



PRIMA
GROUP

**Customer
Engagement Policy**

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Customer Engagement Policy

1 Aim of the Policy

Prima Group's mission statement is "Putting customers and communities first". To deliver this Prima needs to demonstrate its commitment to customer involvement, enabling all customers to be engaged in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods, shaping service delivery and to ensure that the customer voice is heard. This policy seeks to place our customers at the heart of Prima, setting out how Prima will hear a wide range of diverse voices to enhance, shape and improve services and to influence decisions. In this way Prima can be sure that customer involvement makes a real difference to the way it delivers services.

This policy sets out the Prima Group's commitment to customer engagement and gathering feedback, the range of options it will use to inform, consult and engage, and how it will support customers to engage and get involved.

2 Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to all of the Prima Group's residents and customers, the term 'customer' is used to describe anyone who lives in Prima Group homes and accesses its services. It covers more than just those who are Prima Group tenants, such as family members who live in Prima homes, leaseholders, those in supported housing, applicants for homes, and those who may have bought their homes.

It is important that Prima engages with all those people who live in areas where Prima work and who access services it provides that affect them and their neighbourhood.

Prima wants to increase the number and widen the spectrum of customers who engage with us. We want to ensure customers voices from different communities, cultures and backgrounds engage with Prima and that we hear a diverse mix of voices. We encourage, for example, younger customers, those of black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, people living with a disability, and anyone from a minority group to work with us so we have as wide a variety as possible of experiences we can engage with and involve.

3 Policy Statement

Engaging with customers is the right thing to do, using customer feedback to improve services and make changes based on a diverse range of customers' views means Prima will be a landlord of choice, delivering on our mission to put customers first.

Prima welcomes the opportunity to hear from a diverse range of customers, through formal and informal ways and at a pace that suits them, this can be as individuals or as members of

a group. Prima believes that customer engagement is essential, it shows how we are accountable to our customers and will help us be more efficient and effective. The focus on gathering feedback from all customer engagement activities will ensure Prima understands what its customers want and need, and knows their views of the services Prima provide, so its listens, learns and then responds effectively.

Not only is engaging with a wide variety of customers the right thing to do, it is also a key part of how Prima complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#). This has specific requirements on customer involvement and the co-regulation approach, making transparency and accountability to customers a key requirement.

4 Why do we involve customers?

Customers are interested in knowing about and influencing the work Prima do, and many enjoy the opportunity to get involved and make a difference. Customers benefit from getting involved and engaging with Prima as it:

- can result in an increase in customer satisfaction.
- enables them to hold Prima to account for its services.
- provides the opportunity to influence policies so that they meet the needs of customers.
- can deliver improvements in services and see the difference they make.
- gives the opportunity to build skills and knowledge about housing and the wider work we do.
- develops and builds their understanding of how Prima works.
- enables a better understanding of policies and their impact on communities.
- provides the opportunity to work on projects that improve communities.

Gaining views and involving a diverse range of customers in our work is vital for Prima to understand their needs, expectations and aspirations. Working alongside customers and using their feedback helps Prima Group to improve and enhance its services, so we get things right for customers. Prima will work with its customers to review and change the ways to get involved to ensure it is offering the right levels of involvement to benefit them and the organisation.

5 Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

As well as the wider benefits of customer engagement for those who access our services, this policy helps us meet the RSH's [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#). In summary it requires Prima to:

- Support its customers to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment.

- Support the formation and ongoing activities of resident and customer panels, building their capacity to be more effectively involved.
- Provide performance information to support effective scrutiny by customers of our performance, including publication of an annual report.
- Consult with customers on local offers for service delivery, which we do through their Neighbourhood Plans.
- Consult with customers on any significant changes to management arrangements and on their involvement in governance and scrutiny.
- Demonstrate how we understand and respond to customers' diverse needs in the way they provide services and communicate.

In addition, Prima has gone further, committing to meeting the National Housing Federation's "Together with Tenants Charter", to strengthen its relationship with its customers, be more accountable and transparent, hear the customer voice and give customers more oversight of the Group's work.

