

CUSTOMER VOICE STRATEGY 2025 - 2028

Classification: Strategic

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Director of Community Services
Last Review Date:	June 2025
Review Due Date:	June 2028
Review Period:	3 years unless required earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice or requirement of the Association

REFERENCE PAGE

Document Title:	Customer Voice Strategy 2025 - 2028
Aim:	To enhance the services for all the people and communities we serve by engaging, listening to, and collaborating with our customers.
Objective:	1 The Eildon Group will ensure that the highest standards of governance and partnership working are adhered to, including compliance with our regulatory frameworks
Scope of Policy:	All stakeholders
Nominated Officer:	Community Partnership Manager
Approval Source:	Board
Legal & Regulatory References:	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 , Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 , Scottish Social Housing Charter , Towards Transformation , National Care Standards: My Support, My Life
Procedural References:	Customer Service Standards and Commitments
Consultation Completed:	Yes - Staff & customers
Risk Implications:	Eildon is required by law to operate and publish a Tenant Participation / Customer Engagement Strategy. In addition to regulatory risk, the reputational risk of not operating a Strategy of this nature is high, not to mention the risk of lost opportunities through failing to engage with customers in an organised and meaningful way.
Equalities Assessment:	Full
Accessibility:	Accessible electronically/online and in print. All documents can be translated and made available in audio, braille and large print versions upon request.
Available on the website	Yes

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Foreword

At Eildon we work across the whole of the Scottish Borders and provide a diverse range of services including affordable homes, supported housing for older people and people with a learning disability, and factoring services.

Our affordable homes include those for social and mid-market rent, and low-cost home ownership. Our aim is to be among the top performing landlords in the country and to deliver an excellent customer experience across all our services.

Further, we work with a range of like-minded partners on projects and services with the aim of improving the wellbeing of our customers and communities.

We cannot be successful in our aims without listening to and working with our customers. This strategy continues our 'Customer Voice' approach to customer engagement, making sure that we have our customers' views to the front of our minds whenever we make decisions, whether that is building a new development, designing a service, or reviewing a policy.

We want to make a difference that goes beyond the home and helps our customers and communities to thrive. This means listening to their lived experience, responding to their needs and involving them in the shaping of our services.

We recognise that our customers lead busy lives and that many things are competing for their attention; our involvement options are designed to allow customers to get involved as much or as little as they would like.

Introduction

This strategy sets out Eildon's continuing commitment to customer engagement and outlines how we will encourage, promote and support this engagement with both customers and staff.

This strategy is for all customers who have a tenancy or receive a service from us.

We have implemented the participation requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as well as the scrutiny aspects of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010; this Strategy also complies with the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the 'Health and Social Care Standards My Support, my life'.

Our Vision

Committed to excellence in providing housing, care and support services for the individuals and communities we serve.

Our Values

Caring – we care about what we do, the people we work with and the customers we serve.

Committed – We all work together to provide affordable, high-quality homes, care & support services.

Connected – We are part of the communities we serve, and we believe we can make a real difference.

Creative – We are ready to meet the challenges of the future with enthusiasm and new ideas.

Our Vision for Customer Engagement

To enhance the services for all the people and communities we serve by engaging, listening to, and collaborating with our customers.

Our Aims

- 1 Plan and embed customer engagement opportunities and requirements within our strategic and departmental objectives for the organisation.
- 2 Make it easy for customers to get involved and share their ideas, no matter where they live or what help they need.
- 3 Build good relationships between customers and staff so we can better work together to improve our services.
- 4 Promote Customer Voice across the organisation by showing how it makes a difference to our customers and service delivery.

Our Approach

We operate across a large geographic area, including both rural and urban areas, we have a diverse range of customers, deliver a diverse range of services and we want as many customers to meaningfully engage with us as possible.

Our approach to Customer Voice continues to focus our engagement activities on important projects and services, clearly identifying our shared goals, working with customers to shape the outcomes, and then promoting our achievements.

We will make the most of digital opportunities to capture feedback and undertake two way engagement with customers.

We will support our staff by creating a culture where engagement and listening to the Customer Voice is embedded in our projects and services, helping to drive change and enhance the customer experience for everyone. This includes local engagement in the communities our customers live, through discussion with our local staff teams.

Training and Building Understanding

We know that for customers to get involved in decision-making, they need a good understanding of what we do, how we do it and why we make the decisions we do.

This is the best way to ensure meaningful engagement for the benefit of customers and the organisation.

