

SYHA Interim Customer Engagement Strategy 2025

Our vision: For our customers to settle at home, live well and realise their potential.
Our mission: To be a high performing, sustainable organisation providing services that are valued by our customers.
Our purpose: To provide good quality, well maintained homes, and support for people to settle and live well in their community.

SYHA's strategic priority is to provide high quality, efficient and effective services for customers. We will provide services that meet our customers' diverse needs and expectations and use their feedback to make improvements.

We have a strong customer focus culture and SYHA's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) reflect this. 78% of SYHA's customers are satisfied with our overall service, compared to sector benchmark median of 71%. The majority of SYHA's TSMs benchmark in the upper quartile. SYHA's full TSM results can be found here: <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/tenant-satisfaction-measures/>

However, we are also on a journey to improve our approach to customer engagement and governance, and enhance our compliance with regulatory standards. This Interim Customer Engagement Strategy sets out the building blocks of how will do this over the next 12 months.

Background and Context

The Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017 and the death of Awaab Ishak in 2020 have been a catalyst for government to strengthen the voice of customers and introduce new legislation to ensure quality homes.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has introduced a new, proactive consumer regulation regime, aimed at putting customers at the heart of social housing. The Act aims to give customers greater powers of influence and scrutiny and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems. It also focuses on better quality and safer homes.

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a revised set of four Consumer Standards, one of which is in relation to transparency, influence and accountability. This standard includes, amongst other things, the requirements for Registered Providers to:

- Give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services.
- Working with tenants, regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services.
- Take tenants views into account in decision making about how landlord services are delivered.

- Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlords
- Provide tenants with accessible information about landlord services so they can use services, understand what to expect from their landlords and hold their landlord to account.

Current Engagement Work

SYHA has a rich history of facilitating customer engagement and already has an engagement structure in place. However, we wish to strengthen our approach to engagement and develop our offer to allow more customers more opportunities to influence decision making within SYHA and shape the landlord services that we currently deliver.

Our current engagement framework consists of four pillars – Informing, Involving, Insight and Governance. Under these headers, our interim strategy sets where we are now and where we would like to be. We have mapped out our pathway in our Action Plan, which can be found in Appendix 1.

- **Informing**

Current: SYHA publishes information online about our services and ways customer can get involved. For example, we have a Customer Opportunity page on our website <https://www.syha.co.uk/customer-opportunities/>. Our TSM performance data, which includes management information and building safety measures, is shared with customers after each annual reporting cycle. This also includes information relating to repairs and maintenance performance and compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/tenant-satisfaction-measures/>

Our Annual Report to customers highlights how we're keeping our customers and their homes safe and meeting all legal and statutory requirements. <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/annual-reviews/>. We have Information on our website about Fire Safety, Charging e-bikes, Asbestos and Water Safety. <https://www.syha.co.uk/homes/my-home/safety-at-home/>. Our ESG report highlights performance on building safety. <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/esg-summary-report/>

Desired: To identify what SYHA needs to share with customers and ensure this information is shared in an accessible manner. We will undertake a full review of all regulatory requirements and develop a customer communication plan. We want to share more with customers about our performance, so we are transparent with customers in how we are performing in our delivery of landlord services. We also want to share more information around the services that we offer and the events and involvement opportunities we provide. We want to ensure all the information we share is clear and accessible to all. We will undertake a data collection exercise to make sure we have the correct information about our customers.

- **Involving**

Current: Customers are involved in challenging, influencing and examining SYHA's performance, decisions and direction through the Scrutiny Panel. Our Scrutiny Panel consists of 7 members and has operated in this current format for the last 3 years. The panel usually meets monthly and has influenced delivery of our services in a variety of ways including how SYHA communicates service charges, the lettable standard of SYHA homes, as well as conducting SYHA's first customer-led Annual Health Check.

To ensure tenants have a voice in our Governance structure, our Board includes two Non-Executive positions for SYHA tenants.

SYHA also has a well-established transaction survey framework for the following areas:

- Complaints handling satisfaction
- Handling of anti-social behaviour complaints satisfaction
- Satisfaction with how routine repairs are carried out
- Damp, mould and condensation repair survey
- Satisfaction with moving into a new home and ending a tenancy with SYHA

To support scrutiny and add a level of independence, our tenant perception TSMs are gathered and produced by Viewpoint, a social enterprise specialising in independent customer surveying.

Desired: To increase the ways customers can be involved in shaping and influencing SYHA's services. We will offer a greater range of activities, including improving opportunities to influence policies and strategies.

- **Insight**

Current: SYHA has a dedicated team who collates all customer feedback from our transactional surveys, complaints and TSM perception surveys. This creates our Customer Voice. The team meets with managers from across the business quarterly to review our Customer Voice themes and discuss feedback and learning.

We share publicly the learning from complaints and TSMs online: <https://www.syha.co.uk/who-we-are/how-were-doing/improvements-and-learning/>

Desired: To ensure that we are hearing a wide range of Customer Voices and to address any inequalities. Continue to triangulate different channels of feedback to identify themes and areas of improvements. Improve reporting to Board on these improvements.

- **Governance**

Current: The role of our Board in Customer Voice is critical, both in understanding what SYHA customers are saying and in demonstrating the impact of customer feedback be that how it is used in decision making or how it influences service delivery. SYHA has a limited number of formal ways that customers can be involved in the governance of the organisation. This includes as Non-Executive Board members, as well as part of the Scrutiny Panel.

