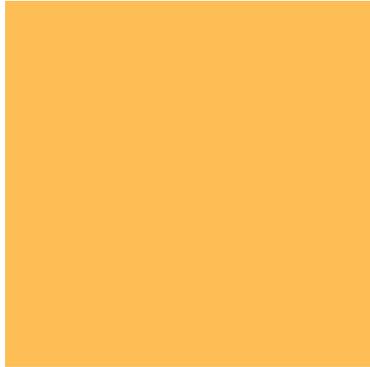




# South Northants Homes Resident Involvement Statement 2010/11



involving residents at every opportunity



## Foreword

Welcome to South Northants Homes' (SNH) Resident Involvement Statement 2010/11. We recognise the involvement of our residents is key to the continuous improvement of housing services provided by SNH.

Our Resident Involvement Statement outlines our key objectives for resident involvement and how we will achieve them. It also gives some information about what we have already put in place. This statement sets out the ways in which we will involve and consult you on decisions that will impact on your home and your local communities. It also sets out how we will involve you in our decision-making structures and what our key targets are for 2010/11.

SNH has many exciting opportunities for you to get involved. By having your say, SNH can develop services which reflect the needs of our residents. We will continue to develop and facilitate new and innovative methods of involvement, in consultation with you.

This statement sets out what you can expect from becoming an involved resident and working in partnership with SNH to improve services.

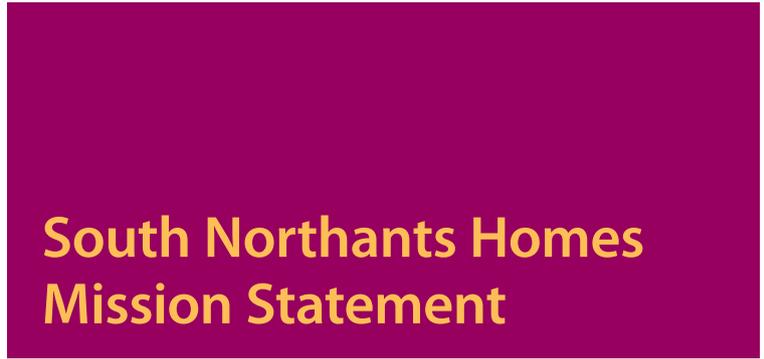


**Paul Calland**  
South Northants Homes  
Managing Director



**Tim Knight**  
South Northants Homes  
Vice Chair Customer Committee





**“To provide homes and housing services that make a positive difference to the communities in which we work”**

**SNH core values**

- Be open and honest in all our dealings and maintain the highest integrity at all times.
- Provide efficient and accessible services and work continuously to improve them to meet customer needs.
- Listen to customers and involve them in the development and management of their homes.
- Provide and maintain quality, affordable, sustainable homes.
- Respect and value equally the contribution of all people involved in our organisation, including customers, staff and stakeholders.
- Maintain a sound financial base and maximise the use of our assets and resources.

The SNH Mission Statement and core values put residents at the heart of the organisation. SNH provides a range of opportunities for involving residents, both formally and informally. This will enable SNH and residents to work in partnership to make key decisions about how housing and related services are delivered and developed.

## SNH's key objectives for resident involvement and community development



### Enabling resident involvement

We will encourage, motivate and empower our residents to be involved in the work of SNH. We will provide the training and support that individuals and groups need, in order to contribute to their communities and to the success of SNH.

### Ensuring our customers have the opportunity to influence service delivery

We will provide a range of opportunities for customers to be involved in the activities of SNH. We ensure equal access to all our customers (for example younger and older customers), so all our customers can have an influence. We recognise our customers are in the best position to tell us which services work well and where we can improve.

We will offer a range of ways in which residents can be involved, from attending neighbourhood walkabouts to membership of our Board of Management.

### Communication with tenants

Working with our customers, we will aim to continuously improve communication and the quality, clarity and range of information we provide, such as service statements, leaflets and publications, including our residents' newsletter and our website. We will implement the methods of communication that residents want us to use and make sure that information is easy to understand in whatever format it is produced.

### Community development

We will work with local communities, Parish Councils and other voluntary and statutory organisations on a range of community development projects, that will help to create safe and sustainable communities.

### Understanding resident involvement

SNH has a dedicated Community Development Team - however it is vital that all staff recognise the importance of resident involvement and their role in ensuring that it is genuine and meaningful. All staff will be appropriately trained and supported to ensure that they can achieve their individual resident involvement objectives.



