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in large print or on CD, please contact us on 01235 515900.

Polish W jaki sposób można się zapisać

Jeśli chcesz uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, dużą czcionką lub na płycie CD, skontaktuj się z nami pod numerem 01235 515900.

Portuguese Como participar

Se desejar receber esta informação em outro idioma, num tamanho de letra maior ou em CD, queira contactar-nos através do número 01235 515900.

Bengali আপনি কীভাবে যুক্ত হতে পারেন

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য একটি ভিন্ন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরের ছাপায় অথবা সি.ডি'তে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01235 515900 নম্বরে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese 您可以如何參與

若您需要以其他語言撰寫、以大字體顯示或以 CD 方式儲存的此資訊，請致電 01235 515900 聯絡我們。

Albanian Si mund të përfshihen

Nese deshironi kete informacion ne gjuhe te ndryshme, te shtypur apo ne CD, ju lutemi te na kontakton ne numrin 01235 515900.

Slovakian Ako sa môžete angažovať

Ak požadujete túto informáciu v inom jazyku, vytlačenú s veľkými písmenami alebo na disku CD, kontaktujte nás na čísle 01235 515900.

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Website: www.soha.co.uk



How you can get involved



02 06/09



How you can get involved ... and make a difference!

We have developed an agreement with tenants, which sets out how we will encourage and support you to get involved. **We will:**

- Have a range of ways for residents to get involved – and publicise these
- Listen to your views and tell you clearly what difference your involvement can make

- Provide easy to understand information about our services in a clear format
- Support residents to get involved through an annual programme of free training

The above are published in service leaflets, in Hometalk and on Soha's website.

We will support you to get involved by:

- Paying travel expenses (mileage or standard class public transport) for involvement. Where there is a problem, we can offer other help with transport
- Paying other reasonable expenses, such as child care, to help residents get involved
- Holding Resident Involvement meetings and events in accessible venues
- Providing at least a week's notice of meetings and events which will not generally last longer than 2 hours
- Giving advice and support to informal and formal residents' groups where this is requested
- Providing a start-up and annual grant to formal residents' groups that have a constitution which is fair and democratic (see the Tenants and Residents' Groups pack for more details)
- Giving incentives to involve new residents and to say thanks for your time (details are included in service leaflets and on Soha's website)

Why get involved?

It makes lots of sense to involve residents. After all, you live in your home and in your neighbourhood, you order repairs and have improvements made in your home – and you pay your rent and service charges. So, who better to tell us how we could be improving our service than you!

There are lots of tenants, leaseholders and shared owners involved – it doesn't mean you have to give up lots of time or get involved in meetings. There are ways to have your say which suit you.

Resident Involvement at Soha

We believe that by listening to residents we can develop and improve the service we provide.

Resident Involvement Statement

Our purpose is:

To consult you on all issues which are likely to affect you. We will encourage you to get involved to improve our services, to improve our response to you as our customer, and to support you to develop your community.

Aims

- 1 Make tenant and resident involvement a central part of our business by involving and consulting tenants to shape services to meet their needs

- 2 Be inclusive and provide opportunities to widen participation by offering a range of ways that tenants and residents can get involved
- 3 Provide support, learning and development opportunities to empower all tenants and residents to make a difference
- 4 Give value for money by working effectively and efficiently

Priorities 2009/10

- 1 Increase the say that younger residents have by increasing the number of younger tenants involved and listening to their views
- 2 Increase the involvement of Black and Minority Ethnic residents by holding focused discussion groups and finding out how BME residents would like to get involved
- 3 Increase the number of residents who are involved by having more local events across Soha's area of operation

How to make a difference

We've got a whole menu of involvement, so whether you only have 5 minutes or have much longer to spare, there's a way for you to have your say.

Connect Club

Share your opinions. We will call, email, text or post short surveys to our Connect Club Members.

Time commitment – very low 

We'll contact you no more than 5 times a year and each survey will take less than 5 minutes.


Incentives: For every survey you complete, you'll be entered into a prize draw for a £25 shopping voucher!

What difference does it make? Surveys give Soha a useful snapshot of what residents' views are. We use this information to improve services.



