



## CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2022/2025





# Contents

1.	Introduction, Vision and Strategic Aims	xx
2.	Moving Forward	xx
3.	Strategic Aims in our Customer Engagement Strategy	xx
4.	Strategic Context	xx
5.	Driving us forward	xx
6.	Value for Money	xx
7.	Consultation on this strategy	xx
8.	Risk Management	xx
9.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Targets	xx
10.	Review of this strategy	xx
11.	Links to Nehemiah training academy	xx
12.	Summary of our menu for involvement	xx
13.	Link to Policies and Other Documents	xx



## INTRODUCTION, VISION AND STRATEGIC AIMS

The Government's Social Housing White Paper outlines an enhanced regulatory regime intended to improve safety, transparency, and customer service, with effective input from customers. Nehemiah as a landlord has a responsibility to extend beyond quality homes to include the quality of the neighbourhood, through managing allocations and tackling antisocial behaviour.

Further to the Social Housing White Paper Report being delivered by Nehemiah's Chief Executive to the Board on 3 December 2020, this customer engagement strategy seeks to address and respond to the seven main provisions within the White Paper [as part of the Social Housing Charter] and the steps that Nehemiah will be taking to measure up to its requirements by way of a preliminary action plan (outlined in Appendix I).

We know customer involvement can enhance our business, can make us more successful, responsive and helps us understand the risks and challenges in our neighbourhood. The opinions of customers are essential to future proofing our service provision, predicting future trends and planning for change.

Through listening, engaging and developing our relationship with customers and acting on customer opinion, Nehemiah will achieve customer satisfaction and a commercial advantage whilst also delivering value and outcomes for customers in the services that we provide. We will demonstrate this by delivering a strategy which delivers real accountability to customers and enables customers to engage with us in a way which suits their busy lives.

We know customers give us a unique insight into what is happening in our neighbourhoods and can help us design services to maximise their satisfaction, reduce waste and support the delivery of value from the investment we make in our neighbourhoods and services.

We want to hear a reflective and diverse customer voice from across our business which goes beyond traditional methods of engagement, is dynamic and interesting for customers and enables those customers who do not have much time to engage to choose how their views can impact on our services.

Our priority moving forward will be to engage with hard-to-reach customers. This is to ensure we have representation from customers across all our tenures for example:

- Customer in General Needs properties (Working Tenants) and
- Sheltered Housing Tenants (during the pandemic)

We plan to reach more customers using technology including social media, making better use of our website for customer feedback and sharing video clips of meetings to maximise the opportunities for customers to get involved. The customer engagement strategy sets out our commitment to involve customers in governing, shaping and supporting us to improve our services and to grow.

We recognise that engagement of customers is vital to the success of our organisation, which is why we are developing a variety of new ways for customers to influence services at a local and strategic level. This will be reviewed with our tenants throughout the year and as part of the Nehemiah Tenants Panel.



**Our values and mission remain at the center of the service we deliver:**

### 1.1 Our vision

Is to be the leading independent BAME housing provider in the UK delivering a range of services which are unsurpassed in the community, embedded within our values.

### 1.2 Our mission

Is to build successful, sustainable and diverse communities by providing housing and well-being services in a culturally sensitive way to our current and our future customers.

### 1.3 Our values:

#### Passionate

we are passionate about empowering people to build communities alongside homes

#### Diversity

we believe diversity is a strength in every aspect of our work and the communities around us

#### Integrity

we act with integrity in all that we do even when that is not the easy option

#### Sustainable

we believe our actions and their impact must always be Sustainable

### 1.4 Nehemiah's Objectives

Nehemiah will passionately pursue the following objectives whilst focusing on the importance of customer engagement:

- a. To be effective and grow
- b. Deliver excellent customer services with respect
- c. Strong governance, finance and risk management
- d. Invest in our Homes
- e. People Development and Well being



Nehemiah has a portfolio of over 1,240 properties serving the multicultural African Caribbean, Asian, Irish and European communities within the West Midlands. The Association provides homes for single people, families, couples and elderly people in Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. As a landlord, we pride ourselves on being accountable and accessible to the communities we serve. As a support and wellbeing provider, we assist people to obtain and maintain tenancies, and make a major contribution in the prevention of homelessness. We have responded to the needs of our customers by providing large homes for those with extended families, specially designed homes for people with disabilities or specific religious/cultural needs, and energy efficient homes to minimise the impact of fuel poverty.

Nehemiah is committed to serving the community and aims to build it into a thriving social unit in which people of all ethnic backgrounds feel at home and valued. The provision of good, affordable housing is the platform from which the Association has committed itself to the community at large, conveying the idea of value and a sense of caring.

## 2. MOVING FORWARD WITH CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Our original target was to develop a sensible and extensive 'menu of engagement' to enable customers to participate at the level they chose, which caters for a variety of personal circumstances. We have a very small number of committed engaged customers but we need to increase participation.

We aimed to:

- Providing a variety of ways for customers to engage, in a way and at a level that suits their interests and their available time as volunteers and have an active and properly supported customer engagement structure including a menu of choices of engagement:
- Provided customers with regular high-quality information in appropriate formats and give customers opportunities to influence how our services are delivered.
- To satisfy customers with opportunities to influence decision-making and service delivery. Involving customers in a way that achieves continuous improvement and demonstrates value for money.
- Providing customers with access to high quality training to develop their confidence and skills not only to engage with us, but to equip them with skills for life and work.

