

The Voice of the Customer Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Capturing, listening to and acting upon the customer voice is essential to the delivery of any public service. This policy sets out how Stonewater will engage with and encourage customers to take a central role in decision making, meeting the necessary regulatory requirements and making a significant contribution to improving the homes they live in and enhancing the services that they receive.
- 1.2 Stonewater's approach to gathering and understanding customer insight falls under four headings Customer Demand, Customer Feedback, Customer Engagement and Customer Complaints.

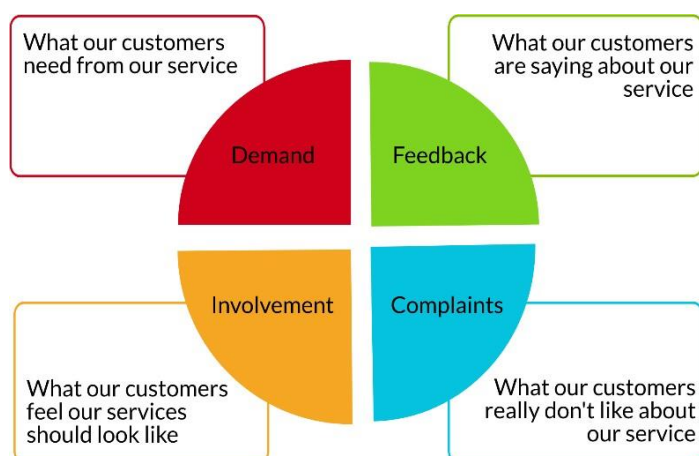
2.0 Policy Scope and Objectives

- 2.1 This policy relates to all Stonewater customers and its implementation is the responsibility of all Stonewater colleagues.
- 2.2 The objectives of the policy are to:
 - 2.2.1 Embed listening and acting upon the voice of the customer and ensuring it is at the heart of Stonewater's decision making;
 - 2.2.2 Sustain and increase the ways we to listen and understand the customer voice through good practice, innovation and commitment;
 - 2.2.3 Ensure that the voice of the customers adds value to the work of Stonewater;
 - 2.2.4 Ensure that customers are given the support and opportunities to effectively influence the services that they receive;
 - 2.2.5 Use customer insight as a driver for continuous improvement, value for money and the ongoing development of services; and
 - 2.2.6 Ensure Stonewater's commitment to consulting customers on matters that affect them.
- 2.3 Stonewater has a framework for ensuring the customer voice is listened to and acted upon to ensure customers are at the heart of decision making:
 - 2.3.1 Customer demand – data gathered from calls into the customer contact centre, or requests raised digitally through the MyHome Online Portal. We will use this information to improve our digital offer, improve service and understand customer demand.
 - 2.3.2 Customer feedback – Stonewater commissions surveys and solicits feedback from customers through a variety of methods including; by

SMS, e-mail or telephone and the information collected helps improve the service we provide.

2.3.3 Customer complaints – we recognise that we don't always get it right and that sometimes things go wrong. When this happens we have made it easy for our customers to complain or indeed compliment the services they receive and then use this data through undertaking root cause analysis to improve services or prevent similar issues from happening again.

2.3.4 Customer engagement – we will offer a range of innovative options for customers to be involved, and make it as easy as possible for them to give us their views at a time that suits their lifestyle. This information helps us to ensure we understand our customer's expectations.



2.4 Stonewater will support listening and acting on the voice of the customer by:

2.4.1 Providing a Customer Voice team that works with other relevant teams across the Customer Experience Directorate, to incorporate and act upon data and learning from customer insight, customer engagement and complaints and compliments handling.

2.4.2 Offering formally engaged customers access to training to acquire the skills and knowledge which will ensure effective engagement in decision making and service improvement.

2.4.3 Promote innovative approaches to engagement, making digital opportunities more widely available and exploring the development of other ways to widen inclusion of customers in the management and decision making processes of and the business.

3.0 Regulatory and Legal Considerations

3.1 The Tenant Engagement and Empowerment standard of the Regulatory Framework has a set of required expectations which are given below¹:

¹ The actions from the Green Paper 'A New Deal for Social Housing', which as at 31.12.19 have not been released, may impact 3.2 to 3.7

3.2 Required outcomes:

3.2.1 *Registered providers shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be engaged in:*

- *The formulation of their landlord's housing policies and strategic priorities*
- *The making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards*
- *The scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved*
- *The management of their homes, where applicable the management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made, and;*
- *Agreeing local offers for service delivery*

3.3 Specific expectations

3.3.1 *Registered providers shall support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for engagement and empowerment, including by:*

- *Supporting their tenants to exercise their Right to Manage or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate*
- *Supporting the formation and activities of tenant panels or equivalent groups and responding in a constructive and timely manner to them*
- *The provision of timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in a form which registered providers seek to agree with their tenants. Such provision must include an annual report which should include information on repair and maintenance budgets, and;*
- *Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively engaged.*

3.4 *Registered providers shall consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery. This shall include how performance will be monitored, reported to and scrutinised by tenants and arrangements and reviewing these on a periodic basis.*

3.5 *Where registered providers are proposing a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants or a significant change in their management arrangements, they shall consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate and effective manner. Registered providers shall set out any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term. Registered providers must be able to demonstrate to affected tenants how they have taken the outcome of the consultation into account when reaching a decision.*

- 3.6 *Registered providers shall consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of engaging tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.*
- 3.7 Stonewater are early adopters of the National Housing Federation's 'Together with Tenants' campaign and will take into consideration the 4 proposed actions and 6 commitments when engaging with customers.
- 3.8 Following the publication of the Social Housing White Paper we will ensure that we are prepared and able to meet the expectations set out in incoming legislation, and work to deliver any commitments or service changes required by this and other regulatory updates.

3.0 Service Standards

3.1 Operational Performance measures (monitored bi-annually):

- Increase the number of customers engaged.
- Number of services changed following customer engagement.
- Scrutiny Panel Recommendations implemented (Including

Evidence). And contributing to improving the following,

- Overall Customer Satisfaction.
- How satisfied are you that Stonewater listens to your views and acts upon them?

4.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4.1 An equality and diversity impact assessment has been carried out and there are no direct or indirect discriminatory factors. This policy increases equality of opportunity by permitting or requiring positive action or actions to redress disadvantages.

5.0 Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description
0.1	31.12.19	Michelle Hocknull/Dean Ballard	Customer Voice Policy
0.2	02.01.20	Dean Ballard	Amends and addition of KPIs
1.0	10.03.20	Deal Ballard	Approved by Board
2.0	29.03.22	Jade Bradford	Amends to bring up to date with current Stonewater staffing structure