

Customer Voice Strategy

2021/22 – 2023/24

Introduction

This Strategy sets out how the customer voice will be captured and listened to. Great Places will use this to learn lessons and implement service improvement based on customer feedback over the next three years. This will include a menu of involvement options, supporting our Customer Insight group to scrutinise our work and ensuring Board are provided with full assurance that the voice of our customers is being listened to and acted on.

This strategy builds on the previous Customer Voice Strategy and continues to develop our approach of listening to the voice of the many, not the few. It will provide opportunities for the customer to scrutinise services and to get involved in their community. This will include creating a flexible approach to customer engagement, reaching both those customers who aren't in contact with Great Places, as well as those who already challenge the quality of our homes and services

Listening, responding and using the customer voice to improve our services is the role of everyone within Great Places whether that be frontline delivery or central support services, it cuts across all services and teams. Engagement needs to be part of our culture at Great Places, with the infrastructure and mechanisms in place to be able to capture, analyse and use intelligence. Delivery of this strategy will weave the customer voice into everything we do and deliver service improvements that are clear for our customers to see.

The key deliverables for the first three years of this strategy are ambitious and challenging, but all reflect customer feedback and ensure we are aligned with key regulatory requirements.

Context and scope

Great Places owns and manages approaching 25,000 homes across various tenures and regions, meaning our customer base is widespread and diverse. Engaging customers effectively, to ensure that the voice of the customer is present and influences the services delivered, requires a clear understanding of who our customers are, what matters to them, what they expect and how they feel about the quality of the services they receive from Great Places. An inclusive approach is needed to ensure we engage with the many, not the few.

Great Places has listened to customers who have told us that they want a variety of ways to engage, an approach that enables the individual to choose the way that they wish to engage and for Great Places to keep that under constant review. One size does not fit all, so a menu of options will be developed that is tenure reflective and based on individual characteristics and preferences. Use of technology, digital capabilities and social media will be embraced.

This strategy supports our clear vision in the Corporate Plan

- Great Homes maximizing our investment in safe, sustainable homes
- Great Communities building successful vibrant communities - understanding our diverse communities and customers and keeping customers informed is a key element of this
- Great People providing outstanding customer service & support

Our values are strong and will be central to this strategy and its delivery. By working with our customers we will ensure their voice is captured and listened to. We will learn from our customers who will know when their voice has influenced a change, service improvement, innovation or the delivery of great customer experience.

Our Values

- We are fair, open and accountable

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- We know, respect and care about our customers
- We appreciate the effort of everyone who works with us
- We promote partnerships, efficiency and value for money
- We passionately embrace creativity, change and innovation

The **Customer Voice Strategy** will reflect the following:

- The Governments White Paper and the seven commitments that are at the heart of what residents expect.
- Resident voice in building management and fire safety – New Fire Safety Bill and The Building Safety Bill
- The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and its complaint handling code
- Together with Tenants – this initiative from the National Housing Federation (NHF) focuses on strengthening the relationship between landlord and the customer. Including a requirement in the NHF Code of Governance for Boards to be accountable to residents.
- Tenant involvement and empowerment consumer standard - Great Places is committed to delivery in line with this regulatory standard, working closely with customers and colleagues.

This strategy will be delivered in line with the following strategies within Great Places including:

Customer Experience Strategy
Social Value Strategy
Asset Management strategy
Development Strategy
Procurement Strategy
VFM strategy
Carbon Strategy

BI Strategy
EDI Strategy
IT Strategy and digital roadmap
Repairs Strategy
Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Independence and Wellbeing Strategy

Strategy themes – Aims and objectives

The aims of this strategy are:

- To understand our customers, ensuring we have accurate customer profiling data so we can tailor our services
- To ensure that the voice of the customer is heard and influences service delivery
- To improve our accountability and demonstrate the impact of the customer voice
- To strengthen our customer relationship and ensure that Great Places is trusted by its customers