- Enabling customers to hold our Board and staff to account in delivering services and in delivering this framework.

Moving forward we want to increase the contribution our customers have within the business. We want to encourage Nehemiah customers to engage and participate in key aspects across the business by:

- Continuing to encourage them to participate in the review of policies and procedures
- Asking them to assist us with recruiting staff
- Contributing to the review of Value for Money strategy/policy
- Encouraging feedback via surveys
- Participating when we tender new services by being part of the procurement process

This list is not exhaustive.

We will continue to use the 'pick and mix' menu of involvement to ensure customers can choose their level of engagement.



## 2.1 The Social Housing White Paper 2020

In line with the recent review of tenant involvement in housing associations, we will also use some of their key findings to enhance our customer engagement.

The Social Housing White Paper presents an opportunity to welcome a fresh perspective on current regulation. Despite this, delivering a quality service and safe homes will remain paramount as the place people call home should be fit for purpose, secure, dignified and diverse.

The paper sets out seven themes that focus on rebalancing the relationship between residents and landlords and ensuring a new and fairer deal for social housing residents:



1. To be safe in your home
2. To know how your landlord is performing
3. To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
4. To be treated with respect and this is backed by strong consumer regulation
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord, individually and collectively
6. To have good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
7. To be supported to take steps to home ownership

## 2.2 Nehemiah is proud to work with other landlords on joint projects:



### Care Provision

In response to customer feedback and demand Nehemiah continues to work with New Outlook Housing Association to deliver customer centered care provision through onsite care teams at two of its older person schemes. By working with New Outlook, Nehemiah has been able to improve its offer to our customers and improve health and well-being for those living in our older persons' schemes, enabling us to start discussions with health services about future funding opportunities. We will continue to work with New Outlook and develop other partnerships to address the change in customer needs and demands



### Doro Care UK Limited

Security comes as standard, which helps to support and enhance the opportunity for tenants to continue to live in their own homes and maintain an independent lifestyle. This was a service that was previously supplied by Hereford and has been moved to a new provider, Doro Care, whose mission is to help people to live independently by providing and using assistive technology solutions in telecare, with expert installation, calibration, maintenance, and full support.

Providing experienced and friendly advice, plus a full assessment, to ensure the best telecare to meet individual tenants' requirements. They offer a professional 24-hour monitoring system together with outreach support and mobile response for individuals and sheltered housing groups, consultancy and training safety and security solutions for the home and the workplace including lone worker protection, out-of-hours contact centre services for housing providers and local authorities.

## Axis



Nehemiah entered into partnership with Axis in 2019. This followed consultation with our tenants, where we looked towards a Value for Money option, whilst providing a quality property service and being able to support us with data in order to monitor and improve our service.

Axis works with some of the UK's largest building owners, landlords and facilities managers to provide strategic building repairs, planned maintenance and improvement across all property sectors.

Their aim is a continual commitment to work closely with Nehemiah to deliver a high standard of service, measuring the repairs performance and creating action plans for improvement.

## Nehemiah Academy



Establishing the Nehemiah Academy and Educational Support Programme (CAF) is a demonstration of Nehemiah's corporate responsibility to give back to the community. Operating at the heart of the communities, we want to raise levels of achievement and motivation to help people access the career and education opportunities they might not have believed were available to them.

Working in partnership with community organisations and educational establishments such as universities, colleges and schools, the Nehemiah Academy will involve graduate internships and work experience placements. As part of the initiative, the Charitable Aid Foundation will be able to offer grants up to £1,500 to help with course fees and study resources.





## 3

## STRATEGIC AIMS IN OUR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

We aim to create a customer engagement culture, which enhances our business outcomes, which delivers value to customers by maximising opportunities for dynamic feedback and one which we can evidence their views have been enthusiastically acted upon.

### The strategic aims are to:

- Support good governance through co-regulation and challenge VFM in our existing ways of working and the services that we provide.
- Create a culture which allows more and a broader range of customers to get involved in influencing our work.
- Ensure all customers can have a say, by introducing, developing and practicing a broader range of options, whether that be at the strategic level or in the neighbourhoods where people live.
- Build the capacity of customers to influence the perception of our services and satisfaction with the services that we provide.
- Enable customers to see the value of engagement through feedback and early action, where involvement delivers value for money and is outcome focused.
- Bring together the work on feedback, customer surveys and customer insight to align and maximise the views we hear from customers. We will also act on the areas for improvement that customers highlight and feedback on what we have done as a result of this.
- A need to embrace our aspiration and catch up with many other organisations, to engage with customers more digitally. This would mean optimising digital functionality for those customers who want to engage this way for example making better use of digital noticeboard at the schemes – this is focusing on feedbacks about services and involvement as opposed to how we manage our interaction with customers on a day-to-day basis.



### The emerging themes for the new strategy:

- Having a dynamic menu of opportunities that provide a variety of ways for customers to interact and engage with us.
- Actively involving tenants and customers in shaping and influencing how services are delivered, monitoring performance and reviewing value for money.
- Strengthening co-regulation and providing opportunities for customers to hold Nehemiah to account, typically through tenant scrutiny arrangements.
- Increasing the diversity and numbers of involved tenants and customers and measuring the impact and value for money of involvement active.