Mystery Shopping

Help us measure Soha's performance by taking part in 'Mystery Shop' tasks.

Time commitment – medium 

All Mystery Shoppers go on a half day training. The mystery shop itself will involve between 5 - 10 phone calls, emails, letters or visits and filling in a short report.

Incentives: You'll receive a £40 shopping voucher for taking part in a Mystery Shop and will get free training. You could receive a further shopping voucher if you 'find a friend' who becomes a Mystery Shopper.

What difference does it make? Mystery Shoppers give us confidential feedback on Soha's performance and help us find out what we need to improve.



Neighbourhood Links

Neighbourhood Links volunteer to help improve their local area for everyone who lives there. They send Soha reports on the appearance of their neighbourhood and they let us know quickly if there's a problem in their area.

Time commitment – low to medium 

It really depends on you! We'll ask you to come on a short training session and then to send us a regular report on the appearance of your neighbourhood. You can also arrange to do a regular 'walk about' with a Soha Neighbourhood Officer to help identify ways to improve your area.

Incentives: We'll offer you free training sessions. For every short report you return, we'll say thanks with a £10 shopping voucher.

What difference does it make? Neighbourhood Links can be a voice for their local community. You could help us to know quickly where there is work that needs doing in your area.

Fun days and open days

Soha holds a number of fun days and open days in local venues throughout the year. These are a great way to get to know other residents and have your say, all at a fun event!

Time commitment – low 

Usually a half day of fun activities.

Incentives: Free activities for adults, children and families, with free refreshments and a great prize draw.

What difference does it make? We'll ask your views on specific subjects. These are also a good chance to meet senior managers and let them know what you think Soha does well – and what we should do better.

Surfing Soha

www.soha.co.uk gives instant, easy ways to give your opinion. Surfers can report repairs, pay their rent online and give feedback to Soha.

Time commitment – low to medium 

Incentives: Our Community and Computer Support Worker provides free computer mentoring - whether you're a complete beginner or just have a few questions about using a computer.

What difference does it make? Giving your views online is a quick and easy way for you to get in touch. Soha will reply to any feedback that you send in.



Focus groups

We hold one-off focus groups to discuss many different subjects – from repairs to the look of Hometalk.

Time commitment – low 

A focus group will last up to 2 hours.

Incentives: We'll give you a £5 shopping voucher to say thanks for attending a focus group.

What difference does it make? Focus groups help Soha to understand better what residents think about a particular issue. They are a good way for a number of residents to make their voices heard.



Readers' Group

We aim to have every piece of literature for tenants checked by tenants before it's published. (That's how it earns the 'Checked by tenants for tenants' logo like you'll see on the back of this leaflet.)

Time commitment – low 

This is a way of being involved occasionally and from the comfort of your own home. We send you the paperwork and ask you to return it to a deadline which we've arranged with you. We'll pay the postage (or sometimes residents prefer to do these tasks by email).

Incentives: We'll send you £5 for each leaflet or publication we ask you to check.

What difference does it make? We'll change any literature that tenants tell us could be improved to make it more easily understandable or presented in a more logical order.

News Team

The News Team are residents who write and produce the Tenants' Times newsletter three times a year, letting other Soha tenants know what's going on.

Time commitment – low to medium 


There are 3 editorial meetings a year, or you could just write a short article and submit it.

Incentives: If you attend an editorial team meeting, or if you write an article which is published, you'll receive a £5 shopping voucher.

What difference does it make? Because the Tenants' Times is written by tenants for tenants, it's a great way to communicate about important issues.

Tenant Inspectors

Tenant Inspectors review and monitor Soha's service standards and check that we are meeting them. They make suggestions for improvement.

Time commitment – medium to high 

There are 4 meetings a year of all Tenant Inspectors. You'll then take part in 1 or 2 inspections a year. These take place over 2-3 months.

Incentives: You will get free training and a £50 voucher for each inspection you take part in.

What difference does it make? Tenant Inspectors have looked at services from repairs to service charges. They decide which area they want to inspect and tell Soha what we do well and what we need to improve. It helps tenants to understand how Soha works as an organisation. Finally, it helps tenants hold Soha to account.