We will build understanding in general by:

- explaining and promoting opportunities to get involved to new customers at sign up and post allocation visits, including refreshed leaflets and literature;
- creating a Customer Voice glossary of terms to help customers navigate the jargon of social housing.
- sharing the achievements of Customer Voice approach regularly to all customers via news stories in the Connect newsletter.

We will build knowledge and confidence of involved customers by:

- creating a comprehensive induction framework for all involved customers;
- providing a welcome pack to all customers who express an interest in getting involved, containing information on key areas of housing and asset management, and more generally how Registered Social Landlords in Scotland are governed;
- offer introductory workshops with key staff in housing management, property services, customer experience and development;
- provide ongoing training and information to involved customers on specific topics of engagement; and
- offer opportunities to learn and work with our staff teams on shared challenges like estate and asset management, carbon literacy and our net zero aspirations.

We will tailor our support to involved customers by:

- working with customers to understand their interests and the best ways for them to get involved.

- Establishing any individual needs, training requirements or solutions to barriers to involvement (e.g. digital inclusion, work commitments).

Involvement Options

Eildon-wide Opportunities

Customer Opinion Group (COG)

The COG is the place to be for all involved customers, allowing people to join themed Customer Voice groups if they wish, or to have their say on policy reviews and to test out any new services we're offering from the comfort of their own home.

Themed Customer Voice groups

These groups will get together to discuss a wide range of topics, including things like: how we're performing, reviewing consultation design and results, and feeding into our service, policy and strategy review work.

The group will have a changing membership as we draw members from our Customer Opinion Group, based on what service areas they have told us they are interested in.

Mystery Shopping

We will develop options for customers to get involved in Mystery Shopping which, alongside satisfaction surveys, will provide us with useful information about the customer experience and allow customers to provide constructive feedback on how we are performing against our Customer Service Standards.

Eildon Membership

Customers over the age of 16 can apply to become a member of Eildon. Once a member, customers will receive a copy of our annual accounts, invitations to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any other general or special meetings held by the Association. Members have the right to vote on any matters at these meetings and can be nominated for election to the Eildon Board.

Local Voices

Local Engagement

The majority of our teams work out and about in our communities across the Borders and are well-placed to engage locally with customers, picking up issues and listening to suggestions for improvement.

Whether customers have just moved into one of our brand-new developments, or if they have been in an Eildon home for a while, we encourage customers to get in touch.

Registered Tenants Organisations

Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) are another way to come together and influence landlords' decision-making. We can also support customers to set up an RTO, where there is a demand to do so.

Let's Talk

Customers in our Sheltered or Extra Care developments (and their family or friends) can take part in our Let's Talk sessions where we meet regularly in the lounge. to discuss a range of issues, both general and specific to the location; in our learning disability services, we meet either in smaller groups or 1 to 1, based on what best meets our customers' needs.

Surveys

From our repair feedback survey through to our annual rent increase and satisfaction surveys, we're always keen to know what customers think of the services we deliver. Customers can get in touch with a complaint, compliment or question any time through our My Eildon portal or on our website. This feedback helps us to spot issues, find solutions and learn lessons to improve services in the future.

Information and Feedback

We'll provide feedback to show the difference your involvement has made to your fellow customers; we will do this via our social media, our website , and through our quarterly Connect Newsletters.

We will also develop our 'Get Involved' web pages, allowing customers to access information on current and previous consultations, focus groups and the work of the Customer Voice Group.

Equality and Human Rights

Eildon values diversity and is committed to ensuring equality for all our customers. We recognise the importance of eliminating discrimination, fostering good relations, and advancing equality of opportunity in our interactions with tenants, service users and the communities in which we work.

Eildon will ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to participate fully and equally and that there will be no direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the grounds of the following, which are considered "protected characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race

- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In addition to the protected characteristics specified in the Equality Act 2010, there will be no discrimination or indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

- care experience
- caring responsibilities
- gender identity
- parental status
- socio-economic disadvantage
- trade union membership

To ensure this commitment is met, Equalities and Diversity training is a core training subject for Eildon staff and will also be made available to customers who get involved.

Communication

Eildon is committed to providing high quality, meaningful information to customers and will provide that information in accessible formats that meet their needs. Increasingly, we will be meeting these needs digitally where appropriate and exploring new technological options to engage those who may need additional support (e.g. read aloud apps, translation options etc.)

Customers can tell us about their communication needs at any time and are encouraged to keep their details up to date so that we can provide them with the best service.