# 4. GOVERNANCE

**4.1** Regulators and commissioners of services are increasing their scrutiny on governance and so, our Boards are required to operate in a transparent way and be accountable to customers.

Our Regulatory standards requires a process of co-regulation requiring customer involvement in policy development, performance improvement, scrutiny, complaints, customer care, choice, and equalities across all areas of our work. Our services are now examined by customers. We are proud of their support and the way they challenge us to improve satisfaction.

## Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

ESG is important to Nehemiah in terms of housing provision, how we are governed and with whom we are able to acquire funding to invest in our properties. Nehemiah will be measuring its ESG performance using the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing in 2022 to assess how we are delivering on these positive outcomes for our tenants and wider stakeholders.

### Customer Involvement will ensure:

- Boards and committees receive regular reports on the impact of our customer engagement work, the way customers are engaged and precisely how we have listened to our customers feedback and the outcomes achieved as a result of customer engagement.



- Board Members and committee members who are customers will provide a link within the customer engagement structure, informing Boards of their views of involvement in services and holding the business to account for transparency and acting on our customer's input/opinion.
- Transparency and feedback are always encouraged and a quick response. Commentary through will be encouraged through social media platforms.
- Our regular panels for consultation for sheltered schemes and on scrutiny and complaints will hold the organisation to account for the delivery of the promises in this strategy.
- Tenant involvement in the governance of the organisation will be provided with the relevant training and development to assist them in their efforts to make a valuable contribution to the work of the business for the benefits of the wider tenant customer community.

## 4.2 Growth and sustainability

Our operating environment is one of growing housing need for energy efficient homes of the right size and with improved facilities as competition from the private sector increases and homes for life become less aspirational. Vibrant neighbourhoods and communities are equally important as the quality of housing, care, support and the other services we provide.

Funding for care and support services and assistance to improve health and wellbeing is under pressure. Nehemiah has experienced cuts in Supporting People funding from Local Authorities but has protected the promises made to customers as far as possible to reduce impact on the quality of life of our most vulnerable customers. This is increasingly challenging as we are reliant, in some areas, on the voluntary sector to fill gaps in activities for our older and most vulnerable clients.

Organisational development is rapid and corporate planning is being developed to be flexible, responsive and fit for purpose to meet changing business needs. Our services are now scrutinised by customers, which continue to challenge us to improve satisfaction.

Our future is bright, even at a time of great economic and social stress and we are proud of our responsible growth, our partnerships and the way our customers have supported us to tackle disadvantage in a positive way. We are proud our values have been influenced by customers and they tell us the way we impact positively or otherwise, in our communities. Customers can support us to learn, grow and sustain our neighbourhoods.

#### Customer Involvement will ensure:

- A commercial edge which supports property development growth and where customers can influence future services subject to ongoing charges.
- Reality checking and customer insight projects will review development and services to new and existing developments to enable service improvements.
- Staff and customer groups working with other agencies and clubs will contribute to our investment in communities where we will support local activities which enable us to work in partnership, hear about growth opportunities and sustain neighbourhoods to address issues as a "can do" landlord.

### 4.3 Inclusion and social value

Unemployment and financial inclusion are ongoing problems in our neighbourhoods. Programmes to alleviate disadvantage are being cut in our communities. The spending power of customers in communities is reducing, causing local businesses and facilities to close. Inequalities are increasing, not only in traditional equality act terms but in the exclusion of other groups in our communities. This is a major concern to our customers.



We have a fresh call to support our customers and communities into training, employment and to support access to low-cost finance, maximise benefits and educate customers on best use of energy, use of the internet and to rebuild their confidence.

Within our Neighbourhood Improvement Policy, we outline how we are committed to working with local community to make the decisions together that affect the environment of their neighbourhood, and deliver Nehemiah's Corporate objectives.

#### Customer Engagement will:

- Nehemiah aims to empower and encourage tenants to participate in and shape their neighbourhood to create places where people enjoy living. To ensure that Nehemiah combine the needs of preserving, protecting and maintaining open and green spaces with providing tenants with high quality neighbourhoods, and to fulfil our Mission Statement.
- Agree with tenants in the neighbourhood the style and frequency of consultation and communication throughout the project.
- Agree with individual tenants who wish to become involved, ways of doing so that suits their circumstances.
- Report the outcome of consultation back to the community in a clear and timely manner.

- Provide practical support to enable participation throughout the project. For example, transport or travel cost.
- Agree with tenants any future maintenance that will be required, the frequency and who is responsible.
- Enable and target diverse groups of customers to become involved throughout the engagement structure, building trust and offering training and support for those who are under-represented to participate.
- Ensure any customer commentary includes representatives who can consider the needs of a diverse customer base.
- Develop training through our Academy where customers will have the opportunity to get involved with operation of the business. Furthermore, understand, monitor and influence routes to further education, training and employment.
- Where our customers are in dispersed stock, or where other agencies lead on service provision, or where we have management agreements with other landlords which deliver engagement and other services, we will support them to involve our customers and we will build the confidence of our customer to engage with others.
- If we engage vulnerable customers to share with us their views on our support services, we can use this experience to gradually increase their self-confidence and resilience and reduce the pressure from homelessness and social services, moving customers on to less dependency and releasing resources to help others. e.g., 'You Said, We Did' outlined through our minutes following tenants meetings.
- To improve effectiveness and quality through the review of complaints and through Nehemiah's social media networks to provide great accessibility for customers online. Delivery increased value and efficiency with customer information.

