Tenant & Resident Engagement Strategy 2023-2026

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RIGHT:
1. Neighbourhood litter picking
2. Getting tenant feedback
3. Community Big Lunch

Introducing our Strategy - empowering tenants and residents

RIGHT: Tenant celebration

Apex is committed to building and improving engagement with our tenants in general needs housing and those living in our supported living accommodation.

This strategy for 2023-2026 sets out how we will do this by giving all tenants and residents the opportunity to make a real difference and have their say in our day-to-day service delivery. We do this by putting tenants and residents at the forefront of our service improvement and engagement opportunities.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants, residents, board members and staff.

The engagement and communication aspects of the strategy will focus on our relationship with tenants and residents.

We will also continue to work closely with non-Apex residents, community and voluntary agencies and elected representatives to develop thriving communities.

Through this strategy, Apex aims to empower tenants and residents, promote good relations, ensure equality of opportunity, improve service delivery and support the development of sustainable communities.

The past few years has given rise to difficulties in how we traditionally engaged with our tenants and residents, however those difficulties also provided opportunities through digital platforms to welcome on board individuals who previously found it difficult to get involved.

As we move forward in an increasingly digital world, we will review the way we communicate with tenants and residents to ensure that we continue to meet their needs.

This strategy demonstrates our commitment to empowering our tenants and communities, as well as complying with regulatory requirements and best practice.

About Apex

We provide and maintain almost 7,000 high quality homes and provide support to more than 16,000 tenants and residents across Northern Ireland.

As a not-for-profit housing association, we work to social enterprise principles and employ almost 650 staff. Over the next three years, the number of Apex homes is expected to grow to around 8,000.

We provide:

- *General needs housing for families and single people*
- *Purpose-built accommodation for older people and families with complex needs*
- *Supported housing for people with mental ill health, learning disabilities, or alcohol/drug addictions; young people in need of support; and older people*
- *Housing support for vulnerable groups under the Supporting People programme*
- *Support services for tenants and the wider community through our community investment programme*
- *Community buildings managed by local community groups*

We work with others

Apex works with Newington Housing Association, using our joint resources for mutual benefit. We provide services on behalf of Apex Housing Association (Ireland).

High quality homes

almost **7,000**
high quality homes provided and maintained by Apex

Tenants and residents

more than **16,000**
tenants and residents live in Apex accommodation

Apex Staff

almost **650**
staff are employed by Apex

Our engagement achievements during 2020-2023

During 2020-2023, both the quality and quantity of our engagement improved, and we developed new ways for tenants and residents to participate.

The number of 'Connected Tenants' increased and we established our 'Tenant Panel', giving tenants a voice at the very top of the organisation.

Members of the Apex Tenant Panel

Tenant Feedback

81%

service satisfaction reported by tenants as part of Quality Assurance process

Community Events

more than **11,000**

people have engaged through events and activities

Connected Tenants

68

tenants became 'Connected Tenants' helping to organise local community events

Tenant Panel

The Tenant Panel was established in January 2022, providing a direct link between tenants and Apex Directors

Online Engagement

Hybrid approach was adopted - tenants and residents provided with devices and data to participate in online activities

Cook Along

A successful 'Cook Along' programme helped address tenant mental health and cost of living concerns

Strategic themes and objectives for 2023-2026

Over the next three years, our priorities are to empower tenants and residents and enable successful communities.

We will do this through engaging, supporting and informing tenants and residents; and providing a variety of opportunities for individuals to get involved.

THEME 1

Apex wants to **empower tenants and residents.**

Our objectives are to:

- *Provide opportunities for tenants and residents to share their views and influence decisions*
- *Enable tenants to scrutinise and monitor the services delivered by Apex*
- *Keep people appropriately informed*
- *Demonstrate good governance*

THEME 2

Apex wants to **enable successful communities.**

Our objectives are to:

- *Support tenants and residents to develop their communities*
- *Encourage engagement with tenants and residents of all ages*

How we support engagement

Apex offers support to encourage greater engagement by tenants and residents.

Some of the ways we offer support include:

- *providing resources to support engagement and activities;*
- *supplying tablets with mobile data to facilitate online engagement;*
- *providing transport or covering expenses; and*
- *supporting tenants to access training.*

Ways for tenants and residents to get involved - 'Menu of Options'

Our 16,000+ tenants and residents are encouraged and enabled to engage with Apex and their community in a variety of ways. Our 'Menu of Options' allows tenants and residents to engage in a way that best suits them.

Options include responding to surveys, attending community information events or scheme meetings; or joining the 'Interested Tenant Register'.

Connected Tenants
Tenants who want to be more actively involved in their community and with Apex are supported as a 'connected tenant', with help and regular updates from their Tenant Engagement Officer.

Connected tenants can be as involved as they wish and can choose one or more of the following options.

Engage with Apex as an individual

Tenant & Resident Surveys
Have your say on a range of service areas by completing our surveys.

Community Events
Attend events throughout the year to find out what's happening in your area, e.g. fun days.

Interested Tenant Register
Join your local register of tenants to get notifications for events and meetings in your area, or at Apex.

