

Customer Engagement Policy

1. Aim

- 1.1 This policy sets out the way in which Onward will engage with and listen to its customers.
- 1.2 Our aim is to shape and deliver an inclusive engagement service that has maximum reach and impact within our neighbourhoods and the communities we work in.
- 1.3 We want to create a modern and progressive engagement framework and we will achieve this through a blend of informal digital engagement activities and more formal activities such as tenant scrutiny.
- 1.4 Our engagement activities will allow us to ensure that our decision-making and review processes are open and accountable. We want the voice of the customer to influence how we deliver, shape, and improve our services and neighbourhoods.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Policy covers all aspects of customer engagement and consultation, and applies to:
 - a. Onward Tenants
 - b. Onward Leaseholders & Shared Owners
 - c. Anyone else who lives in an Onward property
 - d. Onward Employees

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Onwards' Customer Engagement Policy has been developed to ensure that there are clear processes in place for delivering customer engagement at Onward.
- 3.2 We have used the term 'Customer' throughout this policy to refer to tenants, residents, leaseholders, shared owners and anyone else who lives in a property where Onward is the landlord and whom we may seek to engage with.
- 3.3 Our approach ensures compliance with the Regulator of Social Housings' Tenant Involvement & Empowerment standard.
- 3.4 Everybody within Onward has a responsibility for ensuring that they capture and listen to the voice of the customer.
- 3.5 The Customer Engagement Team will provide support and guidance to operational teams to help maximise the reach and the impact of activities.
- 3.6 In order to shape services, 'Customer Engagement' will be evidenced at both an operational and strategic level.

4. Engagement Framework

- 4.1 Our Customer Engagement Strategy provides the vision, objectives, and plan for directing our approach, this will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.2 We will seek to maximise the number of engaged customers in our Engagement Community and will not be reliant on the voice of just a few.
- 4.3 We will develop and promote a range of tailored and outcome focussed engagement activities that aim to capture a representative view on the services that we provide.
- 4.4 We will ensure that our Scrutiny Framework is fit for purpose and provides opportunities for customers to work with us, challenge us, and hold us to account.
- 4.5 We will adopt a blend of both traditional and digital engagement solutions to maximise our reach and promote the value of customer engagement and its impact on our services.
- 4.6 We will ensure that we have colleagues who are empowered to listen to and understand customer feedback to embed a customer focussed culture.

5. Training & Support

- 5.1 We have a dedicated Customer Engagement Team who will provide guidance and support for both colleagues and customers to ensure that we get the most out of our engagement activities.
- 5.2 We will ensure that our engagement activities are accessible and appropriately facilitated.
- 5.3 Formal groups will be provided with the relevant support, coaching and training that will allow for effective engagement, and will give them the tools to hold us to account.
- 5.4 Timely and appropriate information will be provided to allow customers to fully participate.

6. Expenses, Rewards & Incentives

- 6.1 Expenses that are incurred because of engagement activities (travel, communication, subsistence and any caring expenses for example) will be reimbursed in line with our Expenses and Incentives procedure.
- 6.2 At times we may offer incentives and rewards linked to engagement activities.

7. Equality

- 7.1 We utilise a range of engagement approaches at Onward and will continuously seek out new methods to capture the views of all of our customers.
- 7.2 We will identify any under-represented groups of customers and put measures in place to proactively respond to any gaps and remove and barriers that may prevent engagement.

8. Measuring Impact

- 8.1 We will regularly report on the outcomes and impact of our engagement activities via our newsletters, website, annual reports and social media.

9. Responsibility and Monitoring

- 9.1 The Customer Experience Director will be accountable for ensuring that this policy is implemented and complied with, and the Customer Engagement Manager will be responsible for its implementation.
- 9.2 All Onward colleagues will have a responsibility for capturing the voice of the customer.
- 9.3 Engaged customers will ensure that the policy is being adhered to via regular scrutiny and review.

Linked documents:	Onward Scrutiny Framework Onward Customer Training Plan Onward Customer Expenses and Reward Procedure Onward Engaged Customer Code of Behaviour
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