## 5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) was replaced by Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in January 2018. Homes England is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It exists to accelerate the delivery of housing across England by using expertise and resources to drive positive market change, helping to improve neighbourhoods and grow communities.<sup>1</sup>

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regulates private registered providers of social housing to promote a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. Standards contain specific

expectations and the outcomes that providers are expected to achieve. Providers' boards and local authority councilors who govern service delivery are responsible for meeting the relevant standards and determining how this is done<sup>2</sup>. Nehemiah will use these standards identified by the regulators to form a base to measure how we engage with our customers.

One of the consumer standards is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (TIE) 2017 and expectations of landlord performance have been increased in the new regulatory framework. The TIE is a cross cutting standard for all landlord services. The standards contain specific expectations and the outcomes that providers are expected to achieve.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-england-strategic-plan-201819-to-202223>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>

<sup>3</sup> Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

For Tenant Involvement and Engagement standards and expectations see **Appendix 2**.

**Expectations from regulation, all met from this strategy includes:**

- A partnership between the Board, senior staff and the NTP Panel to review services important to customers and the Board.
- An opportunity offered for involvement in a Designated Complaints Panel (under the Localism Act 2011, enacted from April 2013).
- Influence strategic priorities through Customer Consultation panels.
- Influence on how housing related services are delivered, through engagement Influence in setting and monitoring standards by Customer Consultation panels and reality checkers.
- Making of recommendations on how performance can be improved.
- Specifying and monitoring local offers at Customer Consultation panels.
- The annual report to tenants reviewed by task and finish group and signed off by the Customer Consultation panel.
- The awareness of information on the right to manage.
- How tenants can access services and the service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices.
- Review of customer policies.



**The TIE applies as a cross cutting standard, requirements for customer involvement in the other standards will be considered by the groups:**

- Customer Care and choice, complaints, access and equality
- **Home** – decent homes and right first-time repairs, consultation on budgets, programmes and spend
- **Neighborhood and Community** – ASB and estate management and partnership working in neighbourhoods/communal areas
- **Tenancy** – fixed term tenure, allocations, mutual exchanges and homelessness
- **Rent** – affordable and social rent consultation
- **Value for Money** – stakeholder involvement and review of VFM plans and how to spend saving.
- **Governance and Financial Viability** – consulting on how customers should be involved in reviewing their own involvement in governance and influencing strategic objectives.
- The risks to landlords for non-compliance in co-regulation include:
  - The Housing Ombudsman (or Councilors, MPs or Designated Complaints Panel) may become involved in the non-delivery of standards or promises through the complaints process.
  - The HCA could enact tools still at its disposal including deep dive inspection, external audit, voluntary undertaking or more serious interventions.
  - The service of a notice of serious detriment on health and safety issues like failure to deliver statutory gas servicing.

## 5.1 Competition and pressure to merge for small Housing Association's

- There is a reputational and financial risk to the Boards to not have a fit for purpose and dynamic involvement structure in the competitive environment.
- The accommodation offer and demand for the core product of housing associations in some locations is a business risk. This is partly due to changes in benefit changes (the bedroom tax) but also due to the growth of and lowering of rents (in some cases) in the private sector market and their ability to negotiate with customers for larger accommodation within local housing allowances.
- The competitive environment is subject to greater challenges for innovation in a commercial setting. Getting client involvement right and being known for engagement excellence will equal or give a commercial edge over similar organisation. In a similar way, the engagement offer must be excellent to gain the trust of any future stock transfers or any management contracts and development opportunities which support Nehemiah to achieve growth.

It is essential that customer involvement in the business is targeted to engaging customers to support the focus on these issues. Customers can help the business consider access to our homes products; identify the accommodation offer; identify needs for management of accommodation and how Nehemiah encourage customers to stay in their homes and manages any that move on.

## 5.2 Welfare Reform

It has been over 5 years since the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 was introduced. During this period registered providers of social housing in England had to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year for 4 years and comply with maximum rent requirements for new tenancies. The introduction of welfare reforms, in particular the Bedroom Tax, linked to housing benefit has impacted on some of our General Needs housing tenants. We anticipated that this would impact on some of our most vulnerable tenants in receipt of benefit. However, the migration of people in receipt of benefit over to Universal Credit has not been as quick as we initially thought, and the pandemic has slowed this down. We are monitoring the roll out of Universal Credit closely and will offer help and support to Nehemiah tenants.

Supporting People funding cuts have impacted on the sustainability of Nehemiah's traditional supported housing provision and necessitated a restructuring of staff and service delivery.

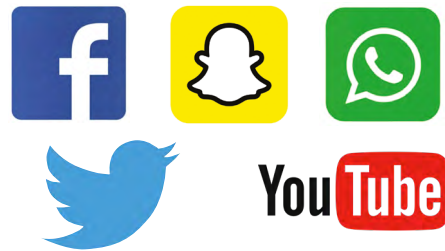
The new funding method for supported housing is estimated to start in April 2020 and apply to all new accommodation. It will be a type of social rent, funded through the welfare system and incorporating gross eligible rent and eligible service charges.

