

Have your say... get involved



Freephone 0800 027 2057

"Better homes and better services for better lives"

What is resident involvement?

“A two way process involving the sharing of information and ideas, where tenants and residents are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening.”

As a customer of Acis there are many ways that you can have your say in how your home, services and neighbourhood are managed. You can help us to improve things by having your say and getting involved with us in ways that suit you.

Resident involvement (or tenant participation) is about giving you choices and about encouraging you to have a say in how services are managed. We involve our tenants and other customers because we want you to be really satisfied with your homes, services and local neighbourhoods.

Making it easier for you to have your say

We want to make it easy for customers to be involved. There are various ways to help, enabling different levels of involvement to suit your individual lifestyle.

We will help you to become or stay involved by providing help and support with things such as childcare costs, transport, travel expenses, training and stationery. We will try to help, whatever your needs.



Free training is also given to customers to help them to build their ability to contribute effectively on behalf of all our residents.

In order to help resident groups to succeed we will offer practical advice and other support. For example, we will try to ensure that one of our employees attends meetings and helps with sending invitations, hiring venues, getting publicity and taking notes.

The ways you can have your say

There are a number of ways that you can get involved in either making your views known to us or playing a bigger part in the management of homes, services and local neighbourhoods.

We will involve you to ensure that the services we provide are efficient and effective, giving value for money as well as meeting your needs.

The wide range of ways that you can get involved and make a difference are outlined below.

The board of management

We have skilled tenant volunteers on our board to help provide effective governance for the organisation.

The board of management has three tenant members who work alongside eight independent members. They are paid an allowance for giving up to 15 days of their time each year.

Our board members have strong links to the local area and its people and want to make a difference to people's lives and the communities in which Acis has homes.

Resident panels and local management boards

The resident advisory panel co-ordinates and reviews all resident involvement activity. This panel makes recommendations to our board on possible improvements to your homes, services and neighbourhoods.

You can also join local management boards which are set up for you to shape local services, agree local housing policies and oversee the delivery of major improvement programmes, as well as setting and measuring against local targets.

Local tenant and resident associations

We actively encourage the forming of resident associations, as we believe they:

- Help to establish and build communities
- Are a way that residents can be heard and make their views known
- Are sources from which resident panel and board members can be found
- Give us a good feel for neighbourhood issues

Resident associations are groups or committees of like-minded people, living in a community, who have a strong desire to see their neighbourhood develop as a safe and enjoyable place to live. Group members meet to discuss any issues that affect them.

Resident associations may be interested in starting neighbourhood watch schemes, organising activities for local people or keeping an eye on vulnerable residents in their area.

Working and focus groups

A number of tenant groups have been set up to deal with specific service issues in line with customer requirements.

These groups aim to introduce ongoing improvements in our services.

Groups have already been established to make improvements in areas such as communications, repairs, elderly services and customer service.

Service reviews

We are committed to improving our services by looking at them with you. These reviews are sometimes run as a structured project and are known as best value reviews.

Individual managers at Acis act as service champions for different service areas, such as customer service, resident involvement, repairs, lettings and elderly accommodation.

The managers run these more structured reviews from time to time and there are normally two best value reviews each year. Customers are always involved, giving their opinions about services and helping to design and improve them. This approach helps to make sure that services are high quality and cost effective.

Surveys

We try to ensure that you are consulted fully on all issues that affect you. We use a number of approaches to understand your opinions:

- Satisfaction and opinion surveys (postal, telephone and online)
- Focus groups
- Personal visits
- Open meetings
- Workshops

Local meetings and conferences

These events are held at various local venues throughout the year, in places central to where our tenants live.

The aims of these meetings are to:

- Give you additional ways of getting involved and talking/listening to Acis
- Find out your views on our services, policies and procedures
- Listen to your comments on issues that you wish to raise about your home, services and the local area
- Share information about things that are happening
- Work together to improve homes, services and neighbourhoods

We regularly discuss with you how, where and when meetings take place. This helps to make sure that meetings are held in places and at times that make it easy for people to take part.

Estate audits

We want the places where our tenants live, whether in towns or in the countryside, to be clean, tidy and attractive.

One of the ways that you can help us to make sure that this happens is by joining our local staff in carrying out estate audits. These are scheduled local walkabouts where neighbourhoods are checked to ensure that they are clean and tidy.

Audits help to identify and deal with any problems such as rubbish dumping, graffiti or vandalism at an early stage.

Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping involves interested Acis tenants being trained to test our services in a number of ways.

Mystery shopping campaigns are designed by customers. Often, special telephone recording equipment is used but mystery shopping can also involve visiting offices and estates.

The team of tenant mystery shoppers produce reports on their findings and agree how services can be improved based on the results.

Resident mystery shopping at Acis has been widely recognised as good practice.

Giving you information

We want to provide information that is clear and easy to understand. We will provide information about how you can get involved and about what resident involvement has achieved in the following ways:

- At customer conferences and meetings
- Through resident panels and groups
- In this handbook, which will be updated from time to time
- In our newsletter, which is produced quarterly
- In our annual review and calendar
- Through performance reports
- In letters and mailshots
- Through advice leaflets
- In the sheltered tenants' handbook
- Through our website
- By personal contact

We measure the success of resident involvement by carrying out an annual impact assessment with our residents. The findings of the assessment are available to you.

Consulting, listening and acting

We will ensure that you are consulted fully on all issues that are likely to affect you. In particular, detailed consultation will be carried out on:

Proposals for change in:

- Our strategies, policies or practices affecting the management and maintenance of your homes
- The standards, development, delivery and accessibility of our services
- The cost of services we provide
- Plans to carry out improvements to your home
- Plans to carry out physical improvements to the environment (including any redevelopment works)

We will ask for your views in a number of ways including:

- Postal and telephone surveys
- Personal visits
- Customer meetings
- Public exhibitions
- Consultation with resident panels, associations and groups
- Customer satisfaction surveys to monitor service standards, including analysing the complaints register

We carry out an independent survey every three years to find out how satisfied you are about getting involved and with your homes, services and neighbourhoods.

We take all views into account before finalising any proposal that affects you and will let you know about any decisions made. Our board of management must reserve the right to make decisions that it believes to be in the best interests of Acis, its tenants and in the neighbourhoods in which we have homes.

Have your say!

If you would like more information about having your say, or if you want to become involved in any way, we would be very interested to hear from you. We want as many of you as possible to join us, other residents and partners in improving homes, services and neighbourhoods.

If you would like to have this information in large-print, another language, or any other format, please contact us to let us know about your needs.

Our aim is to give you the information you need as quickly and as clearly as we can. We therefore have a target of arranging suitable personal communication for you within one working day (for example by talking things through verbally, by using signing, language interpretation, etc).

Please be aware that some large documents may take some time to convert into the format you need and other agencies are often involved in reproducing our published materials. This means that it can take up to 8 weeks to convert a large document into some formats.



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