The ways Prima Group will show how we meet the Involvement & Empowerment Standard, and the Together with Tenants Charter is shown in section 10 of this document, 'Making sure we do what we say.'

6 Prima Promise – Customer Engagement

Prima Group's promise to hear the customer's voice and deliver meaningful engagement can be summarised as:

Prima will seek and value the voice of customers and ensure customers feel listened to on the issues that matter to them.

Prima will deliver on this promise, by:

- **Ensuring customers have a wide range of opportunities to be involved** – providing a range of meaningful engagement activities that will enable and empower customers to shape feedback on services. New technology will also be used to provide a greater choice in how feedback can be shared and Prima will learn from best practice to keep improving customer engagement opportunities.
- **Showing customers how they have helped Prima improve services** – listening to customer feedback and learning from this where things could be better. Prima will share where it has made changes following customer feedback and consultation. This will be on the Group's website, newsletters and as part of an annual report.
- **Being transparent and enabling scrutiny of its performance, policies, standards, delivery and complaints** – sharing performance information and providing opportunities for customer scrutiny exercises on issues that are important to them.

- **Supporting and building capacity for Prima engaged customers** – providing support and resources to enable them to be as fully engaged as possible, for example arranging training, covering travel costs and expenses, support in learning new skills or further developing existing skills. We will also take positive action to support diverse groups in being involved, establishing a youth group or a group representing BAME customers where this is needed for example. Where customers are keen to increase their level of involvement we will support them in taking the next step, should they wish to progress to being a Customer or Group Board member.
- **Working with customers to keep them safe and their homes decent** – put in place a way to monitor building safety and the standard of Prima homes that can be quality checked by customers.
- **Engaging with communities and partners** – work alongside partners and communities to deliver community initiatives based on needs and insight, looking for opportunities to learn from good practice.

7 Role of Colleagues

Customer engagement responsibilities are a part of everyone’s job and Prima will promote positive engagement and build colleagues capacity in doing this well. So no matter what the job, colleagues will have to regularly ask themselves:

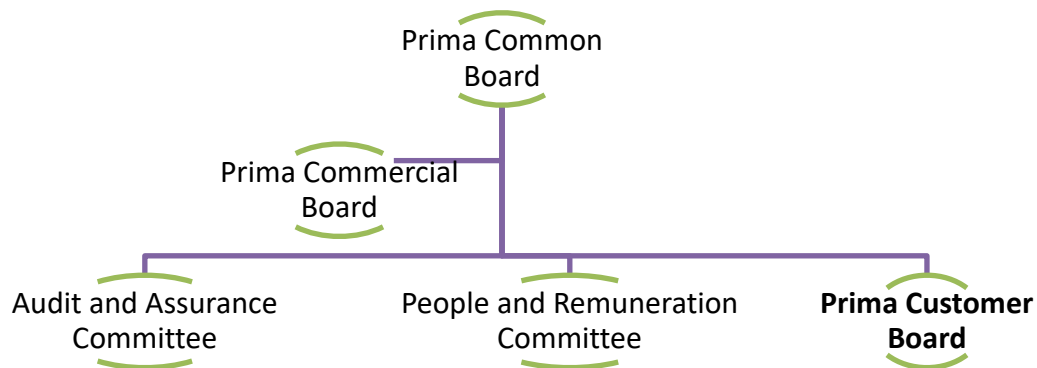
- Who should I consult in relation to the job I am trying to do?
- How can customers experience help to improve the service I deliver?
- Can I offer customers more choice?
- How do other service providers compare to me?
- How can I secure input from a range of customers that reflects the makeup of those using the service I provide?
- Do I need to update customers or let them know what has changed?

Having asked these questions, employees will then have to act on the answers, converting these into team and individual actions. This will link back to Prima’s corporate objectives.

8 Governance Structure

Board and Committees

Prima Group has one Board of Management and four sub committees:



The Board are responsible for the overall running of the Group, making strategic decisions at the highest level. All Board Members are selected based on their skills.

There are four Group Committees/sub-Boards, that focus in more detail on specific areas:

- Prima Commercial Board.
- Audit and Assurance Committee.
- People and Remuneration Committee.
- Prima Customer Board.