An estimated 90% of the current supported housing provision across the country will be kept within the welfare benefits system for funding rents (sheltered and extra care accommodation, and long-term housing). This is good news as concerns around Local Housing Allowance would have had an impact on the viability of our sheltered schemes.



### 5.3 Internal pressure for change

- Customer engagement needs to be focused on work to support business challenges, build better business intelligence on the competition, capture outcomes from customer engagement and to be proud to engage and consulting customers and see their real influence across the business.
- The numbers of involved customers are low. There is a need to increase both the amount of regularly involved customers and those that get involved on an adhoc basis.
- There is a need to offer a more varied menu for involvement including commentary on social media. This is to be more flexible and inclusive for our customers with busy lives.
- There is a need to acknowledge hard to reach customer groups to increase participation on all levels.
- To respond the social climate and to be flexible to re- access our ways to engage at any given time e.g. As a result of Covid 19 with social distancing and lockdown we reviewed our communication methods, for example increased contact with social media and WhatsApp.



## 6. DRIVING US FORWARD

### In this strategy we seek:

- A very different menu of involvement offering short term involvement, opportunities to simply comment and feedback through social media and web consultation as well as structured neighbourhood and formal group activities.
- To engage with 10% of our customers and to be constantly recruiting and supporting customers to engage. We recognise that this is an ambitious aim but the use of social media and other practices such as virtual panels will help us to achieve this.
- To make better use of our communal spaces in sheltered schemes which are under utilised. Also, to make better use of digital notice boards at schemes to inform customers of upcoming activities. This strategy will enable customer engagement that meets local need.
- To promote self-help. The opportunity to offer training and support through 'life, work and volunteering skills' to involved customers, by capacity building will tie in with the inclusion agenda and projects for financial inclusion, digital inclusion and pathways to work and access to the academy. Self-help will require a returned commitment from customers to engage in an involvement or neighborhood project.
- To increase customer participation by targeting hard to reach groups including general needs customers, young people and working customers. This also emphasizes the need to incorporate flexible engagement opportunities to suit the individual.

- To make better use of customer surveys as they have the potential to reach a wide number of customers and gather opinions on a service. This can be carried out online, by phone, through social media and via post.
- To support and enable our customers to exercise their right to influence and participate in identifying new ways of working together, by providing support to customers to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.
- To support customers individually and to raise any concern or make suggestions to improve or influence change.
- To regularly consult customers on the best way of involving customers in the governance and scrutiny of housing management services.
- To increase communication by holding two Nehemiah Tenant Panel meetings per quarter in different areas covered to maximise tenant participation. Also, for the customer engagement representative to attend residents meetings and Estate Walkabouts.

## 7 VALUE FOR MONEY

Customers are an important stakeholder and will be consulted in our production of an annual value for money statement. Customers will also support us to review policies, suggest service improvements and will hold us to account by scrutinising services.

### Economy

The total cost of the service for the financial year 2020/21 amounts to approximately £46,224.90 and includes staffing and the day-to-day costs of delivering the framework. This is a substantial and important investment.

In 2020/21 financial year we spent £11,528.90 on customer engagement excluding staffing, made up as follows:

Customer Engagement	
Marketing	10,044.01
Other (OO CE)	1,374.65
Travel & Subs (OO CE)	110.24
<b>Total Customer Engagement</b>	<b>11,528.90</b>

### Efficiency

Productivity, in terms of what we invest into Customer Involvement and the benefits partners receive back for the business, is addressed in this fresh strategy by a more flexible, dynamic customer involvement framework which holds staff to account and is more transparent to Nehemiah.

### Effectiveness

Qualitative and quantitative measurements of the service can be collected which show outcomes and progress in delivery. Key Performance Indicators are found later in this report. Our customer engagement representative now works closely with our tenants as part of the Nehemiah Tenant Panel, to gather feedback from surveys and other methods of engagement.

We previously carried out qualitative results that captured feedback as a result of engagement every 3 years. This was called the STAR customer surveys. We reviewed



this process and decided to look at surveys which were carried out annually as these would capture more up to date changes in the services we delivered. This would also help us to reflect our different types of tenure, especially those on short term tenancies in Supported Housing. The table below show the comparison between our previous Star survey and the current one introduced 2021:



**Comparison between different types of survey:**

Type of survey	Frequency	Benefits	Drawbacks
Traditional STAR	Annual or every two to three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good overall perception survey with a broad range of residents</li> <li>• Consistent approach, so good for trend analysis and benchmarking</li> <li>• Can ask more questions, although this can affect the response rate</li> <li>• Bigger sample lets you do sub-group analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time lag between any issues and finding out about them</li> </ul>
Tracker	At regular, more frequent intervals, e.g., quarterly, three times a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good overall perception survey with a range of residents</li> <li>• More regular contact, so better to monitor trends in views and impact of changes</li> <li>• Still contact a big enough sample over the year Actionable more quickly than traditional STAR surveys</li> <li>• Quotas help to hear from a representative sample Sub-group analysis advisable at year end</li> <li>• Responses over the whole year can be collated for benchmarking purposes and deeper analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer questions, though this can boost the response rate</li> <li>• Smaller samples each period, so higher margin of error each time (though reasonable at year end)</li> </ul>

