



SOLOM SOUTH WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

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1 Introduction

Solon is committed to involving residents as fully and effectively as possible. Our Business Plan for Resident Involvement says we will:

- Achieve a 3-star/excellent approach to Resident Involvement by September 2012
- Gain TPAS Accreditation for Resident Involvement by March 2013
- Support successful co-regulation
- Deliver upper quartile customer satisfaction with services and opportunities to influence service improvements
- Increase residents' involvement in managing their homes, deciding strategic priorities and improving the quality of services

The Customer Service Improvement Committee also aims to:

- Make sure that services are fully shaped by the widest possible resident 'group' and the widest possible representation of the resident body in Solon's operations by September 2011.

This Strategy has been written in partnership with the Residents' Forum (appendix 6.2 details how residents have been involved as well as a communication plan). Their aim was for the document to be brief, clear and in plain English. It sets out what we are doing now, and what we plan to do, to meet our aims and the regulator's requirements.

2 Where we are now.

Residents can get involved in a number of different ways:

Board Membership – there are two residents on the Board. There are up to four places for Resident Board members.

The Customer Service Improvement Committee – a Board Committee which monitors customer service, resident involvement and equalities. Up to six residents can be members of the Committee and at the moment there are 6 resident members.

Residents' Forum – the residents in this group look at Resident Involvement, Customer Care and Housing Management. They also see information about how well Solon is doing and help decide how we should consult residents.

Maintenance Forum - the residents on this group look at the maintenance service. Working with contractors at a special event, they helped to develop an action plan to improve the service. The Forum now monitors that action plan. They also discuss the notes from regular meetings with contractors.

'My Place' Newsletter & Editorial Panel – there are two residents on the editorial panel who help to decide what should be in the newsletter. The newsletter is sent out 4 times a year.

Residents can also come to focus groups, special events, project groups and training events. They can fill in surveys and questionnaires and can help to check our service by becoming a Mystery Shopper.

Residents can get information from the newsletter and the website, and can use the suggestion box to give us ideas to improve services. They can also give feedback on individual services on satisfaction slips.

A survey is sent to all residents every 3 years. The next survey will be in Summer 2011.

We help residents to get involved by paying costs such as child-care or transport, booking a taxi if they need one. We also give residents training. Details are in appendix 6.3

3 Where do we want to be? - Objectives

- To use ongoing consultation, training and support, to make sure that all residents who want to, can get involved in and influence Solon's decision-making forums and service delivery plans.
- To offer as many different ways to get involved as possible, so that all residents, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexuality or other characteristic, can get involved in the way that is best for them.
- To work with residents to explore options for Resident Scrutiny, decide the best way to do this and set up Resident Scrutiny Panel by December 2011.
- To give residents the training and support they need to be able to take part in the Residents and Maintenance Forums.
- To agree, with residents, how we will measure and monitor the performance of staff, contractors and partnership agencies.

4 How will we get there?

Detailed actions aimed at achieving the objectives are included in the action plan (appendix 6.1). This includes specific actions, the expected outcomes for residents, a cost benefit analysis and learning outcomes.

The action plan will be monitored and actions signed off by the Residents' Forum.

5 How will we know when we have got there?

The Forum have agreed twelve key outcomes that they feel will be met by this strategy.

Outcome	Target
More residents will be involved with Solon in some way.	10% of all residents to be involved in some way.
Residents feel there is a way to get involved that would suit them, even if they do not want to get involved at the moment.	
Involved residents will be broadly representative of the whole resident body.	Diversity profile to match that of all residents.
Resident Scrutiny will be in place.	By December 2011.
Forum members will be happy with the training and support provided.	95% satisfied with training and support.
Involved residents will be happy with the training and support offered and provided.	95% satisfied with training and support.
Ways to monitor performance will be agreed.	By August 2011.
Services will have changed or improved as a result of resident involvement.	10 different service areas to involve residents.
More residents will be satisfied with Solon as a landlord.	Top quartile (in the top 25% of Associations).
More residents will be satisfied with opportunities to participate.	
More residents will be satisfied that Solon takes their views into account.	

