



Portus
Supported Housing

Policy Title: Customer Engagement & Involvement Policy

Version: 1.0

Review

Date of this review	Date of last review	Author(s)	Owner	Next review date
31/10/2025	31/10/2025	Sophie Hayward Customer Director	Sophie Hayward Customer Director	01/12/2026

Details of amendments

Version	Date	Update/ amendment detail	Resulting from

Approved by

Executive Team	SF (CEO) 21/11/2025
Board	[00/00/00]



1. Introduction

This policy sets out Portus Supported Housing's (PSH) commitment to meaningful customer engagement as a core part of how we deliver and improve our services. It establishes the principles that will guide our approach, the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, and the mechanisms through which customers can influence, scrutinise, and hold the organisation to account. By embedding customer engagement into our governance, management, and everyday practice, we will ensure that customers' voices are central to decision-making and service improvements.

PSH's vision is 'To provide high quality homes and services that meet the support requirements of our customers throughout their lives.' Effective customer engagement is essential to achieving this vision, ensuring that services are responsive, inclusive, and tailored to the needs of those living in our supported housing.

2. Values in Engagement

Customer engagement at Portus Supported Housing is underpinned by our organisational values.

- We Care – Every engagement will be carried out with compassion and empathy, promoting customer wellbeing and safety.
- We Listen – Feedback from customers and stakeholders will be actively sought, acted on, and communicated back.
- We Learn – We will learn from customer insight, complaints, and lived experience to improve services continuously.
- We Deliver – We will follow through on commitments, keep customers informed, and focus on high-quality outcomes.
- We Influence – We will empower customers to shape decisions, advocate for their needs, and influence wider housing practice.
- We Are Inclusive – Engagement will value diversity, challenge discrimination, and ensure services and opportunities are accessible to all.

These values guide how staff, Board members, Housing Officers, Customer Engagement Officer, and the Customer Committee interact with customers and their networks,' ensuring engagement is respectful, meaningful, and impactful.

3. Purpose

This policy is delivered through the Customer Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. This policy sets out PSH's commitment to meaningful and accessible customer engagement.

The policy ensures that customers, their families, and support networks can influence decisions, scrutinise services, and hold PSH accountable in line with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)



4. Scope

This policy applies to all Portus Supported Housing customers, prospective customers, their representatives, and staff responsible for service delivery.

It also governs the role of the Customer Committee as the primary customer voice within PSH's governance framework, ensuring that engagement is embedded in decision-making and oversight across the organisation.

5. Policy Statement

Portus Supported Housing will place customers at the heart of decision-making. We will:

- Provide clear, timely, and accessible information about homes and services.
- Listen to and act on customer feedback, closing the loop by reporting back on outcomes.
- Involve customers in shaping policies, services, and performance.
- Ensure engagement is inclusive and accessible to all, removing barriers wherever possible.
- Demonstrate accountability through transparent reporting and benchmarking.
- Strengthening governance through the Customer Committee as a formal mechanism for customer influence.

6. Principles

Our customer engagement activities at PSH will be underpinned by a set of core principles that reflect our organisational values and commitment to continuous improvement. We will ensure transparency through open, honest, and timely communication, and demonstrate respect by recognising customers as experts by experience.

We will also uphold accountability by acting on feedback and providing clear reporting on outcomes. Engagement will be inclusive, with communication methods adapted to meet diverse needs, and empowering, by enabling customers to influence and shape service improvements directly.

Our engagement will be based on:

- Transparency – open, honest, and timely communication.
- Respect – valuing customers as experts by experience.
- Accountability – acting on feedback and reporting outcomes.
- Inclusion – adapting communication and engagement to meet diverse needs.
- Empowerment – enabling customers to directly influence service improvements.



7. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy supports compliance with:

- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Portus Supported Housing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

8. Levels of Engagement

We adopt a framework of progressive involvement to ensure customers can engage in ways that suit them:

- Inform – providing clear and accessible information via newsletters, the website, social media, and regular visits by Housing Officers.
- Consult – gathering views through surveys, feedback forms, and meetings.
- Involve – inviting participation in focus groups, workshops, and service reviews.
- Collaborate – working with customers on projects, policies, and publications.
- Empower – supporting customer-led panels and the Customer Committee with real decision-making authority.

9. The Customer Committee

The Customer Committee is the cornerstone of Portus Supported Housing's customer engagement and governance framework. It provides a formal mechanism for customers to scrutinise, challenge, and influences how services are delivered and improved.

