



**Black Country
Housing Group**

Customer Transparency Strategy 2023-2026



Introduction

This Customer Transparency Strategy continues to build on what we achieved between 2021-2023, introducing the concept of 'No Voice, No Approval' to make customer voice central, strengthening customer scrutiny, and operating a more flexible involvement menu. The focus of this strategy is to take this to the next level at BCHG.

The purpose of this strategy is to set our three-tier plan with a vision to build greater transparency that is fair and respectful, to enable influence that is accessible, meaningful and impacts. To be held accountable and answerable for the decisions we make. This is a catalyst to establish trust in our relationships with customers and driven by our core values, aligned to our mission, and strategic objectives and underpinned by the social housing consumer regulation.



Ramesh Malhan, Head of Customer Voice

Developing the Strategy

This strategy was developed through listening to the views of our customers through focus groups, workshops at the Customer Conference 2023, surveys, and complaints, it also includes colleague voice. Through this, we learned:

- That customers have loyalty to BCHG and wish to remain with us as their landlord.
- That transparency has issues that rank more important to our customers around investment plans, access to services and decision-making on how homes are allocated.
- That a shift towards digital platforms needs to offer training, and support to customers, the technology used needs to be reliable, a single point of contact and give some control to customers.

This is a cross cutting strategy that impacts all BCHG activities, with links to our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy to increase inclusion activities, ICT and Digital Strategy to increase the uptake of digital literacy.



Values

Our values are at the heart of the way BCHG works and define how we deliver our services; both internally and externally.



We not me



We do what we say we will



We care



We do the right thing



We love to learn

We have also developed these into our Values Based Service Standards, which link our values to behaviours, we call this the 'The BCHG Way'. These standards were co-created with customers in response to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), set out what our customers can expect from us and shape our approach to the delivery of excellent customer service.

Strategic Context

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 gives the regulator powers to tackle failing landlords with tougher enforcement when things go wrong. It gives a stronger voice to customers, improving access to redress, and increasing professionalism in the sector.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures already in place require we collect and report annually our performance, giving greater transparency.

As a forward-thinking organisation, an early adopter of Together with Tenants and already working to recommendations set out in the Better Social Housing Review around the quality of social housing, BCHG will continue to be responsive and strengthen our commitment through our values-based approach, so it changes the way we do things.

Our Ambition - Taking it to the Next Level

- Create an inclusive environment by sharing information in accessible format and promoting activities so that people of all backgrounds are comfortable to express their views.
- Widen representation by proactively encouraging groups who may be excluded so that diverse views contribute to decision making.
- Flexibility to get involved in ways that work for customers.
- Reframe the language we speak to remove stigma, and negativity to unleash customer potential.
- Support inclusion by making person centred approaches.
- Digital inclusion through improved skills and confidence to use online and digital services.
- Brand Ambassadors that have a clear customer focus and take a no wrong door approach.
- Ethical decision making that is answerable to customers.
- 'No Voice, No Approval' approach in customer scrutiny to hear a wider perspective.
- All recommendations made through customer groups consider equality, diversity, and inclusion implications.
- Access to networks, support, and training to help customers be informed, be involved.
- Measuring the impact so we know the difference we are making together.



Our Approach

We will deliver this strategy following a three-tier approach that aligns with the consumer standard:

Transparency
Building trust through greater openness to our actions and activities.

Influence
Mechanisms in place to shape the way BCHG operates.

Accountability
Holding us to account, answerable for the decisions we make.

Stream	Strategy
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be clear on decisions made by BCHG that impact customers and how customers have influenced those decisions. We will be clear about our investment and management plans, so our tenants understand our future intentions. We will publicise our complaints process and what tenants can do if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or how a complaint was handled. Where we have failed in any of the consumer standards, we will be clear with both the Regulator and our residents about our learning and how we will make amends.
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All customers will have fair and equitable access to services and an equal opportunity to influence those services. We will give customers a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies, and services. We will support formal structured meetings and train individuals so they can fully participate. These will include a Customer Scrutiny Panel, Partnership Board, Local Scheme Meetings, Digital Panels and Focus Groups. No decision will be made by the BCHG Board which impacts on customers without their voice being heard. No Voice, No Approval. Customers will be given opportunities to be involved in the recruitment of senior colleagues and in the Procurement of key contractors. We will involve customers in the recruitment of BCHG Chair.
Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be clear about the relevant roles and responsibilities of senior level employees or officers, including who has responsibility for compliance with the consumer standards. All our housing and neighbourhood policies are publicised being fair, reasonable, accessible, and transparent, setting out decision-making criteria and appeals processes. Locally we will be visible and aim to co-design local services through neighbourhood plans, visitation, and encouragement of estate walkabouts. We will never adopt an approach that BCHG knows best and will default to the belief that the customer perception is reality and should be acted upon. We will be clear with residents about how their voice has influenced our learning