No.	Strategic Objective / Recommendation	Action No.	Action	Lead	Priority rating	Links	Deadline	KPI / Measure	Expected Outcomes
R11	To use ongoing consultation, training and support, to make sure that all residents who want to, can get involved in and influence Solon's decision-making forums and service delivery plans.	1.1	Research reasons why residents do not get involved.	RICO	☆☆	Mock Insp report	Sep-11	Reasons identified	Able to address barriers -more residents involved
		1.2	Establish a systematic way of publicising how Resident Involvement has made a difference	RICO	☆☆	RI Service Standard	Dec-11	Satisfaction - views are taken into account / able to influence services	More residents involved
		1.3	Develop a database to keep accurate, comprehensive and up to date records of involved residents	RICO	☆☆☆	Mock Insp report	Aug-11	Database in use	Able to target consultations and involvement opportunities
		1.4	Develop a method of recording and assessing the impact of Involvement activities, including cost/benefit analysis	RICO	☆☆☆	TPAS report RI Service Standard Mock Insp report	Aug-11	Impact assessment reports to RF/CSIC	Residents clear about how they have made a difference
		1.5	Develop a Communications Strategy	PIM	☆☆	VFM Action plan 18.7	Sep-11	Strategy in place	More effective communication
		1.6	Publish information on Resident Involvement on the website and keep up to date	RICO	☆☆	TPAS report	Jun-11	Satisfaction - views taken into account	Residents more aware of how they can get involved

R12	To offer as many different ways to get involved as possible, so that all residents, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexuality or other characteristic, can get involved in the way that is best for them	2.1	Regularly monitor the diversity of involved residents, including by type of involvement	RICO	☆☆☆	E&D Action plan 2.9	Dec-11	Diversity profile to match that of all residents	Wider range of residents involved - representative of wider resident body Demonstrate the effectiveness of methods being used More service areas will have involved residents	
		2.2	Set targets for how many residents will be involved in each way	RICO /RF	☆☆	RI Service Standard	Jan-12	Targets set		
		2.3	Identify under-represented groups	RICO	☆☆☆	E&D Action plan 2.3, 2.4 TPAS report	May-11	Groups identified - service uptake reports to CSIC		
		2.4	Consult on ways to include all groups	RICO	☆☆		Nov-11	Meet diversity target		
		2.5	Find ways to involve residents from a wider geographical area - include Forest of Dean, Mendip etc	RICO	☆☆	Mock Insp report	Nov-11	Residents involved from outside Bristol		
		2.6	Investigate methods of involving residents such as: - E-mail/internet/social networking - Resident inspectors/surveyors - Local events etc - Tenant management	RICO /RF	☆☆	Mock Insp report	Dec-11	Menu of involvement opportunities in place		
		2.7	Agree with residents the range of involvement opportunities (using tenancy audit data)	RICO /RF	☆☆			Feb-12		Menu of involvement opportunities in place
		2.8	Increase involvement in producing 'My Place'	RICO	☆☆	RI KLOE	Dec-11	More residents involved		"My Place" more resident-led
		2.9	Consider ways to involve Shared Owners	RICO /RF	☆		Apr-12	Proposals to involve		Wider range of residents involved
		2.10	Consider ways to involve residents in supported housing managed by agents	RICO /RF	☆	Mock Insp report	Apr-12	Proposals to involve		Wider range of residents involved