## Customer Consultation on VFM – What our customers said:

What customers would like to see reflected in the use of resources at Nehemiah:

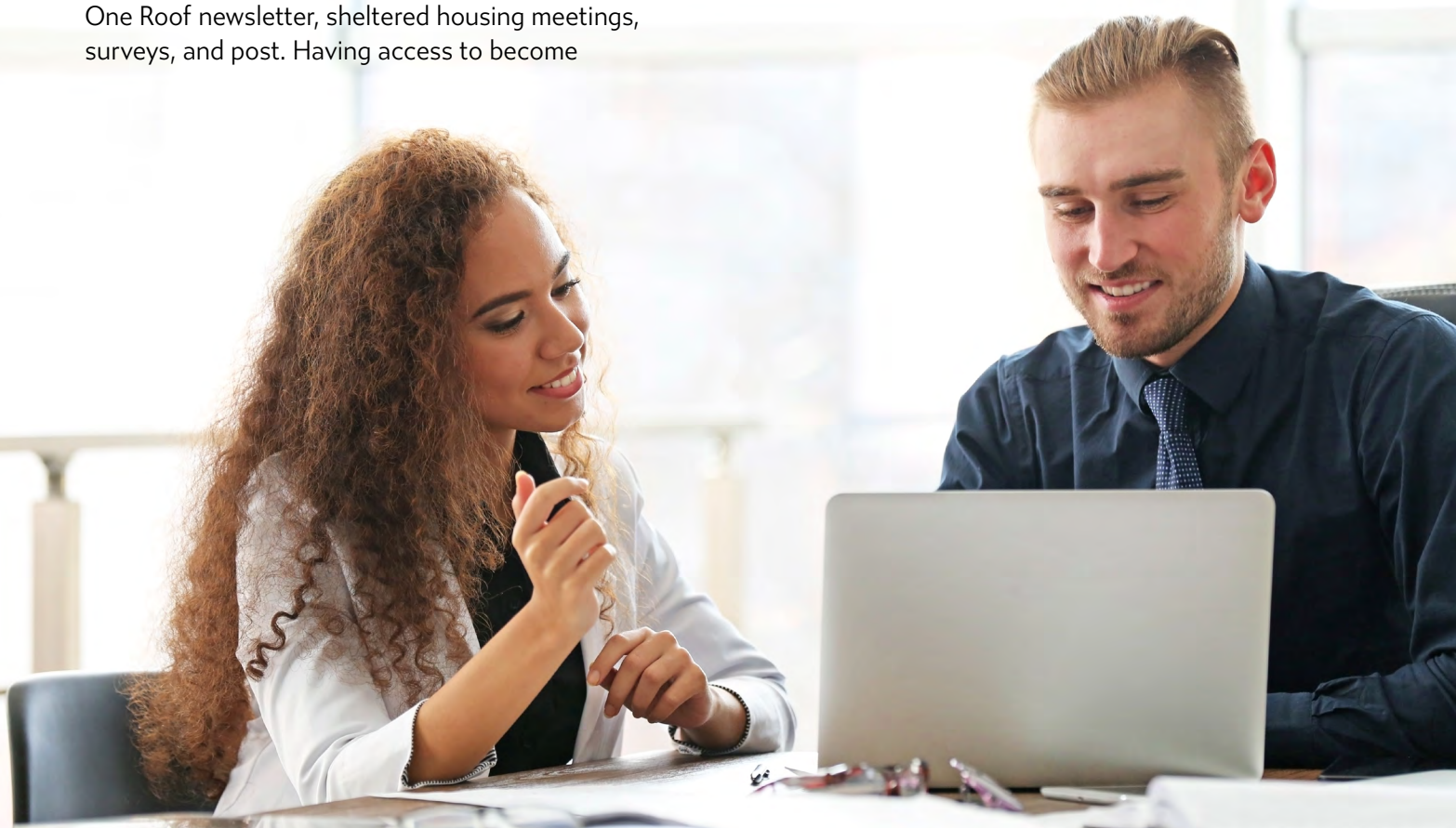
- A VFM review of the current services (quality and cost) formerly subject to Supporting People grant from the LA and now subsidised by Nehemiah (for retirement living schemes) and how this resource might be maximised for the benefit of all tenants.
- Promotion of access to adaptations funding for tenants and how they might access this.
- How Green technology might be used to reduce fuel bills.
- A review of the usage of satisfaction surveys and changes to services made as a result of this.
- Nehemiah to be proactive in pushing out updates and information on the forthcoming Universal Credit and how this will impact on those affected – letting people who are not affected know too.
- The on-going improvement and upgrading of homes.
- The increase in smaller accommodation being built – which will help those who wish to down-size due to the “bedroom tax”.
- A need to engage with our tenant when looking at the Rent policy whilst looking at VFM.

# 8

## CONSULTATION ON THIS STRATEGY

Customers will be consulted using a variety of methods including at Nehemiah Tenant Panels and meetings, website, social media platforms, Under One Roof newsletter, sheltered housing meetings, surveys, and post. Having access to become

members on the Nehemiah Property Service and board. Staff will also be given the opportunity to give their views and comments on the strategy.