The objectives of this strategy are:

- To understand our customer profile, and preferred ways of communication and engagement, by tenure
- To use an inclusive, customer led menu of options to engage customers and increase our involved customer base
- To enhance the opportunities for customer scrutiny and ensure appropriate assurance to Board
- To embrace technology and ensure a digital focus in our engagement offer
- To ensure a collaborative approach to using feedback to improve services
- To keep customers informed on the impact of their voice

How we deliver against our aims and objectives is outlined within the themes below:

Theme 1 – Understanding our diverse communities and customers

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy makes a commitment to get to know our diverse customer groups better. This Customer Voice Strategy aligns with the EDI Strategy in its commitment to hold accurate and up to date

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profiling information on our customers and using that information to help inform the way we deliver services, increase satisfaction and promote engagement with our diverse customer groups.

We will consult and engage with our diverse customer groups to ensure that they are at the heart of service development, service improvement and that their voice is reflected in the delivery of those services by our colleagues and partners. We will consider the barriers that some customers face in engaging with us and work with customers to understand the best ways to support them. Digital engagement will be an area of focus to support accessibility, as well as a menu of options for engagement.

Understanding our customers involves knowing our customers, knowing how they interact with us and what their views are on our services and their customer experience. We will develop meaningful relationships with our customers and support those who want to be more involved. This might be through our Hub, through colleagues working in neighbourhoods and schemes, or through other feedback mechanisms such as surveys. Delivery of this strategy will include a review of how we capture all feedback. This includes capturing the feedback provided during interactions with frontline services for example at sign ups, welcome visits, scheme inspections and comments via conversations with customers.

The tenure dimension is important in engagement and what works for general needs customers, Plumlife customers, or those supported through our Independence and Wellbeing services will be different. Through delivery of this strategy we will ensure we understand the needs of our customers across all tenures. To do this we will identify the barriers to access or engagement and tailor our approach accordingly. We will work with colleagues across Great Places to ensure our approach is flexible and provides a variety of opportunities to capture customer feedback including those customers who we might not have much contact with us.

We will develop methods of reporting to ensure customer feedback and insight is reported to Board and Customer Insight group. We will ensure that we are listening to and acting upon, the voice of many customers through flexible and focused activities that work for our diverse customers and their busy lives.

<i>Theme one – Understand our customers key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review customer profiling data and future approach including agreement on data to be captured Review approach to Customer Segmentation – customer behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational commitment/understanding Tailored service and communication linked to customer behavior
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start to deliver on customer profiling action plan including data capture Implement Aeron to facilitate the recording of accurate customer contacts Review mechanisms to capture and report on all feedback effectively Develop involvement mechanisms tailored to tenure Target diverse customer groups and provide a range of options to engage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a better understanding of our customers To ensure the voice of our diverse customers is captured Use data to tailor services, communications and engagement Increase customer satisfaction Increase number of customers engaged Ensure customer insight feeds

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<i>Theme one – Understand our customers key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
	with us <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with colleagues to consider engagement options and utilise skills 	through to Board
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review profile data of engaged customers and develop targeted activity to ensure diverse representation in engagement activity • Ensure reporting on profile data, engagement activity and learning • Engage with our silent customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure voice of the many captured & listen to and Great Places learns from its customers feedback

Theme 2 – Offer Choice

Consultation with customers has highlighted that key areas of importance to customers with regard choice are; having opportunities to comment and feedback, having the ability to get involved when they want to and it being easy to give their views.

Customers highlighted that it is important to be involved in reviewing performance, ensuring Great Places meets regulatory requirements, and supporting the organisation.

Consultation with customers about our new Corporate Plan highlighted that “keeps you safe in your home” was the area of most importance to customers. Building safety and consulting with customers around this, will be an area of focus for Great Places going forward.

We also know, that customers preferred engagement method is email and telephone, but customers still value being able to talk to and give feedback to Great Places colleagues who are working in local communities and in customers’ homes.