R13	To work with residents to explore options for Resident Scrutiny, decide the best way to do this and set up Resident Scrutiny Panel by December 201	3.1	Research existing models and methodologies for Resident Scrutiny	RICO /RF	☆☆☆	Annual Report action plan 7Mock Insp reportTPAS report	Jun-11		Residents able to hold Solon to account and collectively challenge poor performance. Residents playing a key part in Solon's 'self-regulation'
		3.2	Work with Resident Forum to identify how it might work for Solon	RICO /RF			Jul-11		
		3.3	Consult wider resident body	RICO /RF			Aug-11		
		3.4	Decide on approach to be taken	RICO /RF			Sep-11		
		3.5	Identify further actions - likely to include: - recruit residents - develop terms of reference - develop and deliver training - Establish relationship with Forums, Board and CSIC	RICO /RF			Sep-11	Specific action plan produced	
		3.6	Implement Scrutiny arrangements	RICO /RF			Dec-11	Scrutiny arrangements in place	
		3.7	Consult with residents on Governance Structure as a whole	RICO /RF	☆☆		Mar-12		

R14	To give residents the training and support they need to be able to take part in the Residents and Maintenance Forums	4.1	Identify skills needed for various Resident Involvement roles	RICO /RF	☆☆☆	E&D Action plan 2.5, 2.7 Annual Report action plan 9 TPAS report Mock Insp report	Jul-11	Person specs / skills profiles in place	Residents are clear about the skills needed to be involved in a meaningful way and have opportunities to acquire those skills. Residents are happy with the training and support offered and provided
		4.2	Develop a Resident Training plan (where possible, include coaching, mentoring, shadowing etc as well as formal training sessions)	RICO /RF	☆☆☆		Aug-11	Training plan developed	
		4.3	Complete a skills audit for involved residents, and establish a rolling process of repeats to keep up to date.	RICO /RF	☆☆		Sep-11	Skills audit completed	
		4.4	Monitor satisfaction with training opportunities and training provided (short and long term)	RICO	☆		Apr-12	95% satisfaction (including after 6 months)	
R15	To agree, with residents, how we will measure and monitor the performance of staff, contractors and partnership agencies	5.1	Agree with residents the key performance issues to monitor.	RICO /RF	☆☆☆	Objective 3 - Resident Scrutiny	Aug-11	Performance indicators and reporting agreed	See Objective 3 - Residents able to meaningfully monitor and influence performance
		5.2	Agree how performance will be reported to residents: - which group - how often - format	RICO /RF	☆☆☆		Aug-11		
		5.3	Agree method for residents to express concerns about performance and request that action be taken	RICO	☆☆☆		Sep-11		

Resident Involvement in Producing the Strategy

The Resident Forum discussed the strategy at meetings in December 2010, January and March 2011.

The objectives were written by a resident, discussed and agreed by the Forum.

As the March meeting was poorly attended, the draft of the Strategy has also been discussed with individual members of the Forum.

The strategy has also been discussed at meetings of the Customer Service Improvement Committee which includes residents.

How will this be communicated?

What?	Who?	How?	When?
Resident Involvement Strategy & Action Plan	Residents	Resident Forum (by post/e-mail and in meetings) Newsletter Website Other events	April – June June May & ongoing As events happen
	Staff	Staff Meeting Team Meetings	May June / July
	Board	CSIC Meeting Board Meeting	4 May 2011 18 May 2011
Performance against Action Plan and Performance Indicators (including diversity of Involved Residents)	Residents	Resident Forum (meetings) Newsletter Website	Frequency to be agreed Annually Ongoing
	Staff	Website KLOE Meetings	Ongoing As appropriate
	Board	CSIC Meeting	6 monthly
Support available to get involved. Options for involvement developed through strategy Training plan	Residents	Newsletter Website Other events Resident & Maintenance Forums	6 monthly May & ongoing As events happen As appropriate
	Staff	Website Team Meetings	Ongoing June / July
	Board	CSIC Meeting	6 monthly

Support for Residents to Get Involved

1. Expenses

Solon will pay out-of-pocket expenses for travel and other reasonable costs, so that you can come to meetings, training courses and other events.

Travel costs

We would encourage residents, where possible, to use public transport. We will repay bus and standard class train fares. We will need to see your ticket (we can copy it and give it back if you still need it). If you need to travel by train, we can book tickets for you.

