

Customer Voice Strategy 2025→2028





Welcome

Hello and welcome to Southway's new Customer Voice Strategy which I have been involved in producing.

I hope that it inspires more tenants to engage with Southway and become enthusiastic participants in Southway's future.

As a tenant, my experience of raising issues with Southway hasn't always been positive. I have been unhappy with how some of my queries have been dealt with and that responses have felt impersonal.

I wanted to change that to help improve communication and give tenants more influence over how Southway runs its services.

When the opportunity to become a board member arose, I jumped at the chance, and it's been a positive experience and a great learning opportunity. I've met good people at Southway who want to do right by customers and are committed to providing high-quality services. And most of all, I've found my voice as a tenant and am listened to.

It's a great time to become an involved tenant and the latest Consumer Regulations emphasise that housing associations need a strong customer voice.



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I believe the best outcomes for our customers are when Southway and tenants work together, and I would encourage tenants to get involved.



David Hampton,
Tenant and Board Member

Introduction

At Southway, customers are at the heart of everything we do.

We want to deliver high quality services that are important to you to high levels of satisfaction.

Our **new Five-Year Plan** has a strong commitment to listening to you and using your feedback to improve services.

To do this well we need to know your views and for you to tell us what you think about our services.

We want to provide you with lots of different ways to get involved to shape and influence services. We also want to hear from as many customers as possible, reflecting the diversity of communities and giving equal access to get involved.

This Customer Voice Strategy sets out how we will engage with you as our customers, the opportunities you will have to influence services, and how we decide where we should spend money.

It's a great time to get involved and by working together we can ensure we're providing excellent services and doing the basics brilliantly.

National housing regulation

Since 2017, there has been an increased spotlight on housing providers across the country to strengthen the customer voice and be accountable to customers for the services they run.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 puts customers at the heart of social housing and helps the Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator) to carry out proactive consumer regulation and set powers around this. In 2024, the Regulator introduced a revised set of Consumer Standards that Southway and all other social housing landlords need to meet.

These are new measures that set out clear standards to assess how well landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services. The standards include specific ways in which we will work. One of the Consumer Standards is the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

The outcome we must achieve to meet the new Standard relating to customer involvement is:

Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.



What do we want to achieve?

STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES



Our aim is:

To listen and use the customer voice to improve services and satisfaction, and to change things for the better.

There are four objectives of this strategy. Each year an action plan detailing the priorities to achieve our aim and objectives will be developed and monitored.

Customer Influence



More customers will be involved and be directly influencing services.

We will expand the ways in which you can get involved.

We will strengthen and expand the diversity and number of customers involved in Scrutiny Panels and Service Improvement Groups. These will have a direct influence on decisions taken by our People and Places Committee around policy, performance and service improvement.

How will we do this?

- Increasing the opportunities for **customer participation**.
- Engage a **new customer panel** to oversee the delivery of this strategy.
- Launch complaints, repairs and customer access **improvement groups**.
- Review the role of **tenant scrutiny** as part of our governance structure.

STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Customer Insight



We will use data to drive improvements to services.

We will improve the way we use the information you give us through surveys about services, TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures), community events and complaints and compliments. This will help us understand what matters to you. We will use this to come and talk to you about how to make things better.

How will we do this?

- Quarterly analysis and use of data on a regular basis to **identify issues with services**.
- Use our **Equality and Diversity** information to identify customer needs and ensure that the customer voice is representative of our communities.
- Use **mystery shopping** to test our customer service.

Customer Information



We will be proactive, open and compassionate in our communication with our customers and will keep you informed about the things that will affect you and that interest you.

We will provide information that is clear and accessible and tells you what you need to know at the time you need to know it. We will keep you updated and communicate using your preferences.

How will we do this?

- Ensure our information about you is **up to date** and check how you prefer to be contacted.
- Help our colleagues to understand the importance of **clear and timely communication** that puts the needs of our customers first.
- **Regularly involve customers** so they can have their say on how we communicate our services.

Customer Impact



Our services will have improved because of the customer voice and our customers will be happier with the services they receive.

Customers will be able to see the direct impact their voice has had.

Satisfaction with our services will increase.

How will we do this?

- Regular **'You said - We Listened'** updates in Southway Stories and on social media.
- Satisfaction with services that are changed as a result of the customer voice will be **monitored and reported on**.
- Feedback we receive for our services will be at **95% or above**.



Our commitment

We want all feedback and customer engagement to help us shape services, so they improve along with your satisfaction.

So, it's really important and valuable to us that you get involved. You have our commitment that we will make it as easy as possible for you to work with and engage with us.

See the table on the next page to find out how we will do this



Our commitment	How we will do it
Menu of opportunities	We will develop our offer of ways to get involved and publicise these to reach as many people as possible. We will ask you what sorts of opportunities you would like.
Flexible	We will engage with you at a time and place that suits you and use your preferred method.
Different options	We will use a mixture of face-to-face, telephone and online ways to get involved.
Remove barriers	We will help you to be able to get involved by providing transport, large print, translation services etc.
Respect	We will respect you and ensure all tenants have the chance to give feedback and be listened to.
Consistency	We will make sure staff from all service areas understand the importance of customer involvement and use the Southway values in their work.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	We will make necessary adjustments where applicable and work hard to ensure the diversity of all our customers is represented. We will help you to be able to get involved by providing transport, large print, translation services etc.
Remove jargon	We will use clear language in letters and other documents.
Reporting back to you	We will tell you the outcomes of consultations including any changes made as a result on our website, in our newsletter, via social media and on our noticeboards.
Learning from what you tell us	<p>We will look at all feedback and learn from what you tell us.</p> <p>Our new Customer Experience Team will be specifically focused on complaints we receive to ensure we learn from them and make necessary changes to the way we do things.</p>
Honesty	We will be honest with you, and when changes cannot be made because of your feedback we will explain why.