How the Three-Tier Works in Practice

Transparency

Driving a culture of transparency and accountability that is meaningful to tenants and demonstrates fairness and respect.

Reviewing what you want to know

Learning from customer data

Customer feedback and complaints

Board to Tenant Feedback

Performance Reporting

Influence

Influence decision making by engaging with tenants.

No Voice, No Approval

Consultations

Volunteer program co-creating services

Tenant Led Reviews

Neighbourhood Plans

Digital Inclusion

Resident Involvement

Accountability

Hold landlord to account.

Resident Scrutiny Voice Panel - embedded in governance structure

Partnership Board - Better Social Housing Review

Tenant Satisfaction Measures






Tenant Annual Report

Self-Assessment

Values Based Service Standards

Customer Transparency Outcomes and Action Plan

These actions and outcomes support our ambition in this Customer Transparency Strategy and the delivery of our Strategic Plan objectives:

-  **Trusted Landlord**
-  **Outstanding Employer**
-  **Quality Homes**
-  **Sound Business**
-  **Thriving Communities**

Outcomes	Actions
<p>Strengthened Relationship - using The BCHG Way, we want to build internal and external relationship on mutual respect, openness, trust, and transparency, where customers feel safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch TSMs and improve performance feedback • Launch mystery shopper program • Develop workshops to increase the awareness of Customer Voice in neighbourhoods and to staff • Create Brand Ambassadors – First Impression Training (FIT) Programme • Embed new consumer standards making roles clear • Review service standards (The BCHG Way) • Revisit the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy • Develop internal complaint handling and learning. • Partnership Board is strengthened with wider representation and co-creation of service standards that holds service providers to account for performance
<p>Meaningful Involvement - We will promote a wide range of involvement opportunities that engages diverse views to make a meaningful and tangible difference to the lives of our residents and communicate this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch involvement menu • Create volunteering opportunities • Develop co-creation opportunities in procurement of customer facing services • Deliver 'You said, we did'

Customer Transparency Outcomes and Action Plan Continued

Outcomes	Actions
<p>Effective Communication - We will create an environment that supports plain English and accessible formats. That gives a clear view of performance, inviting accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and transparent about investment and service charges • Create TSM dashboard • Board to Tenant feedback is made more transparent and significance increased. • Enhance the use of BCHG Chat • Website adapted for customers • Newsroom used to improve communication to residents • Launch Facebook following of BCHG campaign • Co-create communications plan with customers • Findings from FIT implemented • Two resident broadcasts and one tenant annual report to residents
<p>Insight that improves customer experience - We will link data so that it identifies trends and areas for learning in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer data profile produced annually. • TSMs followed up • Map engagement spots
<p>Resident governance structure embedded and co-creating services - Develop on the success of scrutiny panel with a strong influential voice that can hold BCHG's Board to account for performance and seek long term improvement. And a volunteer programme that normalises co-creation in the culture to shape place and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit train and retain volunteers • In partnership deliver 2 capacity building courses • Continue to develop and roll out E learning • Scope and develop volunteer policy and reward scheme • Create digital connectivity and lobbying opportunity influencing social policy • Achieve TPAS accreditation • Deliver annual conference

What Success Looks Like



Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints achieves 70%

Resident structure reviewed and embedded in governance

ICT and Digital Strategy
Customers accessing services digitally increased to 1250 (Digital Panel of 100 users)

Achieve TPAS accreditation for Scrutiny in year 3

Co-creation model embedded

Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them achieves 80%

Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them achieves 85%



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