We will also pay petrol costs at 40p per mile (this is the same as staff) if you use your car to come to meetings or events or 24 p per mile for motorcycles. You will need to make a note of the actual distance you have travelled.

If you need to use a taxi to attend a meeting or event, we can book one for you. All taxis should be booked through Solon on our account.

We will pay parking costs but not parking fines. We will need to see your ticket or a receipt.

If you need a carer or personal assistant to travel with you then we will meet that person's travel costs as well.

Child and adult care costs

For large events, we will usually provide a crèche. For other meetings, we will pay reasonable childcare costs for children under 16 as well as care costs for dependant adults.

For child care we will pay the national minimum wage (£5.93 per hour from October 2010). For dependant adults, we will pay the same, or the cost of a professional carer if required.

Child or adult care is not payable to family members living in the same household.

Child care is not normally payable for children of school age during school hours.

How do I get paid?

Expenses are paid in cash at each meeting or event. You will need your ticket or a receipt.

For petrol costs, you will need to provide the actual number of miles travelled and fill in a mileage claim form (available from the Resident Involvement Coordinator).

For child / adult care costs, you will need to fill in a care claim form, which includes a section to be filled in by the person providing care. We can send you a form to fill in before the event. If we do not receive a form signed by the carer (for claims paid where a form has not been filled in) we will not pay any more care claims.

If you need to claim an unusually large amount, we may not be able to pay this on the day. Please let us know in advance if you think this will affect you.

Tax and benefits

Expenses paid to residents are not classed as earnings. They cover out of pocket expenses, and should not affect residents' benefits, but may affect their tax position. The tax-free mileage allowance is 40p per mile (24p for motorcycles) up to 10,000 miles. Claims are subject to audit by internal and external auditors. Also, HM Revenue and Customs inspect paid claims from time to time. We strongly advise residents to check their position.

2. Training

Training will be offered to residents who are, or who want to be, involved in shaping and monitoring Solon's services.

This will range from introductory 'taster' courses to comprehensive training packages for activities like Resident Scrutiny. The training plan will be developed in conjunction with residents.

Training sessions will be arranged at times to suit residents. This could include evenings and weekends.

Expenses will be paid as detailed above and other support provided as detailed below.

Where possible training will be delivered by Solon staff. If it is more appropriate or cost effective, or staff lack the skills, external training providers will be used.

3. Other Support

If you need assistance to attend events or get involved in other ways, we will do our best to help.

All meetings, training and other events will be held in accessible venues.

Accessible transport can be provided if needed.

If you need a carer to support you in your involvement, we will cover their costs as detailed above and make sure they are able to support you effectively.

If you need other support, like an interpreter (including sign language), a hearing loop, large print documents etc we will do our best to provide this.

If English is not your first language, we can translate documents for you – we will discuss and agree with you which documents will be translated.



Ways to have your say

To find out more about how residents can get involved in Solon, ask for our leaflet or call 0117 916 7768.



Resident involvement

Solon residents have many different ways to tell us what they want from our service. We work to enable all residents to have a strong voice, be involved and give us feedback on the service we provide.

→ To help you have your say about us we will:

- keep you informed in a variety of ways, including via the resident newsletter, the annual report and the website
- offer a range of ways for you to get involved in shaping, monitoring and delivering our service, so that you can be involved in the way, and for the amount of time, that suits you
- make sure that you are effectively involved in decisions at an early stage and act on what you say, or tell you why we cannot act
- involve you in producing and reviewing the Resident Involvement Strategy, the ways to get involved, the resident newsletter, policies and procedures and other key documents
- support new and existing residents' groups
- have at least 2 (we aim for 3) Board Members who are residents.

