through periodic reviews of our methods and outcomes achieved.

## **How are we going to deliver?**

### **Digital Communication**

We will explore opportunities to engage with our tenants digitally.

### **Keep Promises**

We will aim to keep our promises and demonstrate this.

### **Establish Key Performance Indicators**

We will establish a measured way to show performance of the tenant engagement structure and opportunities through the creation of new Key Performance Indicators in consultation with our tenants.

### **Value**

Keep tenants, residents and stakeholders informed by demonstrating the value and effectiveness of tenant engagement giving opportunities for them to forward their recommendations.