Great Places is committed to providing a menu of options for feedback. This will include digital options for engagement as well as face to face opportunities. These options will also reflect the Regulator for Social Housings, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard.

Our menu of options will include:

Subject matter experts (SMEs) – Great Places will recruit SMEs to ensure focus on what interests customers for example; website testers, policy reviewers, performance reviewers or those with an interest in specific service areas such as repairs or building safety. We will also look to involve customers in the recruitment of colleagues into Great Places and the appointment of contractors delivering key services to customers, including those that focus on keeping customers safe in their homes. Customer involvement at different levels will help to shape and influence decision making in key areas and compliment the work of our Customer Insight Group and Board. We will continue to be flexible and creative about how our diverse customer groups want to be involved and tailor opportunities that work best for them by listening to their feedback and ideas.

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Insight & scrutiny – we will look to expand this group to ensure we have a diverse range of customers to work with and involvement that is representative of our wider customer profile. We will include a focus on customers who have recently experienced services. We will ensure that we are flexible and provide different ways for customers to be involved. We will consider the observations of our Customer Insight group and tap into those customers that have a particular interest in a service or area of focus such as performance. The Customer Insight group are already successful in engaging customer responses for the surveys they commission. By engaging more customers we can ensure that we are capturing and reporting on what matters most to our customers. This will strengthen our approach to scrutiny.

The Customer Insight Group will continue to report directly to our Board, reporting on the outcomes of scrutiny exercises and agreed action plans. Insight will ensure the customer voice is heard at board and influences decision making. Customers will also have opportunity to scrutinise our compliance with regulatory requirements and feed into Audit and Assurance Committee on issues such as complaints reporting. This will be complimented by additional reports from service leads around customer experience and insight. The Customer Experience quarterly dashboard which reports on engagement activities and outcomes, as well as satisfaction with services, complaints and compliments, will be shared with Insight members to demonstrate transparency as well as informing their programme of work.

Customer Complaints group – We will look to involve customers that have previously complained to really hear their voice and their perception of customer issues which will help us to learn and improve. This group will present their feedback to service managers and monitor delivery through action planning. Great Places will share learning with our wider customers through customer publications and online platforms.

Surveys and satisfaction – We will review our approach to include virtual workshops as part of our surveys. This will include transactional and perception surveys, as well as how we get feedback about specific topics. Recent customer feedback has told us to ask about areas that matter to them including subjects such as security; welfare calls; lighting; internal decor; and bins.

Service reviews and Business Transformation – We will continue to capture the voice of the customer in service review. We will work together to ensure the customer view is embedded in future services. To include customer journey mapping to understand key customer touchpoints.

Neighbourhood involvement – It is important to involve customers on issues that affect where they live, including their home and their neighbourhood or scheme. Consultation with customers in early 2021 about our new Corporate Plan, highlighted that safe and inclusive neighbourhoods were very important to Great Places customers, as well as being safe at home. Engagement with customers on these issues will be a big part of future engagement activity. Involvement will be carried out in a range of ways and may be digital, in schemes, via focus groups or being out and about in neighbourhoods.

Informal - We will listen to our customers through our social media and digital platforms. We will capture the great conversations our customers and colleagues have every day and ensure that we are listening to all our customers regardless of where they live or what their tenure is. Colleagues in customer facing roles have a pivotal role to play here.