→ To improve resident involvement we will:

- continue to develop ways you can become involved and work with all sections of the community, especially under-represented groups
- give you support, training and quality information so that you can be involved in a meaningful way
- pay expenses (travel, childcare, etc.) so you are not out of pocket
- tell you how your involvement has influenced or changed our service – we will let you know personally and provide details of changes in the resident newsletter
- keep up-to-date records of all residents who have expressed an interest in getting involved, and consult them regularly
- monitor how happy residents are with our key services, including opportunities to get involved and influence the organisation
- set targets for how many residents will be involved in each way.

→ To help us to hear your voice in Solon you will:

- tell us if you want to become more involved
- tell us what you think we could do to improve our service
- respond to satisfaction surveys and other requests for feedback.



Equality Impact Assessment Form

The form is to be completed at the beginning of any service review. The actions can then be addressed as part of the service review and can be added in to new or revised strategies or policies.

This is to be used in connection with EIA Toolkit as guidance.

Title page

What is the subject of this EIA – What are you assessing?

Resident Involvement Strategy

Which service is responsible for this?

Resident Involvement

Who are the people involved in completing this assessment?

Angela Lord (HRC)
Leanne Sowersby (RICO)

If required, have you completed any consultation in relation to this?

Worked closely with resident forum to produce the draft

Date of assessment completed

14/04/11

Name of responsible person

Leanne Sowersby (RICO)

Date EIA signed off / approved by scrutiny (HR Co-ordinator or Equality Champions)

Scope of the EIA

What service provision does the subject cover?

Resident involvement within Solon. This includes provision of support to residents (such as travel expenses), arranging and facilitating meetings and events, production of the newsletter, resident involvement objectives, resident training and actions for the future.

Who are the people affected or covered by this?

Potentially all residents – we should be trying to reach as many people as possible. All residents will, at some point, be impacted by the decisions made by involved residents. Also, all residents receive the newsletter and other communications. Some residents also have access to our website at home.

Staff will be affected as the expectation will be that all staff are involved in delivering a 3 star resident star resident involvement service.

What other information or legislation is relevant to this subject?

- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- TSA requirement for local offers
- TPAS landlord accreditation for resident involvement
- 1980 Housing Act and Tenants' Charter (right to be consulted)
- Involvement Policy for the Housing Association Sector (2004)
- Housing Key Lines of Enquiry - KLOEs (2004) – Resident Involvement
- The Localism Bill (tbc) – Resident Scrutiny

Knowledge levels relevant to the assessment.

Service users: Involved Residents

STRAND	PROFILES / DATA / KNOWLEDGE
Age	-25 – 0% 26-35 – 17% 36-45 – 36% 46-55 – 21% 56-65 – 19% 66+ - 7%
Disability	With – 26%
Gender	Male – 36% Female – 64%
Race or Ethnicity	BME – 40%
Religion or Belief	Christianity – 33% Islam – 12% Buddhism – 5% Other – 2% No religion – 43% No data – 5%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual – 79% Refused to answer – 19% No data – 2%
Transgender	0%
Socio-Economic Factors	More involved residents are out of work, rather than in employment.

Local community as a whole: All residents

STRAND	PROFILES / DATA / KNOWLEDGE
Age	-25 – 12% 26-35 – 21% 36-45 – 28% 46-55 – 22% 56-65 – 12% 66+ - 4%
Disability	With – 24%
Gender	Male – 33% Female – 67%
Race or Ethnicity	BME – 33%
Religion or Belief	Christianity – 29% Islam – 10% Buddhism – 0.73% Other – 7%

	No religion – 42% No data – 6% Biggest religion/belief not represented by involved residents is Atheism at 1.98%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual – 76% Refused to answer – 11% No data – 10% LGB – 1.8%
Transgender	0%
Socio-Economic Factors	