Anyone can apply to become Group and Commercial Board Members and will be selected dependent upon their specific skills, however, only those who live in our homes can apply to become a member of the Prima Customer Board.

Prima Customer Board

The Prima Customer Board is an integral part of the governance structure, and reports directly into the Prima Common Board. The Chair of the Customer Board also attends Common Board to ensure a direct and effective link between the two is in place. The views of the Customer Board will be fed into Common Board through members attendance and a direct reporting line through the Chair. Reports related to the Consumer Standards will be considered by the Customer Board in advance of the Common Board, to ensure these matters are always considered by customers first.

The Chair of Customer Board is an appointee of the Common Board, based on their skills and experience. General membership is made up of tenants and those who live in Prima homes, shared owners and leaseholders. The Customer Board has formal terms of reference and members follow the Prima Group's Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Customer Board is to provide the Common Board with assurance that the Consumer Standards are being met and that services offer value for money to customers.

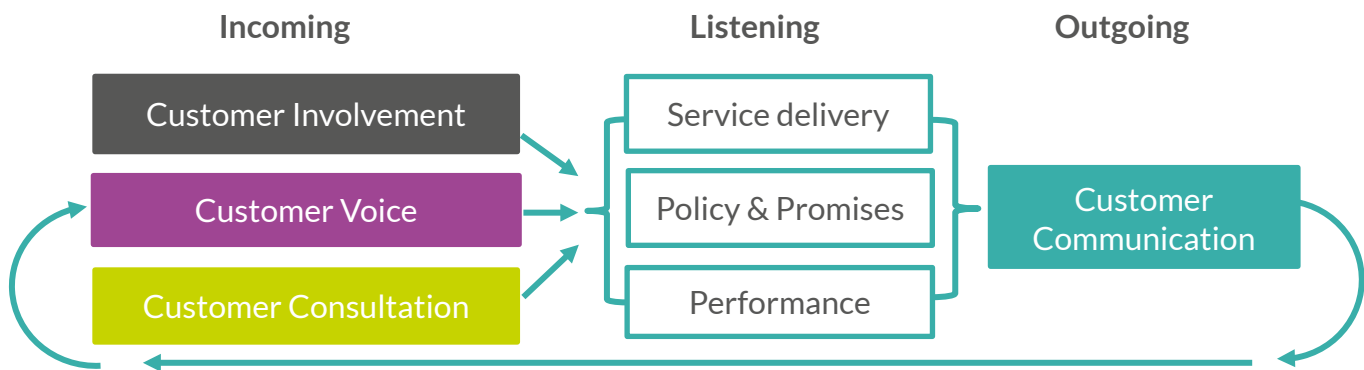
The role of the Customer Board is to be involved in influencing decisions about how services are delivered, review consultations, provide oversight and review of services, and

monitor and review key performance indicators and customer feedback. This in turn may result in the Customer Board commissioning a scrutiny exercise to review services in more detail, to carry out desktop reviews or request mystery shopping. The Scrutiny Panel will report the findings of their scrutiny exercises to the Customer Board.

The Customer Board will be asked to approve customer facing policies, as well as the tenants annual report and other key communication to customers. In addition to overseeing Stage 1 complaint performance, Customer Board members alongside Board Members will be asked to sit on complaint panel hearings that are escalated to Stage 2 and will consider trends in relation to complaints.

9 Customer Engagement Model

Prima customers are all different, their varied lifestyles and interests impact on their ability to influence the Group's work. With this in mind, Prima needs to offer a menu of ways that people can use to let it know what they think and in how it communicates, enabling customers to give as little or as much time as they want to. Whatever they choose, Prima needs to ensure their voice is heard, uses their feedback to improve and communicates this openly and transparently.



The menu shown on the next page sets out the range of opportunities currently available. It also shows the communication channels Prima use to inform and update customers, where they can access information about what Prima does and how well it is doing. Where we find new channels and ways of being involved are developed or brought to our attention by customers we will add these to the menu of available options.

We will support all who wish to be involved with us and engage with us. Where there may be barriers to being involved, we will do what we can to overcome these.

