

TPAS Accreditation Briefing Document

Why TPAS Accreditation?

Seaside Homes are committed to listening to tenants and ensuring that tenant feedback is central to our service improvement plans. Meeting the TPAS standard is not a 'tick box' exercise but a way of working day to day. It's about having a culture that values the tenant voice.

The Regulator of Social Housing believes that tenant engagement is a vital part of providing an excellent service as a landlord. Following the Grenfell Tower disaster, the Regulator of Social Housing has brought in a series of measures to raise standards in tenant engagement.

TPAS are tenant engagement specialists who provide an accreditation scheme for social housing providers. Seaside has chosen the TPAS framework because our Managing Agent, the Council are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The TPAS framework reflects the **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** that all social housing providers need to report on from April 2024. The TSMs are already included in the Seaside Annual Satisfaction Survey (for 2023 and 2024).

In addition, the **Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards** (which have recently been out for consultation) require that **registered providers must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services**. Providers must also assist and provide accessible support to tenants to enable them to do this.

What does TPAS accreditation cover?

To demonstrate we are working in a way that meets the TPAS accreditation we need to provide evidence in seven areas:

1. Governance and Transparency
2. Scrutiny
3. Business and Strategy
4. Complaints
5. Information and Communication
6. Resources for engagement
7. Community and wider engagement

Theme I: Governance and Transparency

Our **Tenant Engagement Strategy** describes how tenant engagement influences the way the organisation is run.

The organisation has **Key Performance Indicators** relating to tenant engagement and these are monitored by the Board. These are measurements that show whether we are successful in meeting the targets we set ourselves.

Outcomes from our quarterly Tenant Panel meetings are reported to our quarterly Seaside Board Meetings. We also have a Tenant Rep on the Board. The outcomes of Board meetings are fed back to Tenant Panel meetings so tenants can monitor our progress too. The wider tenant population are kept up to date via quarterly tenant newsletters, the website and an SMS service.

Theme 2: Scrutiny

In order to improve our service to tenants it's important that we look the things that are working and the things that are not working so well. Tenants can provide valuable insight into this because of their experience of using our service.

When we consider why things are working well or not so well, we need to consider 'the bigger picture' that we operate in. This includes:

- what's happening in housing at a national level (TPAS briefings)
- how we are performing compared to our peers regionally (Acuity Benchmarking data)
- Any changes and developments at the Council (Housing Committee reports, talking to the Council's Community Engagement team).

We also look at the information and feedback we have from tenants:

- Comparison of annual satisfaction survey feedback, year on year
- Comparison of call log issues raised, year on year
- Welcome and exit surveys
- Other ad hoc tenant surveys
- Tenant Panel feedback

From this information we can think about what needs to change and where we are most likely to be able to influence change.

We work with tenants to bring about service improvement through our Tenant Reporter Scrutiny process. The way we do this is described in our **Scrutiny Scoping Document**.

'The organisation, including its staff and governance functions, values scrutiny as a critical friend from an independent resident-led process'

The ethos of our Scrutiny process is:

- **Independent:** in thought, direction and topic

- **Evidence-based:** not just based on an opinion or an idea
- **Inclusive:** consider context and wider residents
- **Positive:** a good thing, not a fault-finding activity
- **Constructive:** critical friend, mutual benefits
- **Purpose:** clear focus, understands overall aim
- **Interesting:** encouraging involved tenants to get involved if they're interested in the topic

Theme 3: Business & Strategy

The **Tenant Engagement Strategy** was designed and agreed with involved tenants at the tenant panel. The wider tenant population are kept informed of developments via the quarterly newsletter and the website.

Updates on key targets around tenant engagement can be found in the **quarterly Tenant Engagement Report to the Board**.

'Residents are meaningfully engaged in the development, monitoring and review of the organisation's policy; service; budget and strategic development as well as any local offers for service delivery'

This is achieved by the scrutiny process outlined above.

Theme 4: Complaints

The channel for Seaside Tenants to raise complaints is via Brighton & Hove City Council's Corporate complaints procedure. At present we receive limited information on complaints from the Council (with no information on the nature or outcome of the complaints raised) as Seaside data is not currently separate from other complaints.

The Seaside Team often advocate on behalf of tenants when they contact us about issues they need resolving. In the absence of more complaints information from the Council we will be using the call log (calls and emails that come into the office) as a basis for identifying themes and trends of issues coming up for tenants. Tenants will be involved in looking at this information as part of our scrutiny work.

Complaints are viewed positively as they contain important information about how we can improve our service. Call log information and feedback via our annual satisfaction and other ad hoc surveys (eg welcome and exit surveys) are the foundation of our scrutiny process.

Information on the Housing Ombudsman (who oversees complaints) is shared on our website and the tenant handbook.

Theme 5: Information and communication

The channels for tenant engagement include:

- A quarterly newsletter (online and paper copies on request)
- Quarterly in-person tenant panel meetings
- Seaside website
- SMS service providing updates

Theme 6: Resources for engagement

For attendance at the tenant panel or 'Tenant Reporter' scrutiny events we cover travel costs and childcare costs (if necessary) and provide a £25 shopping voucher as a thank you.

We also encourage tenants to join 'TPAS Connect', an online forum where they can connect with other tenant TPAS members and cover expenses for tenants to attend conferences, such as the Inside Housing Resident Engagement conference.

Tenants are incentivised to complete surveys by being offered entry into a prize draw.

Theme 7: Community and Wider Engagement

'There is an appropriate menu of engagement opportunities that reflects the resident profile...'

As well as providing digital forms of communication we also provide paper copies of the newsletter and survey on request. Tenant panel meetings are in person and Seaside staff are available to talk on the phone or in person if requested by a tenant.

'Where regeneration or planned improvements takes place, residents will be fully informed and from the start are part of the project planning, delivery and monitoring'

The Council (our Managing Agents) are currently in the process of remodelling their engagement infrastructure to be better able to meet the Regulator of Social Housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures. We're in discussion with the Community Engagement Team to ensure that Seaside tenants are included in any consultation on changes to their service.

Seaside provides a gardening scheme, decorating scheme and new possibilities scheme for tenants.

We have also created links with a number of organisations who can meet tenant need including:

- Pelican Parcels – who provide pre-loved and new items for children up to the age of 12 to families on low incomes
- Digital Brighton – who support people who are digitally excluded
- Marina Studios – who offer discounted dance classes to Seaside tenants.

Impact of Tenant Engagement

- Tenants are involved in service improvement via our Tenant Panel and scrutiny process:
 - We gather feedback from the tenant population via the annual satisfaction survey, welcome survey and exit survey, ad hoc surveys and analysis of call logs –this informs our scrutiny process
 - Issues raised at the Tenant Panel are discussed with the Council to find a solution
 - At scrutiny events:
 - Tenants have reviewed our communications – 42 recommendations were made and we were able to agree and implement 39 of them.
 - Tenants have produced recommendations for how to improve the process of moving into a Seaside property. These recommendations have been shared with the B&HCC Temporary Accommodations Team.
- Tenants are also offered practical support:
 - Many tenants have been assisted through our Gardening, Decorating and New Possibilities schemes.
 - Tenants are signposted to community resources that meet their needs and are linked in with other organisations such as Pelican Parcels (providing items for babies and children) and Digital Brighton (to combat digital exclusion).
- A sense of community has been built via the newsletter, Facebook page, tenant panel and scrutiny groups.

Useful documents:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Tenant Engagement Strategy
- Quarterly Tenant Engagement Report and Key Performance Indicators
- Scrutiny Scoping Document
- Seaside website – Tenant section, especially:
 - Getting involved
 - Tenant newsletter