SYHA's Customer Experience team ensures compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. This includes self-assessment, review of complaints handling performance and an annual complaints and service improvement, Executive Leadership Team and Board reports.

Since April 2023, it has been a requirement for SYHA and other housing associations to assess their performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures as determined by the Regulator of Social Housing. This is assessed both through internal performance monitoring and using an external agency to conduct assessment against the Tenant Perception measures

Desired: To review the governance options to provide Board assurance and information on engagement and regulatory compliance. To ensure that SYHA is meeting all regulatory and best practice around customer engagement (i.e. Consumer Standards, Tpas National Tenant Engagement Standards).

Appendix 1

Customer Engagement and Governance Action Plan

SYHA's Interim Customer Engagement Strategy aims to build on our current work and ensure we meet all regulatory standards. The below actions will support to us to improve SYHA's approach to customer engagement and governance.

SYHA's Board holds ultimate responsibility for compliance with statutory and regulatory expectations. However, subject to Board approval a new Customer Committee will be implemented which will provide oversight of improvements to customer engagement and progress with the action plan. The Assistant Director of Housing will be the Executive Team lead for this plan, with the Head of Customer Experience as the Leadership team lead.

Informing			
Priority	Lead and timescales	How will it be delivered?	How will we measure delivery?
Identify what needs to be shared with customers and why to ensure we are compliant with regulatory requirements.	Marketing and Communications Lead Date: March 25	Assess all regulatory standards to identify requirements and incorporate into a customer communication plan.	Assessment of requirements against communications
Increase the information we share with customers about our services, events and involvement opportunities. Ensure this is clear and accessible to all customers.	Head of Customer Experience Date: April – December 25	Create a communication plan with customers to drive the information we share, as well as the communication methods we use.	Number of communications shared with customers, and methods used
Ensure we hold good quality information about our housing customers. This will ensure we can share information about SYHA, as well as better	Assistant Director of Housing Date: April 25	Complete a data collection exercise to ensure we hold the data set recommended in the Knowing our Homes programme.	Completeness of data against the minimum dataset

understand the diverse needs of our customers.			
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Involving			
Priority	Lead	How will it be delivered?	How will we measure delivery?
Continue to support SYHA's Customer Scrutiny Panel to challenge, influence and examine SYHA's performance, decisions and direction.	Head of Customer Experience Date: January-December 25	SYHA's Customer Experience Team will continue to support the Scrutiny Panel and recruit new members as required.	Number of Scrutiny Panel meetings Number of Scrutiny Panel exercises
To increase involvement options in ways that best suit customers, including digital and face to face options.	Head of Customer Experience Date: April – December 25	Through the creation of a different levels of involvement activity: 1. Occasional and informal (i.e. surveys, single events and conversations) 2. Regular and one-off activities (i.e. task and finish group, focus group, co-create activities) 3. Formal engagement (i.e. Scrutiny Panel, Customer Committee, Board member)	Number of different involvement activities at each level
Improve opportunities for SYHA customers to influence policies and strategies that affect the services they receive.	Head of Customer Experience Date: January – December 25	SYHA will increase the number of opportunities and provide dedicated resources to support customers to participate.	Number of policy and strategy influence opportunities Tracking customer influence in policy revision

Insight			
Priority	Lead	How will it be delivered?	How will we measure delivery?
To hear diverse Customer Voices and opinions, which help shape and improve SYHA services	Head of Customer Experience Date: March 25	Review SYHA's current channels of insight and assess against different customer characteristics. Action plan to be created to address inequalities.	Insight received from customers v customer characteristics
Analyse Customer Voice to identify themes and areas of improvement. Channels include transaction surveys, TSMs, complaints.	Head of Customer Experience Date: January – December 25	Customer Voice working group meets quarterly to review insight and update progress against improvement actions.	Quarterly Customer Voice and Engagement Board Report
Continue to gather insight and improvements from complaints	Head of Customer Experience Date: January – December 25	SYHA's Complaints Working Group addresses themes and improvements.	Quarterly Customer Voice and Engagement Board Report

Governance			
Priority	Lead	How will it be delivered?	How will we measure delivery?
Review options to establish the most appropriate way to provide assurance to SYHA's Board on customer engagement and regulatory compliance	Head of Governance Date: March 25	We will continue to work with DTP to assess best practice and options to support greater customer involvement in SYHA's governance.	Creation and operation of new governance arrangements
Ensure continued compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code	Head of Customer Experience Date: March – December 25	We will use our annual self-assessment against the Code and subsequent action plan to improve our approach to complaints. This will include learning from any maladministration cases.	6 monthly self-assessment against the Code Progress of action plan

Governance			
Meet the requirements of the Consumer Standards	Head of Governance Date: March 25	We will self-assess against the standards and address any areas that require improvement.	Annual self-assessment against Consumer Standard Progress of action plan
Assess SYHA against the Tpas National Tenant Engagement Standards	Head of Customer Experience Date: March 25	Commission Tpas to assess SYHA's current approaches and recommend areas of improvement.	Proportion of standards met v not met
Improve the information shared with SYHA Board about customer engagement and involvement.	Head of Customer Experience Date: April – December 25	Introduce quarterly SYHA Customer Engagement and Voice Board reports.	Number of quarterly reports