The Committee operates in accordance with its Terms of Reference, which set out its detailed responsibilities, powers, and relationship with the Board. Its role is to:

- Provide scrutiny, challenge, and recommendations on services and policies.
- Ensure the customer voice is central to organisational decision-making.
- Provide assurance on service quality and regulatory compliance.
- Highlight themes from customer feedback and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Membership:

- Chair – Non-Executive Board Member
- Board Representative – Non-Executive Board Member
- Customer Representative – three independent parents of customers.



- Independent Members – two independent members (sector/customer perspective).
- Advisory Group – up to ten customers or family/carer representatives who can attend and contribute but do not hold voting rights.

Voting Rights: There are 7 core voting members (5 independents + 2 Board). Independent members form the majority to ensure lived experience leads discussion.

Relationship with Governance: The Customer Committee reports directly to the Board, providing assurance and recommendations on customer experience, service quality, and regulatory compliance.

Quorum: three voting members.

10. Accessibility and supported engagement

As a specialised supported housing provider, Portus Supported Housing will ensure that engagement is inclusive and accessible to all by:

- Providing information in accessible formats, such as easy-read documents, pictorial guides, large print, and audio versions.
- Supporting customers with communication needs through advocacy, interpreters, and/or their support staff.
- Recognising the important role of families, care providers, and support networks in engagement and involving them appropriately where customers consent.
- Ensuring engagement activities are safe, inclusive, and designed to promote customer wellbeing.
- Making reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to participation, so that every customer can be involved.

11. Safeguarding and wellbeing in engagement

Engagement will always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of customers.

- All engagement activities will be risk-assessed to ensure they are safe, inclusive, and do not place undue pressure on vulnerable customers.
- Staff will be trained to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns that may arise during engagement, following PSH's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Customers will be supported to take part voluntarily, with no coercion, and with respect for their capacity, choice, and independence.
- Where appropriate, families, care providers, or advocates may be involved to ensure customers can participate safely and meaningfully.

12. Digital and regional inclusion



As a national specialised supported housing provider, PSH will:

- Provide both online and offline engagement opportunities to avoid digital exclusion.
- Ensure consistency in engagement standards across all regions, while tailoring approaches to meet local needs and contexts.
- Use technology to connect customers across the country, while also offering in-person, face-to-face engagement opportunities where possible.
- Monitor participation to ensure customers from different regions, backgrounds, and support needs are represented fairly.

13. Commitments

Portus Supported Housing will:

- Improve communication about repairs and maintenance, ensuring updates are clear and timely.
- Ensure customers are kept fully informed on matters that affect them and their homes.
- Deal with complaints effectively, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and learn from them to improve services.
- Provide regular opportunities for scrutiny and involvement through the Customer Committee and other engagement forums.
- Support customers, and where appropriate their advocates, care providers, or families, to develop confidence and skills through training, mentoring, and peer support.
- Share engagement outcomes through newsletters, reports, meetings, and online updates, using clear "You Said, We Did" reporting.
- Monitor the diversity of participation and act to reduce barriers for underrepresented or harder-to-reach groups.

14. Monitoring and Reporting

We will measure success in customer engagement through:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), as set by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Engagement participation rates and the diversity of involvement, ensuring inclusion of customers with different needs and backgrounds.
- Feedback and recommendations from the Customer Committee, with clear action tracking.
- Complaints handling performance, including lessons learned and service improvements made.
- Annual reporting to customers and the Board on engagement outcomes, showing clear evidence of learning and improvement.
- The Customer Committee provides formal reports and recommendations to the Board at least quarterly, alongside any additional updates as required.



- Benchmarking engagement approaches against sector peers and best practice in supported housing.

15. Responsibilities

To deliver meaningful customer engagement, responsibilities are clearly allocated across the organisation. Each group plays a distinct role in upholding the principles of transparency, respect, accountability, inclusion, and empowerment, ensuring that engagement is embedded in both governance and day-to-day practice.

- Board – has overall responsibility for ensuring customer engagement and regulatory compliance.
- Customer Committee – is the primary mechanism for customer influence, scrutiny, and accountability.
- Executive Team – oversees delivery of engagement commitments and monitors performance.
- Regional Housing Managers and Housing Officers – embed engagement into daily practice through direct work with customers.
- Customer Engagement Officer – leads on developing and delivering engagement opportunities, supporting the Customer Committee, and promoting accessible and inclusive involvement.
- Customers and their networks (families, advocates, care providers) – participate in engagement opportunities and hold Portus Supported Housing accountable.

16. Review

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, with annual reporting to customers and the Board on engagement outcomes. It will also be updated sooner if there are significant regulatory sector, or organisational changes.