Relevant regional or national context: Local Community

STRAND	PROFILES / DATA / KNOWLEDGE
Age	Under 30: BCC 30.4%, S. Glos 16.9% Over 65: BCC 14.4%, S. Glos 8%
Disability	BCC 14.5%, SGlos 17.8%
Gender	Male: BCC 49.4%, SGlos 50%
Race or Ethnicity	Female: BCC 50.6%, SGlos 50%
Religion or Belief	No religion: BCC 17.5%, SGlos 24.5% Christian: BCC 73.9%, SGlos 62.1% Islam: BCC 0.5%, SGlos 2.0% Other: BCC 8.3%, SGlos 11.4%
Sexual Orientation	LGB: BCC 6%, SGlos 6%
Transgender	No data
Socio-Economic Factors	

Relevant trends within service industry/profession:

STRAND	PROFILES / DATA / KNOWLEDGE
Age	
Disability	
Gender	
Race or Ethnicity	
Religion or Belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Transgender	
Socio-Economic Factors	

Assessment discussion and findings

Age – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people of different ages to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Actual – we have a good range of residents getting involved, in line with our resident profile (except under 25)	Actual - no under 25s involved. However 4% of the local offer survey residents were under 25. Strategy talks about tailoring services to ensure all residents have equal access to getting involved.
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Yes, by addressing the gap.	Not enough information at this stage to know.
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
No	Need to explore why they have not been getting involved.

Disability – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people with disabilities to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Actual - the gender profile of involved residents is very close to that of all residents.	
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Ensure that barriers to disabled people being involved are identified and addressed	
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
No	

Gender – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for men and women to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Actual - the gender profile of involved residents is very close to that of all residents.	
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Ensure that any barriers are identified and addressed	
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
No	

Race or Ethnicity – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people of different races or ethnic backgrounds to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Actual – representation of BME residents is higher in involved residents than the whole resident population	Potential – anecdotally, Somali residents are under represented.
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Continue to ensure any barriers are addressed	No
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
No	Need to explore why they have not been getting involved and the best ways to involve them.

Religion or Belief – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people with different religion or beliefs to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Actual - the religion/belief profile of involved residents is very close to that of all residents.	Some religion/beliefs are not represented by involved residents. The largest is Atheism at 1.98% of all residents
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
	Each of these beliefs is less than 2% and therefore a small number of people overall.
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
	Ensure that any barriers are identified and addressed

Sexual Orientation – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service based on their sexual orientation.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
	There is no representation from lesbian, gay or bisexual residents.
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
	Only 1.8% of residents overall are lesbian, gay or bisexual. This is a small number of people.
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?
	Ensure that any barriers are identified and addressed

Transgender – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for Transgender people to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
No Solon residents have identified themselves as being transgender	
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?

Socio-Economic Factors – Using the information you have, discuss the possibilities for people to experience a different level of service or have different needs to access the service based on socio-economic factors such as low income, education levels, caring status, rural isolation.

Positive – Actual or Potential	Negative – Actual or Potential
Can these be improved further?	Can these be justified?
Are these being promoted?	If not, How can we mitigate or remedy any negative?

Summary of findings and actions required

Positive Impacts – Actual or Potential

Summary of findings	
Great range of ages involved The disability, gender and religion/belief profiles closely match that of all residents. Representation of BME residents is higher than across all residents.	
Actions required	
What can be done to promote?	Include in annual report / newsletter and on website.
How will this be done?	As part of strategy communication plan.
What resources are required?	Time to produce articles
Who will be responsible?	Resident Involvement Coordinator
When will this be done?	
How will this be measured?	

Negative Impacts – Actual or Potential

Summary of findings	
No under 25s or LGB residents are involved. Anecdotally Somali residents are not well represented Some of the smaller religion/belief categories (less than 2%) are not represented.	
Actions required	
What can be done to mitigate or remedy?	Need to explore why residents from these groups have not been getting involved and address any barriers.
How will this be done?	The Strategy action plan covers this
What resources are required?	RICO, assistance in approaching Somali residents.
Who will be responsible?	RICO
When will this be done?	See Strategy
How will this be measured?	Diversity profile of involved residents