## 9

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

It is important to consider our risks and how we will mitigate these in relation to customer engagement:

Risk	Mitigating factors
Failure to deliver the regulatory code for tenant involvement and empowerment	The operations Committee will review this quarterly, reporting to Boards on any concerns.
Failure to engage enough customers to influence the development of policies	<p>This is a priority target for the customer engagement representative at performance review and targets will also be set for neighbourhood, property and support staff to engage new customers.</p> <p>The importance of flexibility for time and location of NTP meetings.</p>
Failure to capacity build new and existing customer groups to make a real impact on service outcomes	Training and capacity building will be completed with newly involved and existing involved customers
Failure to listen to views of customers and engage on business critical issues, to enable a commercial advantage	<p>The review of policies will be scrutinised at Board.</p> <p>The Operations Committee and Board can commission scrutiny and the new customer groups to assist with business-critical challenges.</p> <p>EMT, Boards, Audit and Finance Committee will hold managers to account for delivery of recommendations from customers.</p>
Failure to involve a diverse range of customers	The engagement of BAME customers, middle aged and young voices will be enhanced by the new strategy which does allows commentary on social media, bespoke task and finish groups to tackle inequality and encourages inclusion.
Failure to engage all customers in some format.	Customers will be drawn to their interest group. A database will be monitored to ensure each customer is able to engage in at least one customer involvement activity a year, should they wish to volunteer to participate.

# 10. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI's) AND TARGETS

It is important to monitor and review the effectiveness of the key involvement activities to ensure they are effective, achieving required outcomes and providing value for money.



# 11. REVIEW OF THIS STRATEGY



Customer engagement impact will be reported every quarter to Operations Committee and customer consultation groups. This will monitor progress and demonstrate a transparent approach to customer engagement outcomes.

# 12. LINKS TO NEHEMIAH TRAINING ACADEMY

The academy will be the training offer to involved customers who wish to gather information on services or may require skills to support the task they have volunteered for. The delivery of this part of the academy will be managed and supported by the customer engagement lead. Training will be delivered to all customers who need the skills and be based on business need or needs identified during skills audits for involved customers.

Opportunities will also be sought to link the involvement training in the academy to the recruitment of apprentices and work experience placements.

The delivery of this part of the academy will be managed and supported by the customer engagement officer. Training will be delivered to all customers who need the skills based on business need or needs identified during skills audits for involved customers.



# 13. SUMMARY OF OUR MENU FOR INVOLVEMENT:

## Customer Consultation Panel

Volunteers will commit to working in the spirit of partnership with Nehemiah Housing to drive service accountability and improvements in VFM, compliance on consumers standards, general sounding board, equality assessments and performance review.

## Customer database/virtual group

Any customer wishing to participate in involvement opportunities or share their views with service development can do so in a way that suits them. This information will be stored on an electronic database to establish customer preferences when involvement opportunities arise.

Recruitment campaigns for new customers to get involved will be the responsibility of the customer engagement lead. The target will be to have at least 10% of customers engaged and available on this database. This is referred to as the '100 club'.

Opportunities will be advertised on social media. This pool of customers will include all those who are available to be called upon for the menu for involvement offer below:

- Reality checkers
- Procurement
- Policy readers
- Plain English champions of our communication to customers
- One off task and finish groups
- Online commentators on social media, website or by direct emailing
- Annual report

This list is not exhaustive.

Volunteers with recent experience of the service will be contacted for commentary on policies.

## Estate Walkabouts

Customers wishing to volunteer to be involved in local neighbourhood and property auditing will be able to volunteer and express interest and skills through the customer voice.

Service managers and Boards will commission the audits, including estate inspections; armchair auditing and visits to view the condition of estates.

## Link to Other Policies and Other Documents

- Tenancy sustainment policy
- GDPR Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Customer Handbook
- Safeguarding Policy
- Social Values
- Business Plan 2018-2021
- Confidentiality Policy
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-housing-green-paper-a-new-deal-for-social-housing>
- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/homes-and-communities-agency>
- Neighbourhood Improvement Policy
- Tenants Consumers Standard
- <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/guidance-notes/complaints-policy/>

Document title	Customer Engagement Strategy
Review date	February 2022
Date approved by Operations Committee	February 2022
Reviewed by Board	February 2022
Date of next review	February 2023

# APPENDIX I ACTION PLAN

## CUSTOMERS VOICE BEING HEARD

Target	How is this achieved	Measuring of success
<p>Keep our tenant involvement specific to the needs of the individual or group.</p>	<p>To ensure that we are listening to what our tenants want through consultation and feedback.</p> <p>Reporting the results there after in a format that is easily understood.</p> <p>To focus on what tenant engagement is required within a particular area. Also using the Customer Satisfaction &amp; Repairs Survey to measure satisfaction, utilising the findings from the Government White Paper.</p>	<p>Tenant panel meetings are well attended, and members are confident to take a lead by setting the agenda for the meetings.</p> <p>We get a high-level of returns to the satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>Tenants satisfied that their views have been taken into consideration.</p> <p>New requests are being received, where tenants are wishing to get involved from a cross section of our tenants</p> <p>Tenants have a stronger voice and increased opportunity to shape and review the service received.</p>
<p>Ensuring Customer Voice is heard where it counts i.e. Developing a Tenants Panel and Board level presence.</p>	<p>Identify tenants who have an interest in joining tenancy panels, committees etc.</p> <p>To join and acquire the required skills to join 'Nehemiah's Tenant Voice'</p> <p>Ensuring that the tenants have the confidence and skill to join in and knowledge is developed through the appropriate training and involvement of formal meetings</p>	<p>Tenants are satisfied that their opinions have been taken into consideration and that constructive changes have been made based on their suggestions made.</p>

