

# TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



*This paper describes how Argyle Housing will provide real chances for tenants and residents to have a say in the way that Argyle delivers its services.*

We recognise that our tenants and residents know, better than anyone, whether the homes that we provide meet their needs and gives them the homes and other services that they want. We need to listen to our tenants and residents so that we can make sure we provide the homes and the services which meet these needs.

We also know that our tenants and residents come from all walks of life and from all over the world. We have people living with complex issues, we have young and old, singles and large families and we have Aboriginal people who have lived on this land for over 40,000 years. Everyone whose home is an Argyle home has a story to tell and experiences to share.

We want to give everyone a chance to help shape the experience that you get as an Argyle tenant or resident. We hope that you would want to participate but if you are happy in your home and just want to get on with your life then that is of course ok to.

## Our current activities

Argyle already encourages tenant participation and engagement in lots of events including:



*Invitations to the Argyle Annual General Meeting and various planning activities which give tenants the opportunity to say what they think and meet with Board members and staff;*



*Tenant forums and conferences;*



*Community outings or events;*



*Local competitions – such as garden competitions or prizes for rent payments in advance;*



*Participation in local community events;*



*Informal feedback on an individual level;*



*Formal feedback through annual tenant satisfaction survey or suggestion boxes; and,*



*Contributing to, and editing, The Argyle, the Argyle Tenant Newsletter and website.*

But we know that we can always do better and we want to build on what has already been put in place.

## **How do we want to work differently?**

We want this new Tenant Engagement Strategy to bring all the existing activities and some new ones into a single plan so tenants and residents can see what we have made a commitment to do and to make sure that we deliver on those commitments. But it is more than that. We also want tenants and resident to help us decide what it is we should be doing so that we are delivering services that you actually want rather than what we think you want.

From now on Argyle will talk to tenants and residents.



*In a way which builds trust between tenants and all staff to ensure that our common goal is achieved;*



*We will be open and accountable to our tenants and their families for the actions we take and the decisions we make;*



*Our engagement with our tenants and residents is an ongoing process where we discuss, review, write and discuss again to make sure we are delivering what is really needed;*



*We recognise that our tenants and residents are all different and that we need to provide a range of ways for us all to communicate. For example some people might want face to face meetings whilst others would prefer email;*



*We will deliver on our commitments and if we don't we will explain why;*



*If tenant groups are established we will ensure that tenant groups are adequately resourced so that they can fully participate in discussion and decision making; and,*



*We will recognise the independence of our tenant groups.*

## Delivering the Plan

Because Argyle recognises that we have to communicate differently with different people we will try to develop new and creative ways in which our tenants and residents, particularly those from under-represented groups, can get involved and make their views known. We will give particular consideration to the following:

-  Location and timing of meetings /events;
-  Easy to access venues;
-  Particular needs including dietary, mobility, transport, childcare and translation/interpreting requirements;
-  Availability of information in plain English and other languages and formats where required;

To involve tenants and residents properly the following will either be provided or funded:

-  *Printing and distribution of the Argyle;*
-  *Venues for meetings;*
-  *Transport to and from venues for tenant consultations;*
-  *Costs to provide lunches, teas and coffees when tenants go to consultation and review meetings.*
-  *Child care facilities;*
-  *Travel expenses for tenants to go to meetings;*
-  *Staff time;*
-  *Administration (taking minutes, mailings and photocopying);*
-  *Training;*
-  *Access to information and advice.*

## Our Commitments

Argyle makes three commitments to our tenants and residents.

1. Tenants and residents will be able to be involved in decision making (otherwise called Empowerment);
2. Argyle will answer to our tenants and residents;
3. Tenants will be more informed and will receive information in the way they want it.

### Empowerment

*We will work with our tenants to ensure that the correct decisions are made.*

Action	Explanation	Anticipated completion date
In partnership with tenants and residents, design and establish a Customer Council	This is a group of tenants and residents who will discuss issues, exchange ideas and give feedback to Argyle. Meetings are tenant led and focus on a particular theme, issue or concern for tenants.	
Retain and increase the number of local Tenant Committees	Aim to have a Customer Council Branch for each of our offices. This would discuss local issues and might send a representative to the Customer Council.	
Conduct Tenant Satisfaction Surveys and develop action plans around results.	Tenants and residents will be involved in designing the survey to make sure the right questions are asked.	
Look to set up a Communications Readers Panel	This is a group of tenants and residents who will look at documents/newsletters we are intending to send to tenants and residents or put on our web site or in the Argyle and check that they can be understood, whether the text is the right size, whether formatting could be better. This panel might want to receive drafts through the post, via email or in some other way.	

<p>Look to set up a Policy Readers Panel</p>	<p>Argyle has a large number of policies which cover things like how much rent has to be paid, animals in Argyle homes, transfer requests. Sometimes we might need to change those policies and this group of tenants and residents would be invited to comment on the intended changes before they were made. Again this could be done face to face or through email.</p>	
<p>Consider the opportunities to establish a Recruitment Panel</p>	<p>When tenants and residents contact staff they need to know that the staff member can listen, knows what the job is and can do the job. People volunteering to sit on Recruitment Panels would be trained and would then participate in the process to hire new staff.</p>	
<p>Consider setting up a Maintenance Reference Group</p>	<p>Satisfaction Surveys always show that getting repairs done well is one of the most important services that Argyle provides to its tenants. This group could provide advice to our Assets Team about tenant and resident repair priorities, get involved in writing contracts and choosing tradies that we employ.</p>	
<p>We will formally recognise the voluntary work that our tenants do for the Argyle community.</p>	<p>People who put their hand up to sit on panels will definitely learn heaps but it is also important that Argyle recognises the value of volunteerism. We would love to know how tenants and residents think this gratitude can best be shown.</p>	

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Argyle will report to tenants on the areas of our performance that they most care about.

Action	Explanation	Anticipated completion date
Develop and implement a Customer Report Card	A tenants and resident group will decide what activities it wants Argyle to report on every six months. It might be things like the number of repairs completed on time, how many newsletters we put out or how many people Argyle helped to get into employment. Whatever they are (usually between 6-9) we will agree targets and publish our results.	
Establish a Mystery Shopper Program	A mystery shopper is someone who tests out how good our customer service is and reports back to us on our performance. It tells us whether our staff are doing the job correctly and whether we need to provide extra training in certain areas of our work. With Argyle, a tenant group would decide what areas we want to test and a tenant might be sent to one of our offices to test our performance on that area.	
Argyle Complaints handling	We welcome genuine complaints as an opportunity to identify how we can do better	
Consult tenants on how they would like us to be more accountable.	What else is there that we could do to improve the level of service that we offer?	

## INFORMATION

Argyle will ensure tenants are informed of what is happening in a way which works for them and that tenants can contact us in a way which suits them

Action	Explanation	Anticipated completion date
Continue to publish The Argyle	Seek ways to get greater tenant engagement in publishing/ writing articles	
Hold annual CEO Tenant Conversations	Our CEO will call tenants to get their views on the Argyle Strategic Plan and the direction the company is going.	
Review use, content and management of the Argyle social media platforms.	This will ensure or social media is accessible and useful for tenants	
Develop and implement the MyArgyle App	This will provide tenants access to their accounts, report maintenance and other services provided by Argyle	

## Monitoring our progress

We will regularly check our performance against this plan to ensure that the tenant engagement commitments that have been agreed are delivered and that they are achieving the intended outcomes. We will be honest and open in the results that we achieve.