## Reviewing and monitoring resident involvement

We will monitor resident involvement through:

- promoting involvement activities and opportunities through our quarterly newsletter
- reviews of our services by our customer forum members
- satisfaction surveys and STATUS survey
- impact assessments
- promoting the outcome of your involvement.

### How do we support and monitor resident involvement?

SNH is committed to ensuring that all customers are supported if they wish to get involved. There are a number of support mechanisms in place, including:

- leaflets and literature to promote our services
- a resident involvement budget
- computer facilities for involved tenants to use at nine different locations in the community
- tenant expenses will be paid, including travel and child care

- a training programme designed around both individual and group needs
- support and funding for involved members to attend external conferences and training events
- a dedicated Community Development Team.

### What will happen as a result of my involvement?

Your involvement is important to us and we promise to keep you informed about what we are doing with the views and ideas you have expressed.

We can't promise to always do what you ask us to do, but if we can't, we will give you a full explanation of our reasoning.

## Resident involvement menu – What are the current opportunities for customers to get involved?

### Tenant Board Members

#### SNH Board

**What is this?** SNH is managed by a Board, which has five places for tenant Board Members out of a total 15. This means that a third of our Board Members are tenants, making major decisions about how SNH operates and is managed. The Board is responsible for the strategic management of SNH and ensuring that it meets its legal and financial obligations in the best interests of its tenants, customers and local people in housing need.

#### Customer Committee

**What is this?** An elected committee of 10 tenant representatives, each representing a specific area; a leaseholder representative and two non tenant board members. One role of the Customer Committee is to be the voice for tenants who live in the area they represent and bring to our attention any issues or concerns in the local communities. The Customer Committee meets bi-monthly and their role in the meetings is to:

- nominate tenant members to the five places on SNH Board
- monitor the progress of the Major Repairs and Improvement Programme
- monitor our performance, particularly in terms of delivering the promises made in the Offer Document
- assist with policy reviews
- decide where the money is awarded from the Charitable and Community Donation fund
- make recommendations to the Board

- monitor the progress of the Customer Forums
- decide priorities for the environmental improvement programme.

#### Value for Money Procurement Panel

**What is this?** This is a consultative sub panel for Grand Union Housing Group (SNH's parent organisation) consisting of SNH and Aragon's (SNH's sister organisation) Customer Committee. They are involved in the selection of contractors and suppliers, monitoring tenders and ensuring value for money for the group.

#### Themed Customer Forums

**What are these?** SNH facilitates six themed customer forums: Older Persons' Forum; Repairs and Improvements Forum; Housing Management Forum; Communications Forum; Equality and Accessibility Forum and Leaseholder Forum. The role of the customer forums is to work with SNH in developing improvements across a range of SNH services. The forums are consulted on a wide variety of policies and services and will make recommendations to the Customer Committee and SNH officers.

#### Residents associations and community groups

**What are these?** SNH aims to support and encourage the development of residents associations and community groups out in the district. They will be an important tier to our involvement structure and will give tenants and residents, living within a specific area, a forum to take up issues of community concern and represent the views of tenants and residents to SNH, other landlords, local authorities and other agencies. Once set up, they will make



campaigning for local communities more effective, keep residents informed, and greatly assist community-building.

### Partnership working

**What is this?** SNH works closely with other organisations and makes this part of our day-to-day practice. SNH has positive and pro-active links with Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire County Council, South Northants District Council, other social landlords, as well as many other organisations.

### SNH drop in events

**What are these?** A programme of drop in events in the district, which give tenants the opportunity to speak to officers from SNH service areas, including Community Development, Housing Management, Retirement Homes, Major Works and Responsive Repairs, and to meet the contractors who are delivering the Major Works Programme. SNH works in partnership with other external agencies, including the Safe and Sound partnership, Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and South Northants District Council, on some of the drop in and road show events.

### Neighbourhood walks

**What are these?** A programme of neighbourhood walks which enable the community, in partnership with SNH officers and external organisations (including police and Parish Council representatives), to walk around their neighbourhood and raise any areas for improvement.

### Local and national tenant participation conferences

**What are these?** Tenant dedicated events with key speakers and training workshops. They offer good networking opportunities for tenants to mix with tenants from other housing associations.