Everyday Conversations
Your day-to-day conversations with front line staff will be captured and used to improve services.

Scheme Meetings
Supported living tenants and residents can find out what's happening, provide feedback and ask questions.

Estate Walkabouts
Join Apex staff on estate walkabouts to highlight areas where there is room for improvement.

Event Organiser
Co-ordinate fun days, events or days away for your community.

Meet the Manager Events
Meet senior management to share your views on the supported living service provided to your loved ones.

Estate walkabouts take place annually

Ways for tenants and residents to get involved - 'Menu of Options'

continued

Further levels of engagement
Connected tenants also have the option to get involved as part of a feedback group, or at community level.

Connected tenants can become a member of the Tenant Network, joining other connected tenants at quarterly meetings to represent the views and interests of their communities.

The Tenant Panel provides an additional level of engagement that offers members the opportunity to have a voice at the top of the organisation.

Engage with Apex as part of a feedback group

Apex's community engagement team provides opportunities to join small tenant groups focused on helping to improve Apex's services:

Focus Groups/Service Reviews
Join others to discuss Apex's services and help recommend improvements.

Quality Assurance
Contact Apex without revealing your identity and rate the service you receive. Training is provided.

Tenant-led Inspections
Help inspect a particular service to ensure it is of good quality and rate performance.

Tenant Editorial Group
Help to plan and review content for the Apex Observer.

Engage with Apex at Community level

Apex's Tenant Network and local tenants' associations provide ways to engage with Apex at community level:

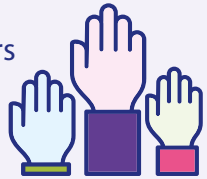
Tenant Network
Join Apex's 'Tenant Network' and represent the views and interests of your community.

Tenants' & Residents' Groups
Establish or join a tenants' or residents' group to represent the views and interests of where you live.

Engage with Apex at Board level

The Tenant Panel is a team of residents from Apex's neighbourhoods. They have a voice at the very top of the organisation, helping to shape future plans and quality of services.

Tenant Panel
Join other tenant panel members to meet with Apex Directors to discuss issues and identify areas for improvement.



Delivering the Strategy

To ensure this strategy is delivered successfully, we will focus on meaningful and timely communication; continuous evaluation; and the provision of adequate resources and support.

Information and communication

We want to ensure that the information provided to tenants is meaningful and up-to-date. We will do this through:

The Apex Observer and Tenant Engagement Magazine
The Apex Observer is the main publication used to inform tenants, residents and stakeholders about service developments, changes and performance.

The tenant engagement magazine provides tenants and residents with specific updates in relation to tenant engagement activities. Both publications are produced twice a year - in the summer and winter.

Tenant Manual and my.apex.org.uk (tenant portal)
These are available to all tenants signing up for a new home and contain a range of information about being an Apex tenant. Both provide useful information around tenancy matters, repairs and maintenance and useful contact details.

Annual Report
Every year, Apex produces an annual report detailing how we have performed over a variety of service areas.

The information is based on data we submit to the Department for Communities and also highlights areas that are of interest to tenants such as new homes, repairs and rent levels.

Annual celebration event
An annual event is arranged to celebrate the work of tenants, residents and staff and to showcase the great tenant engagement work that has taken place throughout the year for both general needs and supported living tenants.

Website and social media
Apex's website and social media is regularly updated with news stories, upcoming events and tenant engagement opportunities.

Listening
We review annually how well we listen to our tenants and residents, to make sure their voice is heard throughout Apex. We ask connected tenants for their feedback on how well we are responding to requests from tenants and residents.

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Delivering the Strategy
continued

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Regular updates from staff
We ensure every Apex department recognises the importance of regular and timely communication, so that tenants and residents see the value in reporting issues or concerns to us. We promote clear and responsive two-way communication between tenants and staff.

Inclusivity
We ensure equal opportunity to all by providing materials in different formats and languages on request.

Menu of Options
We offer a menu of options to allow tenants choose the level of engagement that suits them.

Monitoring and review

We will continuously monitor and periodically evaluate the success of this strategy. We will do this through:

Quarterly Progress Report
Progress on delivering the Tenant & Resident Engagement Strategy and annual action plan is reported quarterly to our Housing Management Committee which is attended by senior managers, board members and two Connected Tenants.

Progress is also reported annually through the Apex Annual Report.

Tenant Engagement Report
An annual tenant engagement report is produced to celebrate the work of tenants, residents and staff and to recognise their achievements throughout the year and this is reported to the Housing Management Committee and Connected Tenant Network on an annual basis.

Resources and support

To ensure the successful delivery of the Tenant & Resident Engagement Strategy, we will:

- Continue to develop modern and flexible communication methods, such as online services, to ensure information is accessible to all;
- Continue to provide a dedicated team to develop Connected Tenant engagement opportunities;
- Offer training opportunities to all those involved to develop their knowledge, skills and capacity; *and*
- Engage with the Department for Communities and Supporting Communities to ensure that good practice is promoted and enables us to deliver positive engagement and outcomes for tenants and residents.

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