<i>Theme two - Choice: Key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop involvement Toolkit that includes menu of options and methods for engagement Recruit SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver choice and flexibility in engagement Ensure customers feel their voice is being heard

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<i>Theme two - Choice: Key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen scrutiny representation – recruit and train • Develop clear action plan for areas of scrutiny • Launch complaints group • Refine approach to satisfaction and surveys • Develop Together with Tenants GP approach/model and charter • Develop plan with Business Transformation of upcoming projects • Agree group approach to customer involvement in policy and strategy development including frameworks and service standards/measures • Develop group approach to involvement in performance monitoring • Develop customer engagement and communication around building safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve satisfaction • Increase number of customers involved • Wider ranging feedback on services • Alignment with TWT and White Paper • Customers involved in codesign • Customers inform policy • Regulatory standards met • Customers feel reassured and involved in decisions around their safety
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of digital engagement solutions • Develop experienced online community of engaged customers • Develop a recognised customer voice brand • Develop clear picture of customer touch points, and levels of satisfaction • Deliver projects that have been co-designed with colleagues and customers working together • Ensure effective links with neighbourhoods, I&W and Plumlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To capture customer feedback any time, any place, anywhere • Improved access to information and engagement
2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing activity linked to the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above

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Theme 3 – Listen, learn and respond - keeping our customers informed

Customers have told us that we need to listen, make positive changes and provide feedback following their involvement. Where Great Places have made positive changes as a result of listening to feedback gathered from customer experiences, it will communicate those changes in an open and transparent way. We are also committed to keeping customers informed with regular feedback from Insight, our customer scrutiny group, emphasising the need to constantly review and improve customer service. This strategy will, through training and awareness, promote a culture whereby we are true to our promises; adapt processes to make it easier to get things right first time; and ensure timely responses which show that we have listened to and responded to customers’ needs.

We will provide the information customers need in ways that meet their preferences and using a variety of different channels. Information will be accurate and appropriate to individuals. Information will include digitally enabled activity through the online portal, website and social media.

Customer feedback and outcomes will be shared with a variety of stakeholders, not just our customers and this will include Board, Insight Group and colleagues. We will provide assurance to board about how commitments and objectives are being delivered in practice, and what insight we hold on customer views to inform decisions. Insight Group will see regular customer information that will allow them to support the business in driving improvements.

It’s important that colleagues across the business are aware of all the opportunities our customers have to be involved, so they can support and communicate with customers, or support the services that do. It’s also important that our colleagues are receiving timely information regarding feedback from customers about their service areas. This will ensure that feedback is properly used to develop services.

Learning from benchmarking and good practice within our sector and elsewhere will be part of business as usual. We will involve customers and colleagues in this process.

Rewards and incentives – During consultation, customers told us that “*evidence that Great Places has listened and acted on your feedback*” and “*reward/give something back to the community*” were most important. This strategy reflects customers preferences and ensures we let customers know the outcome of their feedback, in line with their views.

<i>Theme three – listen learn and feedback: key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication with customers regarding outcomes of their engagement using various channels • Insight and feedback provided to board • Regular internal communications with colleagues around feedback and learning • Consider approach to rewards and incentives • Consider joint customer and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassurance that their voice is listened to • Improved customer satisfaction • Reassurance that we are meeting commitments and regulatory requirements • Increased levels of engagement

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<i>Theme three – listen learn and feedback: key deliverables</i>		<i>Outcomes</i>
	colleague panel to discuss hot topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop branded page on HOME • Develop dedicated webpage and interactive website 	
2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing customer, colleague and Board communication and reporting • Ongoing sector and non-sector benchmarking and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above

Environmental implications

We are working towards a more digital way to deliver our services, which should result in reducing printed documents and media. Delivering our services in a more agile way will result in reduced emissions. Fundamentally, customers will play a pivotal role in helping Great Places plan and implement its carbon management strategies.

