

Beneficiary Involvement and Consultation Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Resident Involvement is a two way relationship between Stoll and its residents; where both parties want and are willing to share ideas, information and responsibility. It is about working together, in a mutually respectful partnership, to improve standards of housing, the services we provide and, ultimately, the quality of life of the people who live in Stoll communities. We define involvement as any activity or initiative that results in Stoll being influenced by or becoming more accountable to its residents.
- 1.2 This policy aims to ensure that we:
- i. Ensure that we engage with our tenants in a warm and positive way, treating them in the way we would want to be treated at all times.
 - ii. Ensure that we foster positive and trusting relationship with our tenants.
 - iii. Communicate effectively and honestly, in a clear and accessible way.
 - iv. Ensure we listen to tenants views and respond positively.
 - v. Ensure Stoll provides customer-focused, value for money services, in line with tenant needs and expectations.
 - vi. Provide a wide range of flexible opportunities for tenants to be involved in a way they choose.
 - vii. Provide appropriate support and resources, to support and enable effective involvement by our tenants.
 - viii. Remove barriers to effective engagement and to try to engage with those under represented or hard to reach groups to ensure all tenants have the opportunity to be involved.
 - ix. Provide timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny of Stoll's performance.
 - x. Ensure tenants are kept informed about, and consulted on, issues which affect them.
- 1.3 As a small charity and Housing Association offering supported housing and related services to our vulnerable tenants, we pride ourselves on the relationship we have with our tenants and we believe it is this that sets us apart from others. We take a more personal approach to working with our tenants, being sensitive to their needs and developing a positive and collaborative relationship with them. This underpins our approach to tenant involvement. However, we recognise that as we house and support some very vulnerable tenants, many traditional forms of tenant involvement may not be appropriate so we aim to take a flexible and creative approach.
- 1.4 The majority of beneficiary involvement is an ongoing, every day activity that occurs routinely between staff and residents. This is through encouraging a culture and ethos of empowering and encouraging residents to be involved in decision-making on any issue relating to their residency that affects them.

- 1.5 But we also understand that there are times when involvement needs to be a more formal process and then we will undertake consultation in a manner that includes all tenants as far as reasonably possible and is appropriate to the issue being consulted about.

2.The Legal and Regulatory Framework for Tenant Participation

- 2.1 The Housing Act 1985 gives secure tenants the right to be consulted about any proposed changes in the way their homes are managed and maintained. Assured tenants do not have a similar statutory right. However, Stoll has incorporated this right into the tenancy agreement of its assured and assured shorthold tenants so that all of our tenants are treated equally.
- 2.2 As a 'Registered Provider', Stoll is committed to follow the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Consumer Standard for Tenant Involvement and Empowerment. This is outlined in The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012 in accordance with section 14 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.
- 2.3 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, which is outlined in 'The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012' stipulates that Registered Providers must be responsive to tenants views and priorities; whilst enabling tenants to play their part in decision-making, and ensuring that tenants are able to effectively influence improvements to services and how they are provided.
- 2.4 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard also clearly states that housing Associations should ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to both influence and be involved in the:
- Formulation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities.
 - Making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards
 - Scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved
- 2.5 Our performance, in relation to compliance with the standard, will be monitored by the Housing Services Committee and, ultimately, our governing Board.
- 2.6 Stoll aims not only to meet its statutory and regulatory obligations set out in the Framework, but to exceed them.
- 2.7 We understand that the standards are less rigorous and vary in appropriateness for beneficiaries who do not live in our properties and we will attempt to tailor our consultation activity accordingly.

3.Our Policy

- 3.1 We recognise that our tenants and beneficiaries have different opinions and needs and that a 'one size fits all' approach will not meet the needs of all who use our services. For beneficiaries who wish to be actively involved with Stoll in

some way we will offer a range of opportunities for them to be involved in a way that suits them.

3.2 Equally we recognise that not all residents and beneficiaries wish to be actively 'involved' in Stoll, other than to be kept properly informed. However, all who use our services should expect to be able to feel that their views are listened to, respected and responded to appropriately.

3.3 We believe that the fundamental element of successful involvement is the way we build relationships with our tenants on a daily basis; we aim to build relationships with our beneficiaries that are truly collaborative and in line with Stoll's values:

- We show empathy and respect to everyone we work with.
- We strive to empower our beneficiaries to live independently
- We do what we say we will do
- We act with integrity in everything we do
- We are a highly collaborative organisation

3.4 Stoll would like to go beyond day-to-day involvement and we are committed to involving our beneficiaries (and in particular our tenants) in developing, shaping and scrutinising our services. We recognise that we are accountable to our tenants for the services we provide and in order to ensure proper levels of accountability, meaningful engagement and involvement is vital. We therefore need to ensure that we offer a range of opportunities for involvement and consultation, on a number of levels, so that we can shape our services in response to tenants' needs. However this needs to be balanced against value for money and the most effective use of our resources.

3.5 We will provide a range of opportunities for involvement that is intended to provide a mix of formal and informal mechanisms at different levels that people can interact with as desired. We will ensure that these opportunities are accessible to as many tenants and beneficiaries as possible, tailoring opportunities to suit different tenants and the issue being consulted upon as appropriate.

3.6 Specific guidelines on how and when we will consult on different issues is outlined in the Beneficiary Involvement and Consultation Procedures.

4. Policy Review Form

Date of review:	May 2019
Date of next review:	May 2022
Approved by SMT on:	20 th May 2019
Approval by Trustee Committee on:	23 rd May 2019

Version Control			
Version	Type of Change	Date	Revisions from previous issues
01	First Drafted	2013	Resident Involvement and Consultation Policy
02	Review	2016	Resident Involvement and Consultation Policy and new Procedures

03	Review	2019	Review of Policy and Procedures – Retitled ‘Beneficiary’ and not ‘Resident’
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4.1 Equality Impact

Stoll strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all service users and the workforce. As an employer and a provider of housing and support services Stoll aims to ensure that none are placed at a disadvantage as a result of its policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are written to ensure fairness and consistency for all those covered by it regardless of their individuality.