Target	How is this achieved	Measuring of success
<p><b>Employ an effective strategy around communications</b></p>	<p>Publishing the work of our Tenants Panel in our website, newsletter and through social media.</p> <p>Ensuring our newsletter reaches a wider audience in order to get more tenants involved and aware of future developments.</p> <p>Engage with tenants at community events to help them to take an interest.</p> <p>Make our newsletter more interactive by gaining tenant feedback, competitions, and a children's section.</p> <p>Establish a stronger working relationship between tenants and the board.</p>	<p>We see more feedback from tenants via our website, emails, and social media.</p> <p>High satisfaction levels when it comes to knowledge of tenant involvement activities.</p> <p>Tenants have the confidence to attend board meetings and board members participate in tenant activities, tenants want to join the board.</p>
<p><b>To Establish a suite of Engagement Channels</b></p>	<p>Make it more convenient for tenants to offer their feedback on our services by giving them opportunities to express their views by email and text message; for instance, continue to offer engagement opportunities such as meetings at times that suit our tenants.</p> <p>Looking at our customer base and establishing different forms of engagement.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of responses received.</p> <p>Continued attendance to meetings.</p>
<p><b>Community Involvement</b></p>	<p>Carry out a programme of events aimed at engaging with the residents where they live through on site meetings and surgeries.</p> <p>Investigate local venues where involvement activities can take place. Use info from surveys to see what people want in their area, ensuring neighbourhood plan specify what tenants want in their area and shows tenants involvement.</p>	<p>Events are well attended stories are published in our newsletter and on our website. Areas where we previously had limited, or no involvement see tenants become involved.</p>

Target	How is this achieved	Measuring of success
Feedback	Where we carry out any satisfaction survey, feedback, we request we make sure that we clearly publish the results and inform of our actions based on these. To detail how we use complaints to learn and develop the service provided. Publishing a 'You Said, We Did' article to demonstrate the voice of the customer being heard. To understand the preferred method of communication by all our tenants, by completion of an audit.	Our tenants will have confidence that their views are being considered and will be more likely to complete future feedback requests

# APPENDIX 2

## TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD

### I Required outcomes

#### I.1 Customer service, choice and complaints

##### I.1.1 registered providers shall:

- a provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards.
- b have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

#### I.2 Involvement and empowerment

##### I.2.1 Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in:

- a the formulation of their landlord's housing-related policies and strategic priorities

- b the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
- c the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- d the management of their homes, where applicable
- e the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and
- f agreeing local offers for service delivery.



### **1.3 Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants**

**1.3.1** Registered providers shall:

- a** treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- b** demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.

## **2 Specific expectations**

### **2.1 Customer service, choice and complaints**

**2.1.1** Registered providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant and timely information about:

- a** how tenants can access services
- b** the standards of housing services their tenants can expect
- c** how they are performing against those standards
- d** the service choices available to tenants, including any additional costs that are relevant to specific choices
- e** progress of any repairs work
- f** how tenants can communicate with them and provide feedback
- g** the responsibilities of the tenant and provider
- h** arrangements for tenant involvement and scrutiny.

**2.1.2** Providers shall offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint. Providers shall inform tenants how they use complaints to improve their services. Registered providers shall publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints. Providers shall accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf.

### **2.2 Involvement and empowerment**

**2.2.1** Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for involvement and empowerment, including by:

- a** supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate
- b** supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them
- c** the provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include the publication of an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets d. providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved.

**2.2.2** Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements for reviewing these on a periodic basis.

**2.2.3** Where registered providers are proposing a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants or a significant change in their management arrangements, they shall consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate

**2.2.4** amount of detail and shall set out any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term. Registered providers must be able to demonstrate to affected tenants how they have taken the outcome of the consultation into account when reaching a decision.

Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

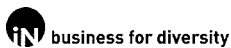
### **2.3 Understanding and responding to diverse needs**

**2.3.1** Registered providers shall demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants.



1-3 Beacon Court  
Birmingham Road  
Great Barr  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B43 6NN

☎ 0121 358 0966  
☎ 0121 358 0934  
✉ [contact@nehemiah.co.uk](mailto:contact@nehemiah.co.uk)  
🌐 [www.nehemiah.co.uk](http://www.nehemiah.co.uk)  
📘 [www.facebook.com/nehemiahhousing](https://www.facebook.com/nehemiahhousing)  
🐦 [@Nehemiahhousing](https://twitter.com/Nehemiahhousing)



Registered office is at 1-3 Beacon Court, Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands, B43 6NN

Nehemiah is registered under the Co-operative and Communities Benefit Societies Act 2014 registration number 25952, governed by the National Housing Federation ("NHF") 2011 Model Rules. It is an exempt charity for tax purposes.

Nehemiah is a Registered Provider of Social Housing, registration number L3833 and regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing ("RSH").

Nehemiah Ventures Ltd is a subsidiary of Nehemiah Ltd is registered with the Registrar of Companies for England and Wales, registration number 10933356.