Risks

- Lack of capacity to deliver this strategy alongside other demands of integration and business as usual. We will mitigate through the regular review of priorities and resources
- Inability to upskill colleagues or retain and attract colleagues. We will seek to put the right training and support in place and review what is important to colleagues. Managing our external reputation is important when attracting the right people
- Pace of change and not being agile and joined up in our approach. Our approach to business transformation and our new system will support Great Places to adapt and be flexible to changing environments
- Lack of response and learning from feedback could result in dissatisfied and disillusioned customers. Effective monitoring, reporting and review will seek to ensure that learning is being implemented and communicated
- Not having the right IT roadmap and infrastructure in place to support digital engagement and data capture. The roll out of Aareon plus infrastructure roadmap will seek to ensure the right infrastructure is in place
- Additional externally driven priorities may alter the pace and direction for delivery of this strategy. We will consider changes as they arise and ensure we are flexible in our response

Financial implications and VFM

In all areas of our service delivery we need to consider why we are doing what we are doing. We need to consider the cost against the outcome or benefit and ensure it provides value for money. We will continue to ensure our services are efficient and effective and measure this through feedback and performance. We will continue to assess opportunities to enhance our services to customers and continue to assess delivery in line with regulatory standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Additional resources may be necessary to deliver this strategy, these requirements will be addressed through appropriate channels, as required.

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Monitoring and review

This Strategy and its delivery, will be monitored and managed through regular reporting to CAST as well as the Leadership Group, and Board. Our overarching performance measures which support delivery, form part of our critical success factors (CSFs), in particular our customer satisfaction and digital CSFs (see below).

To support our CSFs we will develop customer satisfaction measures to reflect customer feedback, in addition to the requirement of the regulator and White Paper.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR	2020/2021 YEAR END	2021/22 TARGET	STRETCH TARGET
Overall Satisfaction (Great Communities)	7.3 / 10	7.30	7.50
Digital Customer Contacts* (Great Communities)	45%	45%	47%

The above CSFs reflect targets for 2021/22 however in line with the Corporate Plan and our 10 year ambitions, we will strive to achieve a top 10 rating from the UK Institute of Customer Service across all sectors.

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Equality Impact Assessment

1. Is this a key strategic document, major policy or procedure or service change? Examples may include: Homeless Strategy/ Customer Involvement Strategy	YES		NO	
	X			
2. What impact will your document or service delivery change have on the public or staff, giving particular regard to potential impacts on minority groups? Issues to consider include race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, carers and other socio-economic factors	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	DON'T KNOW
		X		
3. Please explain your answer: Provide a narrative explaining why you gave the impact rating above.	The Customer Voice strategy affects Great Places customers. It is important to ensure that our approach to involving customers minimises any potential barriers and is tailored to reach our wider customer base.			

1. If, for question 2 you have answered LOW, there is no need to continue to an Equality Impact Assessment.
2. If, for question 2 you have answered DON'T KNOW, please discuss with a member of the EIA Group who can confirm whether an EIA is required.
3. If you have answered YES to question 1, and you have identified MEDIUM or HIGH impact in 2, you should move on to an Equality Impact Assessment and complete the section below:
- 4.

If you have completed a full Equality Impact Assessment please provide the following:

What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment? (Q10 from the full EIA form)

Our approach to involving customers' needs to reflect customers within different equality strands. The strategy aims to provide customers with a range of ways to provide feedback about our services. Our digital offer should support customers to interact with us at their own convenience and in their own home and reduce the barriers for customers who may have struggled to previously engage. Other methods of engagement will support those customers that are not digitally active.

As a result of these conclusions what actions (if any) will be included in your business actions and wider review processes? (Q11 from the full EIA form)

Considering profiling and segmentation will assist us to gain a better understanding of our customers and how they want to do business with us. Continuing to build on our customer centric culture within Great Places will seek to ensure understanding of the need to support and facilitate wider reach and accessibility for our diverse customer base. Co-creation and co-design of services with customers will seek to ensure services reflect our customer's needs. We will monitor delivery of the strategy to ensure feedback and learning is reflected – including scrutiny from our customer insight group. Individual EIAs will be carried out on any new and revised policies supporting the implementation of this strategy.

Strategy Approval Date:	Executive Leadership November 2021
Equality Impact Assessment Date:	May 2021
Safeguarding impact	N/A
Policy Review Date:	Annual Full review June 2024
Lead Team:	Customer Experience
Level of Authorisation Required:	Board & Executive Leadership