We will provide written information in plain English and provide this information in other languages, audio, braille, and large print, on request.

Further, we will develop Easy Read versions of our Customer Voice options leaflets and tailor our communications so that there are no barriers to accessing information.

Resources

Customer engagement requires resources as well as commitment to make it successful. In support of this, Eildon will make available a dedicated budget for this activity, agreed annually by the Board as part of the overall budget process.

Our Community Engagement Officer promotes opportunities for customers to get involved to support our decision making and co-ordinates our planned customer engagement activities at an organisational level.

We also recognise and celebrate the fact that local engagement is happening all the time between our teams and customers and communities; from local meetings about improvements, to planning for new developments and even the day to day suggestions we take on board, we will seek to capture this engagement to promote our culture of shared continuous improvement.

We will also provide further resources by strengthening the requirements for all staff to consider the Customer Voice when designing and delivering services.

The budget will be used to meet the aims of the strategy by providing funding:

- To remove digital barriers by providing equipment, access and support for involved customers to get online.
- To cover the cost for customers of travel and childcare related to customer engagement events that could be a barrier to some getting involved.
- To cover the cost of training for customers who want to get involved.
- To support new groups working to set up and operate as properly constituted bodies e.g., Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs).
- In the form of start-up grants and annual grants to RTOs which may be awarded to assist with the running costs of a properly constituted RTO.

Measurement and Review

To measure success against the aims of this Strategy, we will:

- 1 Create a Customer Voice Strategy action plan ([#Appendix 1](#)) which is monitored regularly by the Customer Experience Group, reviewed annually by our Customer Opinion Group, with updates provided to Board via the Customer Experience report.
- 2 Continue to consult customers annually on satisfaction with our services (in line with our statutory obligations under the Scottish Social Housing Charter), including the indicators most specific to this Strategy around satisfaction with the quality of information we provide, and satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making.
- 3 Analyse customer contact data and feedback through surveys, complaints, enquiries through our Customer Experience Hub, and with front facing officers.

In consultation with customers, this Strategy will be reviewed every three years for relevance but may be revised more quickly should legislative change, best practice, or performance towards its aims require it.

Appendix 1

Action Plan 2025/26

Aim 1: Plan and embed customer engagement opportunities and requirements within our strategic and departmental objectives for the organisation.
Action
Continuously promote the strategy and the support available to staff members at staff briefing sessions, through explainer videos and by promoting the work of our Customer Voice group in articles on our internal 'Eildon Inside' website.
Our Community Engagement Officer will regularly attend team meetings (i.e. Housing Services, Property Services, Customer Experience Hub) to promote Customer Voice and capture and report quarterly the engagement activities undertaken by teams.
Embed consideration of customer engagement options within the development of our approach to all actions within our departmental plans – in tandem with our emerging approach to Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments.
Include a specific briefing on Customer Voice as part of induction process for new staff across the organisation.
Aim 2: Make it easy for customers to get involved and share their ideas, no matter where they live or what help they need.
Action
Create a refreshed suite of explanatory guides and leaflets to be shared online and externally with staff and customers.
Encourage greater involvement through the Customer Opinion Group by creating and sharing a programme of upcoming opportunities, including surveys, focus groups and events.
Establish appetite for online or hybrid face to face meetings amongst our customer group by surveying the Customer Opinion Group and piloting the approach.
Ensure that the flexibility of options and the support we can provide is clearly promoted to groups of customers in a range of appropriate ways to encourage wider engagement.

Aim 3: Build good relationships between customers and staff so we can better work together to improve our services.

Action

Engage with customers locally where that is their preference, helping to build relationships with and between tenants and encourage local groups where there is an appetite or a specific subject relevant to a location, including 'Welcome Meetings' in new developments and, for example, established developments undergoing refurbishments.

Continue to prompt consideration of Customer Voice options by customers taking part in our monthly tracker satisfaction surveys, with notes of interest followed up with contact from our Community Engagement Officer.

Encourage customers to get involved from the outset of their relationship with us, by including a specific communication from our Community Engagement Officer shortly after becoming a new customer with us.

Aim 4: Promote Customer Voice across the organisation by showing how it makes a difference to our customers and service delivery

Action

Standardise feedback reporting for consultations so that those involved know the impact of their contributions, within three months of the consultation ending.

Increase the profile of all the involvement options by feeding back through a section focused on Customer Voice in each Connect Newsletter.

Expand the current 'Get Involved' web pages so that interested customers can access information on current and previous consultations, focus groups and the work of the Customer Voice Group.