	Customer Involvement	Customer Consultation	Customer Voice	Customer Communication
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Board Scrutiny – reality checks Tenant and Resident Groups Street Reps Digital groups Formal Meetings Youth Groups Diversity Groups Neighbourhood Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters/email Surveys and consultation – Prima Voices Drop-ins Community clean ups Door knocking Neighbourhood Plans Community Events Regeneration Plans Formal notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone surveys Text message surveys Satisfaction Index (CSI) Focus Group Social media Onsite feedback/visits Complaints Informal dissatisfaction Door knocking Low level ‘hum’ Customer insight and profiling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Letter/postcard E-mail newsletter monthly Text updates Magazine 2 per year Annual Report Social media updates Customer App Online communities Local forums/events
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged customers Local customers Tenant and Resident Groups Community Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged customers Local customers Tenant and Resident Groups Community Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers Targeted groups Targeted locations
TI&E Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of policies and strategic priorities Making decisions on how services are delivered Setting standards Scrutiny Panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant change in management arrangements Formal Consultation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of opportunities to influence and be involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on delivery of standards, complaints and performance Accessible, relevant and timely information on choices and accessing services

Customer Involvement and Consultation

Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Panel will be asked to carry out distinct pieces of work by the Customer Board, looking into more detail at services areas and customers experience of how Prima works. Their role is to reality check what Prima does, carrying out desk-top reviews, mystery shopping, shadowing and other ways of getting closer to see how services are working in practice. Membership will be made up of people who live in our homes, their approach to scrutiny should consider the wider impact on all tenants and residents of how we work and meet customer needs.

Tenant & Resident Associations (TARA's) and Street Reps

Prima Group encourages the formation of TARA's by providing financial and developmental support to groups of tenants and residents. These groups will usually deal with a specific area or neighbourhood, at a local level. Grants are available for groups to bid for where small amounts of funding will help with reaching the groups objectives. Where Prima only has a small number of homes, Prima welcomes input from Street Reps or Block Reps, who work with Prima as individuals but on behalf of their street or block.

Informal Neighbourhood Groups

Problem solving groups are often formed to address particular issues in areas. Prima will support these groups where there is a local issue that needs addressing. Grants are available for groups to bid for where small amounts of funding will help with reaching the groups objectives. Prima encourages the development of informal neighbourhood groups who will work with Prima to develop neighbourhood plans or feedback on local issues, this may include:

- Input from other stakeholders.
- Input from other service providers.
- Input from the voluntary sector.
- Input from the private sector.
- Profiling capacity within the neighbourhoods for involvement that may then springboard tenants for further training, job opportunities and employability.

Neighbourhood Walkabouts

Regular walkabouts give customers the opportunity to influence how communal areas are maintained and improved and highlight wider issues, other than just housing, that may impact on an area. Customers are invited to attend with officers, contractors and sometimes with elected representatives.

Customer Voice – Prima Voices

Prima recognises that not everyone wants to come to a meeting or join a group, so it has a range of other ways to engage customers who do not wish to be formally involved, giving them an opportunity to have their views heard. These include:

- Surveys – telephone, email, digital and text.
- Online social media (Twitter, Facebook etc.).
- Focus Groups.
- Onsite feedback/visits.
- Door knocks and neighbourhood walkabouts.
- Consultations – telephone, email, digital and text These can be on an ad hoc basis or through joining our ‘Prima Voices’ group where we’ll ask you around 4-6 times a year to complete a short survey for us.
- Community events.
- Clean up events.

Prima will also use its satisfaction and customer relationship management records to see if there are common or repeated issues, areas of interest or concern to customers. Prima recognises that it receives valuable customer feedback all the time in its regular daily interactions with customers, when they phone or message the Group, or when it meets with them in their home for example. This type of informal feedback gives Prima useful customer insight and helps it get a feel of how things are going across all service areas and where it may need to make changes to services.

Incentives

Everyone’s time and effort should be recognised and there will be times when we offer incentives or rewards to our customers who engage with us. This would usually be in the form of gift vouchers for those who are actively involved in a project, or entry into a prize draw for gift vouchers for more ad hoc involvement activity. We also offer training and CV development for those who are more regularly involved with us.