Residents' Groups and Associations

Meet other residents by attending a Residents' Group meeting. This is a great way to improve your local area and get to know new people at the same time!

Time commitment – As much as you want!

Incentives: Incentives are for the whole group. Soha will support informal Residents' Groups by helping to organise events. We can also help groups to develop a constitution and become a formal Residents' Association, when we will pay a start up grant of £300 and an annual grant of £100.

What difference does it make? Residents' Groups and Associations are a strong voice for a local area. They can ask for representatives from Soha, the local police and council to come to their meetings and will be consulted on any local plans. Residents' Associations can make a real contribution to improving the local community.

Working Groups

There are a number of working groups which meet regularly and help to monitor and improve a number of services.

Time commitment – medium 

Meetings last up to 2 hours and a working group may meet 3 or 4 times, or may run permanently.

Incentives: We'll say thanks for your time by giving you a £5 shopping voucher for each meeting of a Working Group that you attend.

What difference does it make? Working groups make a difference through detailed work on a project. For example, tenants helped re-write all our standard letters so they are clear and understandable.

Access for All

The Access for All group is made up of disabled tenants who helped Soha develop our Disability Equality Scheme (DES). They now monitor this and look at services to make sure they are meeting the needs of disabled tenants through an annual open day.

Time commitment – low  half day event

Incentives: Free refreshments will be offered and there is a prize draw at the open day.

What difference does it make? By checking how Soha is progressing on the commitments we made in our DES, you can help to make sure disabled tenants have fair access to a good service.



Young people and young families

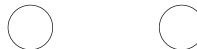
We consult with young people and young families through a number of events and work with groups to consult with their members.

Time commitment – low 

We will come to talk to young people's and young families' groups a couple of times a year.

Incentives: We arrange with each group to make a small donation in return for consulting with their members.

What difference does it make? Working with representative groups helps us understand the views of the diverse community which we serve.



Black and Minority Ethnic tenants

We want to encourage BME tenants to get involved in any of the 'menu' items. Because they are currently under-represented, we are organising a number of meetings for BME tenants to give their views.

Time commitment – low 

Incentives: Incentives are given under each 'menu' item. If you attend a meeting, we'll give you a £5 shopping voucher to thank you for your time.

What difference does it make? We want to make sure we're providing a service which meets all our tenants' expectations. By giving your views, you can help us give fair access to good services.

Tenants' Forum

The Tenants' Forum are the elected representatives of Soha's residents. They are consulted on Soha's policies and service delivery and have a formal role to monitor how well Soha is performing.

Time commitment – high 

The Forum meets 6 times a year and members need to prepare by reading the paperwork. Many Forum members also take part in a Working Group.

Incentives: The Tenants' Forum are offered free training and a £50 shopping voucher. They also have an annual meal to say thanks for the work they do.

What difference does it make? The Tenants' Forum has a big influence over the way Soha is run. Their views are asked before major decisions are made and they are asked for approval on all our policies. The Forum also holds Soha to account.

Board of Management

Tenants who have spent time on the Tenants' Forum and want to get involved at a corporate level can stand for election to join Soha's Board of Management.

Time commitment – high 

Incentives: Board members receive free training and support. Some Board members have a 'portfolio', or area of specialism, and we pay a small amount in recognition of the time and commitment involved.

What difference does it make? The Board make the ultimate difference to Soha! They take all the important decisions about how Soha is run. They set the Corporate Plan and budgets. They also monitor how Soha performs and take action if necessary.

If you would like to know more about any of these opportunities, just call 01235 515900 and ask for the Resident Involvement Team or return this slip freepost (no stamp needed):

Soha Housing, Freepost SCE2680, Royal Scot House, 99 Station Road, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7YW.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

- Connect Club
- Mystery Shopping
- Neighbourhood Links
- Fun days and Open days
- Surfing Soha
- Focus groups
- Readers' Group
- News team
- Tenant Inspectors
- Residents' Groups and Associations
- Working Groups
- Access for All
- Young people and young families
- Black and Minority Ethnic tenants
- Tenant's Forum
- Board of management

Title: First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Mobile telephone number: