



KINGDOM

Group

Kingdom Group
Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy
2021 - 2024

Section One: Introduction

Welcome to Kingdom Group's Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy. It is a legal requirement for social landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation. All Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authorities in Scotland must have a Tenant Participation Strategy.

While fulfilling that statutory duty, this strategy also sets out the Kingdom Group's commitment to providing participation opportunities to **all** of its customers. It's designed to highlight the range of opportunities customers have to become involved, explain how customer participation will be supported and resourced, and sets out the actions that will be taken to ensure the continual development of effective participation.

Rights & Duties

All Landlords have a legal duty to involve tenants and service users. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, introduced the first legal framework for tenant participation by giving tenants the rights to participate and be consulted. The Act also put new duties on all Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Scotland which all still apply.

Your Rights:

- To form independent representative organisations and apply for registration and funding;
- Access information about housing policies and related services;
- Be consulted on issues that affect your homes;
- Participate in decisions that affect the services you receive and have enough time to consider draft proposals and put forward views.

Landlord Duties:

- Develop a Tenant Participation Strategy in consultation with tenants and service users, ensuring that it complies with equal opportunity requirements;
- Put the Tenant Participation Strategy into practice and measure performance against the agreed action plan;
- Provide resources and support to make sure tenant participation is effective;
- Regularly review how well tenant participation is working;
- Set up arrangements for registering tenants groups;
- Consult individual tenants and tenants and residents groups before making any decision that would change:
 - How we manage our housing properties;
 - The standard of service we provide;
 - Any proposals to sell, transfer or demolish our housing;
- Take on board tenants' views before decisions are taken.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 further strengthened landlord duties around tenant participation through the establishment of the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.



The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) is an independent regulator, directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament. Its statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless people and others who use the services provided by social landlords. The Regulator assesses and reports on how social landlords are performing their housing services through the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC). The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities.

Each year all Landlords must publish their performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and they must demonstrate how tenants have been involved in the assessment process. Tenant Scrutiny is the main driver for tenant involvement in monitoring performance.

Tenant Scrutiny

Tenant Scrutiny is about tenants and other customers being actively involved in the Landlord's self-assessment process. It provides opportunities for tenants and other customers to independently review how services are being delivered, identify what works well and recommend what could be improved.

Including all our Customers

The Kingdom Group recognises that while our statutory duty is to provide participation opportunities to social rented tenants, we are committed to ensuring participation opportunities are available to **all** our customers. As such, throughout this strategy we use the term customer participation to reflect the opportunities that are available to our social rent tenants, factored owners, shared owners and those in our mid-market rent properties.

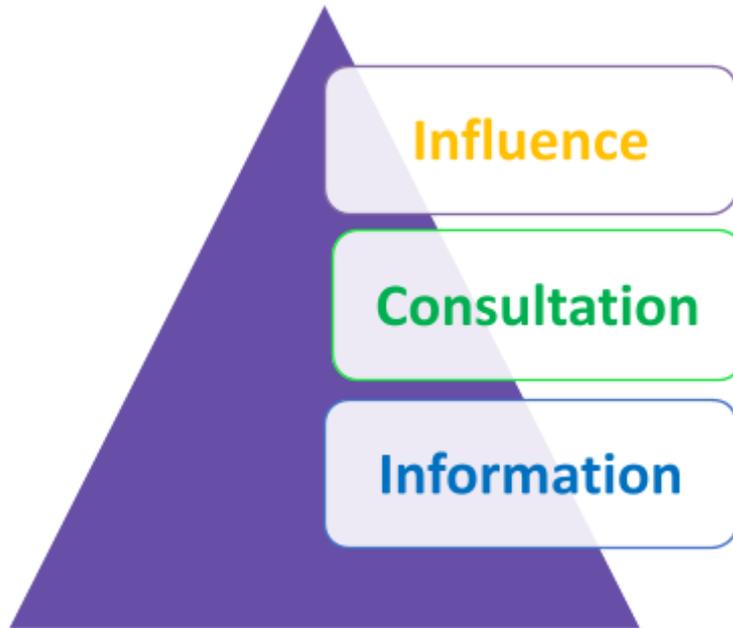
Section Two: What is Tenant and Customer Participation?

Participation describes all the different ways that tenants and customers can influence and shape the housing and related services that are provided by their landlord.

“(Tenant Participation) is about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies, conditions and related services. It is a two way process, which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. Its aim is to improve housing conditions and services.” **(Scottish Government, Guide to Successful Tenant Participation, 2019)**



Participation opportunities can be grouped using a model of participation, often referred to as a Participation Pyramid:



- (1) At the bottom of the pyramid sits **information** – keeping our customers informed about our services is very important, but it is a one-way process, and on its own does not demonstrate effective participation.
- (2) In the middle of the pyramid is **consultation** – consultation gives our customers the opportunity to tell us what they think about our ideas for our services, allowing us to shape these in response to feedback, comments and suggestions.
- (3) At the top of the pyramid sits **influence** – here is where customers take part in the decision making processes and influence housing policies and services. This level is a two-way process, with customers and staff working together to improve the standard of housing conditions and services.

We want to ensure that our customers can participate at the level which suits them. We recognise that for many of our customers, access to relevant and current information, that is made available in a range of formats and places, will be enough to support them to enjoy their home and the other services we provide. However, this strategy also sets out the ways that we will support individuals to take a more active role in influencing and shaping the services that we provide.

The Benefits of Tenant and Customer Participation

The benefits of effective participation for customers, staff and the organisation have been widely established and documented. Our commitment to participation is in recognition of these benefits, and this strategy reflects how we might go about developing and strengthening these still further. These benefits include:

- Better service delivery and improved value for money;
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills;
- Better communication between staff and customers;
- Better links between the wider community and the Kingdom Group;



- Informed and knowledgeable customers who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions;
- Staff and customers who are more aware of each other’s perspectives;
- A positive relationship between landlord and customers, built on mutual respect and understanding;
- Increased customer satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood;
- Increased job satisfaction for staff.

Section Three: Building on Success – Our Achievements & Successes

At the Kingdom Group we are very proud of our achievements and successes in relation to customer participation. In recent years, members of our staff team and Scrutiny Panel have been successful in winning a number of high-profile awards. We are also regularly invited to share our good practice at national networking events and conferences.

This strategy builds on a strong foundation of engagement activities and reflects our commitment to continued development and improvement. Some of our activities are detailed below. This list is not exhaustive but demonstrates the range of engagement opportunities grouped by participation ‘type’:



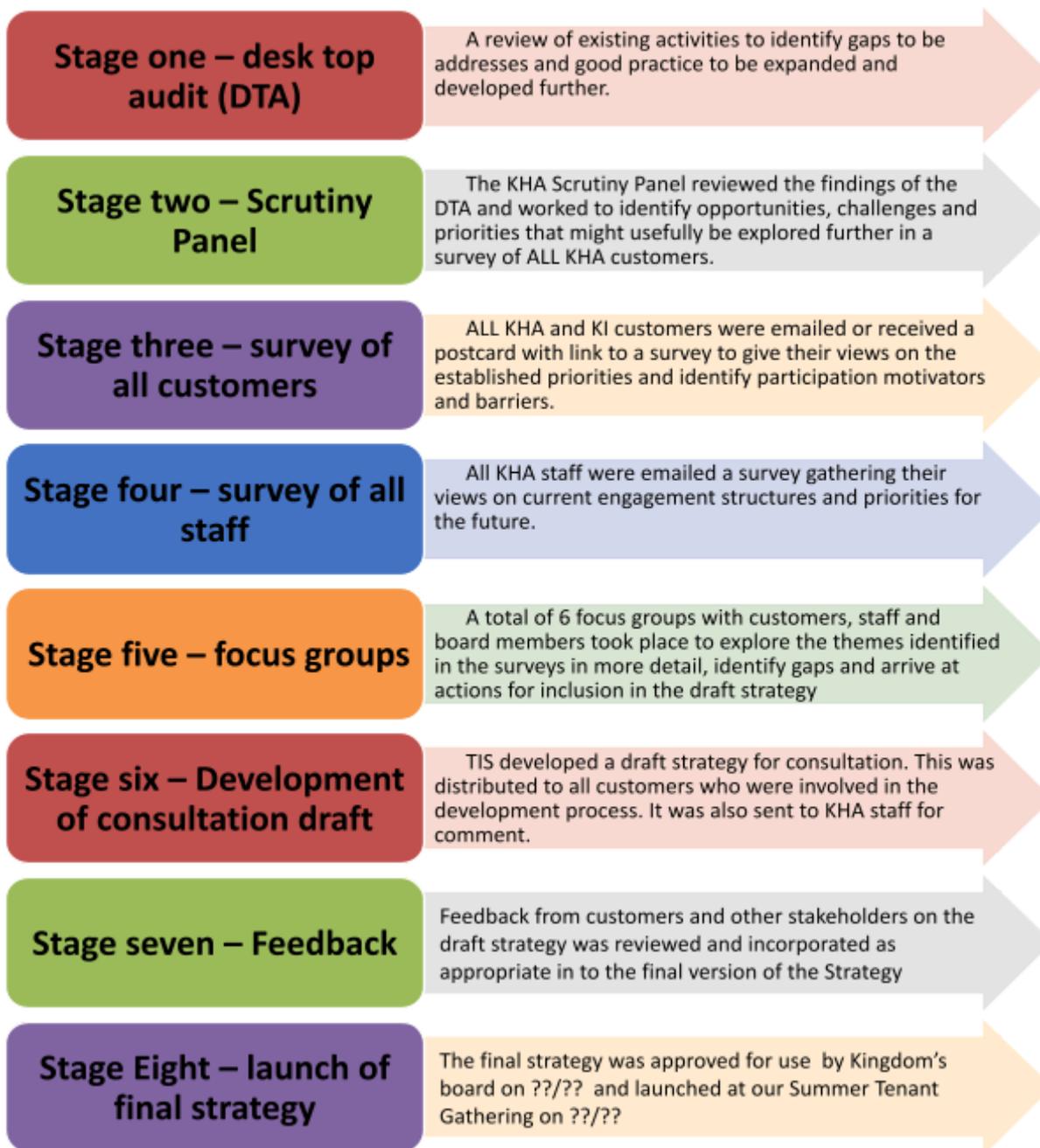
**Choices is Kingdom’s Participatory Budgeting Scheme. It was developed alongside our Scrutiny Panel and allows customers to access funds to support ideas that will improve their own communities.*



Section Four: Developing this Draft Strategy

Collaborative working has been at the centre of the development of this strategy. Through a series of events, surveys and focus groups, Kingdom Group customers, staff and Board members have shaped the strategic priorities outlined in this document. All parties have also helped to identify appropriate actions for delivering each of these.

In order to ensure that we benefit from their independent knowledge and expertise, we have worked closely with the Tenant Information Service (TIS) to develop this strategy. They have acted as a 'critical friend', identifying existing strengths and weaknesses in our existing approach, and have facilitated all aspects of the co-production that has shaped this draft strategy.



Section Five: Our Priorities

One – Develop and strengthen the range of opportunities to participate that are available to all Kingdom Group customers

Recognising that not everyone wants to get involved in the same way or to the same extent, we will look to build on our previous successes and continue to make available a wide range of methods and approaches to get involved in the Kingdom Group; allowing customers to participate in a way, and at a level, that suits them.

1.	Develop a list of interested customers to include information about their preferred method and level of involvement
2.	Strengthen the use of email and text messaging for surveys and 'quick feedback'
3.	Develop a digital network of tenants and customers using appropriate technology and platforms
4.	Coordinate the use of postal surveys across Kingdom Group to avoid duplication and 'survey fatigue'
5.	Develop a Digital Engagement Strategy and make use of digital communication tools to support virtual attendance at events, meetings and other sessions
6.	Promote opportunities to grow scrutiny activities
7.	Involve customers in the planning of customer events
8.	Introduce 'drop-in' sessions

Two – Improve the communication and promotion of the range of participation opportunities available to all Kingdom Group customers

The development of this strategy demonstrated that while we have worked hard to develop a range of participation opportunities, not all customers know that these exist or how they might get involved with them.

9.	Improve the promotion of opportunities to get involved in the Kingdom Group
10.	Support customer involvement in the selection of content for the Newsletter
11.	Develop and strengthen the use of social media to promote events
12.	Develop and strengthen the customer participation section of the Kingdom Group website
13.	Develop customer participation 'branding' / logo for use on all promotional materials / events
14.	Publish a calendar of planned participation events and consultation exercises each year
15.	Develop communication structures and tools so that all Kingdom Group staff are well placed to provide information about opportunities to participate
16.	'Celebrate success' – report on the work of the 'involved customers', staff and board members
17.	Identify customers to become 'Engagement Ambassadors' tasked with promoting the benefits of getting involved to other customers



Three – Develop a Programme of Training, Support & Capacity Building for “Involved Customers”

While our customers might be happy to complete a survey or give feedback to staff, we recognise that getting involved in some of our more structured activities (such as our Scrutiny Panel) can be challenging for some customers who might be concerned that they don't have the right skills to be able to properly contribute.

Digital Capacity Building

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way in which people interact with each other, with the Kingdom Group quickly recognising the increased value of digital communication tools as a way of keeping people connected during times of social distancing. However, while we recognise that digital connectivity can be instrumental in overcoming some of the barriers faced by residents, it is essential that the growing use of digital technology does not in itself create more barriers by preventing those without the technology, connectivity or digital confidence from accessing participation opportunities.

18.	Work with Scrutiny Panel members to identify training priorities and put together a training menu
19.	Identify specific training and support needs of ALL volunteers
20.	Signpost tenant groups and individuals to available resources / schemes that support access to digital devices and equipment
21.	Identify available digital training & support for tenants and staff provided by external agencies
22.	Identify Best Practice and innovation being used elsewhere via continued peer networking and attendance at national seminars and events

Four – Increase the number of customers who participate in order to ensure our services are genuinely customer-led

Our participation activities have grown in their variety and effectiveness over recent years and as we continue to build on these successes, we hope to increase the numbers of customers who get involved and look to influence the services that we provide.

23.	Deliver a number of recruitment campaigns throughout the year
24.	Promote the benefits of getting involved at all levels – including board membership - and highlight the training and support that can be made available
25.	Review and develop appropriate incentives to increase customer involvement
26.	Work to tackle identified 'barriers to involvement' to increase participation of traditionally hard to reach groups
27.	Provide training and support to customers, and identify external programmes that they might be able to access to support their wider interests / needs
28.	Develop a Board Membership awareness and capacity building programme to support interested tenants who might look to join the board
29.	Support housing staff to set up new local neighbourhood groups and provide a neighbourhood 'matching' service to tenants as part of a digital tenants' network.



Five – Develop specific participation opportunities for shared owners, factored owners and Mid-market renters

While our statutory duty is to social rented tenants, we are keen to ensure that all our customers have opportunities to influence the services that we provide. We look to ensure that our housing and related services are of the highest quality and deliver value for money, regardless of tenure, however we recognise that there are some issues that might be better considered in tenure or service specific groups.

30.	Include 'customer tenure status' when creating panel of interested customers
31.	Use the digital tenants networks to create closed groups for all tenures
32.	Consult with service users prior to changes /developments in services

Six – Develop and grow the specific participation of young people

In recent years we have seen some success in reaching out to younger members of our households. We are keen to build on that success and have developed a number of actions specifically aimed at increasing the specific opportunities that we provide young people not only to influence and shape our services, but so that they might gain valuable training and skills.

33.	Undertake an audit of training and support needs of Young People to facilitate involvement
34.	The review of participation incentives (action 25) should include tailored incentives to increase the specific involvement of Young People
35.	Work with interested young people so that they might contribute to the calendar of events

Seven – Demonstrate the IMPACT of effective participation and show how customer involvement is being used to help inform our service planning

Performance is at the heart of our service delivery structure and performance information is collected, measured and reported to a variety of audiences. We are keen to make use of this information to demonstrate the impact that customer involvement has on shaping and improving our performance.

36.	Include customers in the preparation of the annual performance report
37.	Publish an annual 'participation impact' report – incorporating sections provided by 'involved customers'
38.	Develop a Scrutiny Framework that demonstrates how scrutiny activity sits within the Kingdom Group's business plan and service planning structures
39.	Publish an annual scrutiny evaluation report – detailing the scrutiny exercises completed and recommendations actioned
40.	Publish a report of the work delivered via the Choices programme

Eight – Move towards a 'Culture of Participation' across the organisation

To be effective participation should be at the heart of everything we do as an organisation, with all staff and board members being clear about why, when and how customer participation should be supported.



41.	Introduce a programme of participation training to be completed by all staff and board members
42.	Identify opportunities for customers to be involved in staff/board recruitment and induction processes
43.	Introduce a service/policy development/review framework to include a “Customer Involvement” section
44.	Provide opportunities for staff across the whole organisation to share practice and identify opportunities via team/departmental meetings.
45.	Identify ‘Participation Champions’ in each Department & within the Board who can link with the main TP Officer/Team to ensure effective communication and coordination of planned events

Section Six: Staff Structure and Resources

This is an ambitious strategy that reflects changes in the size of Kingdom Group over the years; our commitment to continued development and growth; and our commitment to putting customers at the heart of service planning and delivery. Our current staff structures and resources for facilitating participation and engagement were developed to reflect the size of the organisation and in accordance with the statutory duties in place at that time.

In order to deliver our commitments over the lifetime of this strategy we will revisit the staff structure and resources that are made available to support our participation activities.

Section Seven: Action Plan

Through extensive consultation we have identified a number of actions to be developed over the 3 year life cycle of this strategy in order to achieve our objectives.

What we will do	Outcomes we hope to achieve
Review staffing and resource arrangements for customer engagement activities	A staff structure that is adequately resourced to meet our strategic ambitions and support our continued growth.
Develop a panel of interested customers to include information about their preferred method and level of involvement.	Improved information about interested tenants that can be used when planning engagement activities.
Strengthen use of email and text messaging for surveys and ‘quick feedback’	Better response rates to consultation exercises
Develop a digital network of Tenants and customers using appropriate digital technology and platforms	An informed network of tenants supported to share ideas and signpost each other to services
Coordinate the use of postal surveys across Kingdom Group to avoid duplication and ‘survey fatigue’	Better response rates to consultations and ‘richer’ quality information
Develop a Digital Engagement Strategy and make use of digital communication tools to support virtual attendance at events, meetings and other sessions	Digital engagement is properly planned and resourced. Barriers to engagement that result from ‘traditional’ methods are removed



Promote recruitment opportunities to grow the scrutiny panel	More scrutiny panel members drawn from diverse backgrounds
Involve customers in the planning of customer events	Events are tailored to customer aspirations and are well attended
Introduce 'drop-in' sessions	Customers are able to meet with staff informally at a time that suits them
Promote all available opportunities to participate via printed and digital mediums	More customers are aware of how they might get involved
Support customer involvement in the development of content for the Newsletter	Customers have opportunity to influence and shape Kingdom Group communication
Develop TP 'branding' / logo for use on all promotional materials / events	Enhanced awareness of TP function and role
Develop and strengthen the TP section of the Kingdom Group Website	Enhanced awareness of TP function and role
Develop and strengthen the use of Social Media to promote events	More people aware of (and ultimately attending) events
Publish a calendar of planned participation events and planned consultation exercises throughout the year	Customers (and staff) are able to plan their attendance at, and contribution to events
Develop communication structures and tools so that all Kingdom Group staff are well placed to provide information about opportunities to participate	Staff have more knowledge about participation opportunities and can encourage take-up
'Celebrate success' – report on the work of the 'involved customers', staff and board members	Customers know that they can make a difference by getting involved
Identify customers to become 'Engagement Ambassadors' tasked with promoting the benefits of getting involved to other customers	Customers hear from their peers about how they can make a difference by getting involved
Work with scrutiny panel members to identify training priorities and put together a training menu	All customers involved in scrutiny activities have access to training that meets their needs
Identify specific training and support needs of any new volunteers	All customers involved in participation activities have access to training that meets their needs
Signpost tenant groups and individuals to available resources / schemes that support access to digital devices and equipment	Digital inclusion is maximised
Identify available digital training & support for tenants and staff provided by external agencies	Barriers to digital access are removed and digital confidence is improved
Identify Best Practice and innovation being used elsewhere via continued peer	Kingdom Group remains innovative and offers customers most up to date opportunities relating to digital access



networking and attendance at national seminars and events	
Deliver a number of recruitment campaigns throughout the year	Continued growth in the number and diversity of customers involved in participation activities
Promote the benefits of getting involved at all levels – including board membership - and highlight the training and support that can be made available	Customers influencing service delivery at all levels of the organisation
Review and develop appropriate incentives to increase customer involvement	Continued growth in the number and diversity of customers involved in participation activities
Work to tackle identified 'barriers to involvement' to increase participation of traditionally hard to reach groups.	Continued growth in the number and diversity of customers involved in participation activities
Provide training and support to customers and identify external programmes that they might be able to access to support their wider interests / needs	Enhanced capacity of customers involved in participation activities
Develop a Board Membership awareness and capacity building programme to support interested tenants who might look to join the board	More tenant Board members; Better understanding about what is involved in becoming a Board Member
Support housing staff to set up new local neighbourhood groups and provide a neighbourhood 'matching' service to tenants as part of a digital tenants' network.	Increased number of local groups or individuals getting involved at estate level Improved relationships between neighbourhoods and enhanced community connections
Include 'customer status' when creating panel of interested customers	Enhanced involvement of ALL customers regardless of tenure
Use the digital tenants networks to create closed groups for all tenures	Enhanced connections between communities
Consult with service users prior to changes /developments in services.	Increased opportunities for customers to influence services
Undertake an audit of training and support needs of Young People to facilitate involvement	Increased capacity amongst young people looking to get involved in participation activities
The review of participation incentives (action 25) should include tailored incentives to increase the specific involvement of Young People	More young people involved in participation activities
Work with interested young people so that they might contribute to the calendar of events	Engagement with young people is tailored to meet their needs and aspirations
Include customers in the preparation of the annual performance report	Content of annual performance report is shaped by customers



Publish an annual 'participation impact' report – incorporating sections provided by 'involved customers'	Kingdom Group staff and customers have enhanced information about the impact of participation on their services/customers
Develop a Scrutiny Framework that demonstrates how scrutiny activity sits within the Kingdom Group's business and service planning structures	Scrutiny is an integral part of the Kingdom Group's decision making process for the delivery of services
Publish an annual scrutiny evaluation report – detailing the scrutiny exercises completed and recommendations actioned	Kingdom Group staff and customers have enhanced understanding of the impact of scrutiny on improving services
Publish a report of the work delivered via the Choices programme	Improved monitoring of the impact of participatory budgeting in delivering services that meet local needs and aspirations
Introduce a programme of participation training to be completed by all staff and board members	Staff skills and knowledge in relation to participation (locally and nationally) is up to date
Identify opportunities for customers to be involved in staff/board recruitment and induction processes	Customers are able to influence the recruitment and induction process
Introduce a service/policy development/review framework to include a "Customer Involvement" section	Customers have been involved in all policy and service development and review exercises where appropriate
Provide opportunities for staff across the whole organisation to share practice and identify opportunities via team/departmental meetings.	Staff feel supported in their customer participation role and are able to contribute to activity planning and development
Identify 'Participation Champions' in each Department & within the Board who can link with the main TP Officer/Team to ensure effective communication and coordination of planned events	Communication of TP activities is improved across the organisation and the effectiveness of consultation / engagement activities is maximised

Monitoring & Evaluation

The actions identified through this plan will be completed over the three year period of the Strategy. The delivery of this action plan will be overseen by a Steering Group with membership to include:

- Kingdom Group staff;
- Scrutiny Panel members;
- Interested customers.

The Steering Group will meet every three months and will be responsible for prioritising and assigning tasks, monitoring progress, identifying problems as they arise and making adjustments where required. Performance updates will be provided to Kingdom's Board as part of the Housing Departmental reporting process.



An annual report of progress (including any proposed changes in response to the evaluation process) will be prepared and shared with Kingdom Group board members, customers and staff. The strategy will be reviewed annually.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Kingdom is committed to meeting the main parts of the general duty on equalities as set out in the Equality Act 2010

- We work to promote positive action to proactively tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- We promote diversity and inclusion and work to develop and deliver this through all of our services
- We work to promote positive relations between all people in line with our corporate (CARES*) values.

*CARES stands for Customer, Accountable, Respect, Efficient, Supportive.

We will make sure that specifically in regard to tenant consultation and participation all tenants and customers are treated inclusively, irrespective of their sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other social attributes including beliefs or political opinions.

We will promote inclusive approaches and work in ways that are appropriate to different people and differing needs within our communities. We will continue to use a number of ways to give all tenants the opportunity to get involved and influence decisions about housing services, policies and standards and provide information in a range of formats and various languages to suit our tenants and prospective tenants' needs.