### Working with young people

**What is this?** SNH works in partnership with local youth organisations and young people in the district to develop projects and services that benefit both young people and the wider community. Previously this has included Sound Box, Mears Young Apprentice project and Silver Surfers intergenerational project. SNH also offers work experience placements to young people.

### Intergenerational projects

**What are these?** Projects where older and young people join together to share skills. They encourage mutual understanding and improve communications between different generations within a community.

### Customer feedback and surveys

**What is this?** SNH residents can submit feedback to SNH in a number of ways, for example by completing customer satisfaction surveys, by telephone or by completing feedback forms, both online and by paper. This gives you the opportunity to tell SNH what you think about the service you have received, and enables SNH to collect information about the efficiency and effectiveness of the day-to-day services we provide, which can be used for service improvements.

## Resident involvement menu continued



### STATUS surveys

**What are these?** A standardised survey, which has been developed by the National Housing Federation. It gives customers the opportunity to review our services in relation to their own experiences in their neighbourhood.

### Mystery shopping

**What is this?** Customers are trained to test the services delivered by SNH. The results will identify areas for improving service delivery, as well as recognise what we are doing well.

### Policy reading group

**What is this?** SNH has a series of policies which are reviewed annually, to ensure they are kept up to date. These are customer facing documents and outline our approach to different aspects of our services. The policy reading group members read our policies in the comfort of their homes and then complete a short questionnaire before returning them in the free post envelopes.

## Customer publications

### SNH News

**What is this?** SNH's tenant newsletter is published three times a year, in partnership with our communications panel. SNH News covers a variety of information and keeps readers up to date on the latest news from SNH.

### Retirement Homes News (RH News)

**What is this?** A newsletter published twice a year, specifically for residents who receive the Retirement Homes Service. RH News informs its readers of information relevant to them and is produced in consultation with the RH News editorial panel.

### SNH service statements

**What are these?** A series of leaflets that inform customers of the different services we deliver, and outline what you can expect from the service.

### Tenants' Handbook

**What is this?** The Tenants' Handbook is issued to tenants at the start of their tenancy. The handbook contains all the information needed to establish tenants in their new home.

## Communications tools

### SNH website:

[www.southnorthantshomes.co.uk](http://www.southnorthantshomes.co.uk)

**What is this?** A dedicated SNH website that provides instant access to services, enables customers to report repairs, pay rent, access their account, comment on services and contact officers through a secure site.

## Customer training

### Local and national customer training opportunities

**What is this?** A training programme developed around both individual and group requirements to ensure they have the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their role; to enable our involved customers to make informed decisions, build their confidence and influence matters affecting them.

## SNH Community Development

We believe community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. The SNH Community Development Team supports individuals, groups, communities and organisations in this process on the basis of strong values and commitments.

It is also important to recognise both resident involvement and community development, and the link between the two. Through our community development work, we aim to build trust and mutual respect with our customers and hope that by doing this, we will encourage more residents to get involved with SNH.

Community development is an important area of SNH's work. It does not stand alone, but integrates with all aspects of SNH's activities, which results in:

- residents having a real, focussed influence over the place they live in
- more efficient use of resources
- improved customer/stakeholder involvement in the development of SNH's housing services
- improved customer service
- ensuring communities are sustainable and are places where people want to live
- SNH community representation on wider, decision-making bodies
- supporting communities to make positive changes to meet their needs and priorities
- recognising local people as an asset – providing experience, knowledge, expertise, enthusiasm and effort
- working together with local people and other key stakeholders to ensure our communities are sustainable
- tackling issues such as social exclusion, poverty, discrimination, worklessness, crime and fear of crime, equality and diversity



- working towards improving quality of life issues for all.

### SNH Tenancy Support Service

As well as a community development manager and resident involvement officer, the community development team also has a tenancy support officer. Our tenancy support officer assists tenants in the successful management of their homes.

This can include:

- money management
- practical assistance e.g. filling out a form
- benefits/welfare rights advice
- accessing other services
- tenancy agreements
- making the most out of your neighbourhood: accessing schools, doctors, clubs or groups in your local area
- advice and practical tips on utilities
- highlighting grants and funds that are available
- support with anti-social behaviour.

### Who can benefit from the Tenancy Support Service?

The service is for both new and existing tenants of SNH, who need support with the practical issues of managing their homes and keeping within the terms and conditions of their tenancy.