Communication

Prima aims to be transparent and to keep customers informed on its work and how it is performing. Prima will communicate with customers in a variety of ways, including email, letters, text messages, social media updates, website updates, reports, brochures, information pamphlets, leaflets and newsletters. Our website is the main place for sharing news, service information, policies and performance information.

A customer handbook is provided to all customers when they sign up for a tenancy, which includes information on customer engagement. A separate publication will be made available for leaseholders. Newsletters will be produced twice a year by post and at least

quarterly by email, these will include information on local events, changes to services, complaint and performance information.

All information will be available in a variety of formats to ensure that it is:

- Relevant and at the level of detail appropriate for the customers' needs.
- In a readable typeface and print size – our website includes details of how to change settings for those with visual impairment.
- In an attractive design and format, and inviting to read.
- In clear, concise, plain language.
- Translated where appropriate – our website includes a link to Google translate
- Available in formats suitable for customers with specific communication needs, e.g. large print, Braille, picture format for people with learning disabilities, electronic for use with screen readers.

10 Making sure we do what we say

Prima will record and report back to customers the impact that their feedback and engagement has had. This is so customers can see that Prima is listening and acting on the feedback they give, and so Prima can see that our customer engagement is effective. Prima will keep customers updated with this on its website, newsletters and in quarterly updates to the Customer Board. The Tenants Annual Report will be published each year that will detail the impact of customer engagement and involvement as well as performance and financial information.

Colleagues who carry out engagement exercises will be required to capture the details of how customers voices were heard. These will be reported to Customer Board. This should evidence where:

- Engagement and involvement has resulted in a change for the better.
- Customers think services have improved.
- Prima is contributing to building an attractive, sustainable neighbourhood.

Monitoring will occur at:

- Employee one to ones and appraisal sessions.
- Team meetings.
- Resident and customer meetings.
- Prima Customer Board.
- Prima Common Board.

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but as a minimum of every three years.

An annual self-assessment is carried out to measure our delivery against the Consumer Standards, including the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This is reported

to Customer Board and Common Board. This assessment includes actions for the future, where more work or a different approach is needed for example.

The Key Performance Indicators shown in the Charter for Social Housing Residents will be shared on the Group's website and benchmarked again with comparative organisations.

11 Other things to consider

11.1 Prima policies and procedures

This policy must be read together with:

- The Prima Group's Code of Conduct.
- Customer Board Terms of Reference.
- Customer Standards.
- Performance Management Framework.
- Communications Framework.
- Customer Board Training Plan.

11.2 Legislation and Guidance

A number of pieces of legislation and guidance have informed this policy including:

- RSH Consumer Standards.
- Government's Social Housing White Paper – "Charter for Social Housing Residents".
- NHF Together with Tenants Charter.

12 Consultation

This policy has been consulted on with TPAS to check that it meets the areas that they would expect to see in terms of good practice in customer engagement in June 2021 and then in June 2022 with Prima Customer Voice Board.

13 Equality Impact Assessment

Prima welcomes feedback on this policy and the way it operates. It is interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that this policy may have on any groups in respect of gender or marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or other characteristics.

We will support all who wish to be involved with us and engage with us, where there may be barriers to being involved we will do what we can to overcome these. Some examples of how we will enable engagement include, but not restricted to, covering the cost of childcare so carers can attend a meeting; provide a different device if an iPad is unsuitable for reading

papers; use our profiling data to see if we need to produce a survey in a different language; only hold meetings in accessible venues, or use a portable hearing loop.

The policy has been screened to determine equality relevance for the following equality groups: gender or marital status, race, disability, maternity or pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or other characteristics.

14 Data Protection

All handling of personal data will be conducted under the Group's Data Protection Policy ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal data that is inappropriately accessed or disclosed may constitute a data breach. The GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requires organisations to keep a record of all data breaches and, where the breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the organisation must notify the Information Commissioner within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. If the data breach results in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, those individuals must be notified without undue delay.

15 Document Control Data

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