Measuring success

Over the next three years of this strategy, we want to achieve continued improvements, and our results will be published on a quarterly basis on our website and annually in noticeboards across our areas.

We will also use our e-newsletter, digital channels and Southway Stories to ensure customers can see how we are doing.

By 2028:

- **At least 75%** of customers will say that we listen to their views and act on them.
- **At least 75%** of customers will say that we keep them informed about things that matter to them.
- **At least 85%** of customers will say that we treat them fairly and with respect.
- **At least 70%** of customers will be satisfied with our approach to handling complaints.
- **At least 100** customers will have directly influenced services, policies and decision making.



Monitoring and review

We'll produce an annual action plan which will be monitored by tenants alongside achievements and improvements each year.

The **People and Places Committee** will monitor the delivery of this strategy, receiving annual updates on the outcomes of customer experience and engagement, feedback, and services.



A word from our involved tenants

QUOTES



Being part of the Beautiful South Fund Panel has been an incredibly rewarding experience. It's empowering to have a say in how funds are allocated to support community projects that make a real difference. Collaborating with others to make these decisions highlights the importance of community involvement and the positive impact we can achieve together.

Najwa Hafid,
Tenant in Chorlton



I've been involved from day one and am part of a few groups including my local tenant association. Having a say is really important to me and I get satisfaction from knowing that I am helping others by giving feedback and influencing how Southway does things. I am a member of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and we make recommendations for change directly to the People and Places Committee and get regular updates from staff on what has happened as a result of our reports.

Dennis Powell,
Tenant in Burnage



I got involved to help Southway with its new website and customer app. I felt changes were needed and I was happy to give my views. It was fantastic that I and others had the chance to have our voices heard and listened to. I feel there are lots of opportunities for people to share feedback and I hope more tenants will do so to help make improvements for all.

Nicola England,
Tenant in Chorlton

Ways to get involved

Opportunity	What it is and how it works
Individual Customer Feedback	
Customer Feedback Surveys	<p>Customer satisfaction surveys after visits, repairs etc. Customers receive a link to respond to.</p> <p>We use your replies to celebrate and learn from good service and to identify and tackle poorer performance and shape services.</p> <p>Anyone who tells us the service they received was 'poor' receives a call from the manager of that service so that they can put things right.</p>
Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) Surveys	<p>Tenant Satisfaction Measure surveys that we are required to carry out by the Regulator. The results are published and compared to other landlords. We carry out 1200 TSM surveys per year. This sample size is set by the Regulator and is determined by the number of homes we have. The results will show us what we need to do to get better.</p>
Website, social media, Southway Stories and community noticeboards	<p>We use these methods to provide information, promote services and publicise events and activities. While it's not direct involvement it can lead to customer participation.</p>
Complaints and Compliments	
Complaints	<p>We welcome your complaints because they are an opportunity for us to put things right and learn from mistakes.</p>
Compliments	<p>You can tell us when we do something well by sending in a compliment. These are passed onto the relevant team or individual member of staff and can help us recognise when we get things right.</p>

Ways to get involved

Opportunity	What it is and how it works
Combined Customer Feedback and Challenge	
Service Improvement Groups	Customers meet with staff to look at how things are being done and agree how improvements can be made. They also review policies and receive information about performance. Current groups include Repairs, Complaints and Antisocial Behaviour.
Armchair Group	For any customers who want to give feedback from the comfort of their own home, they respond to online surveys. The results feed into other consultation.
Events	Events in the community such as 'Fun and Feedback' are held throughout the year to promote services, invite feedback and provide free and fun activities.
Tenant Groups	These groups are formed by local people and are open to anyone living within the areas they cover. They focus on issues in their area and work with us to try to make things better in communities.
Direct Influence on Decision Makers	
Tenant Scrutiny Panel	<p>A group of customers that look closely at one service at a time and make recommendations to the People and Places Committee. The Panel interviews staff, looks at tenant satisfaction and performance, review policies and considers if value for money is being achieved.</p> <p>There are up to 12 places on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.</p>
Beautiful South Fund Panel	The Beautiful South Fund totals £25,000 each year and grants are allocated to local community projects by a customer led decision making panel. Applications received are considered on a quarterly basis or as required.

Ways to get involved

Decision Making	
People and Places Committee	<p>The People and Places Committee has delegated responsibility from the Board for monitoring delivery of all our affordable landlord services including repairs, housing management and customer services. There are four places for tenants on this Committee.</p> <p>The usual maximum term for Committee Members is six years as set out by the National Housing Federation Code of Governance. This may be extended up to nine years if it is in the interest of the organisation.</p>
Board	<p>The Board has overall responsibility for Southway's key strategies and direction, for financial management, new build development and investment decisions. There are two places for tenants on the Board.</p> <p>The usual maximum term for Board Members is six years as set out by the National Housing Federation Code of Governance. This may be extended up to nine years if it is in the interest of the organisation.</p>

Do you need help reading this?

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