### Contact the Community Development Team

**Community Development Manager** 01327 357862

**Resident Involvement Officer** 01327 357825

**Tenancy Support Officer** 01327 357820

## Resident involvement achievements 2009/10



- Customer Committee has awarded six donations from the Community and Charitable Donations fund to local projects. This included a donation to Chacombe over 60s club, Towcester recreation ground, Tudor rose garden Sulgrave allotment society, Helmdon pre-school, and Roade bowls club.
- Three new customer forums have been introduced: Communications Forum; Leaseholder Forum and Equality and Accessibility Forum. Here, customers are consulted on a range of issues and have influenced service improvements.
- Facilitated 26 customer forum meetings which have contributed to service improvements.
- During the year, SNH have completed 63 neighbourhood walkabouts, with customers and partner organisations across the district.
- Attended 10 drop in events with the Safe and Sound Partnership (taking services out into the community as promised in the Offer Document).
- Regular retirement scheme residents meetings across our nine retirement schemes, with a total of 35 meetings.
- Produced six editions of SNH News, in partnership with the Communications Forum.
- Produced the first edition of Retirement Homes News with the new Retirement Homes Editorial Group.
- Produced our resident calendar with the Communications Forum, which publishes details of key events and SNH performance data.
- Worked with customer forums to introduce a suite of literature including service leaflets.
- Successful intergenerational Silver Surfer project with Roade School Sports College, training 46 residents in computer skills.
- Set up a Value for Money Procurement Group with 12 committee members from Aragon and SNH.
- Delivered equality and diversity training for our involved customers.
- Engaged with 300 young people through the Sound Box youth partnership project.
- Trained six mystery shoppers who have completed their first 'shop' of the SNH Housing Management team.
- Held the first residents association meeting in Churchill Way, Brackley and identified two other areas, which are now in development.
- Delivered the apprenticeship project with Mears contractors, where two successful young people received an apprenticeship with Mears.
- Supported Towcester C of E and Stoke Bruerne Primary School with the design and build of vegetable gardens so the children can learn to grow their own and learn about the importance of healthy eating.

## Resident involvement priorities and plans for 2010/11

- Introduce a regular staff training programme on the importance of resident involvement.
- Attend and organise local events to raise the profile of SNH and improve engagement in the wider community.
- Develop an effective support and tracking system for existing and new resident involvement including introducing T.P tracker database for monitoring resident involvement and its value for money.
- To develop our annual customer training programme, doing a skills audit of current involved customers to identify areas for development.
- Support the development of residents associations in Spencer Gardens and Hesketh Crescent.
- Develop an induction programme for all involved residents.
- Introduce new ways for customers to get involved, in consultation with residents, including exploring technological options such as video internet forums/chat rooms and texting.
- Continue the development of our website, involving residents in the process.
- Consult with residents on new housing development opportunities.
- Gather the remaining customer profile information. Use customer profiling data to understand our customer base and see what specific groups are underrepresented. Develop methods of involvement to target these groups.
- To support each service area of SNH, with the development of their own resident involvement plans and impact measurement assessment.
- Undertake a transport review with local taxi companies and explore advantageous prices and other transport options.
- To use residents in the recruitment and selection of SNH staff.
- To involve residents in the selection of contract tenders.
- To implement the new TSA regulatory requirements of tenant scrutiny and SNH 'Local Offer' developing local standards around the needs of our customers.

### How can I find out more?

**If you require further information or if you are interested in becoming involved in any of the resident involvement opportunities please contact:**

South Northants Homes  
Community Development Team  
Wood Burcote House  
Burcote Road  
Towcester  
NN12 6TF

**Tel:** 01327 357862 / 01327 357825

**Email:** [becky.pavey@southnorthantshomes.co.uk](mailto:becky.pavey@southnorthantshomes.co.uk)

## Equality and Diversity

**South Northants Homes** has a responsibility to ensure that equal opportunity and effective management of diversity are at the core of its business. We set targets to deliver services that are responsive to the needs of communities and individuals, and promote social inclusion. Further details of this policy and our action plan are available on request.

### Do you need this in a different format?



Do you need the information in this document in a different format? Please contact us on **08454 606 888** for details.



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Towcester, Northants NN12 6TF

**Tel:** 08454 606 888

**Fax:** 08454 607 888

**Email:** [housing@southnorthantshomes.co.uk](mailto:housing@southnorthantshomes.co.uk)

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