

Resident Consultation & Engagement Policy

1. We value the views of residents. Listening to residents and consulting them helps us to take their views into account when making decisions, which helps us to improve our services.
2. This policy sets out how and when we will consult on decisions affecting Guinness tenants, licencees and homeowners. It seeks to promote a standard and consistent Guinness approach to consulting residents, and to promote openness in how we consult. It supports our strategic objectives to deliver great service and to meet our legal and regulatory requirements.
3. In this policy, the word “consultation” means formally asking residents for their views so that we may take them into account when making a decision. It gives residents the formal opportunity to influence the outcome of the decision. Consultation is different from “engagement” and “scrutiny”. These words are described as follows:
 - “Engagement” is about our on-going relationship with residents and seeking residents’ views even when we are not required to do so by law or regulation. It is typically a less formal process than consultation. We try to create relationships with residents where they have their voice heard, so they may share their feedback, concerns and ideas and work with us to improve what we do.
 - “Scrutiny” describes tenants closely examining our services and performance and making recommendations for improvements. This is carried out by our Customer Committee, which makes recommendations to the Guinness Board.

The Guinness Policy

4. Our policy is that we:
 - Want to understand tenants’, licensees’ and homeowners’ views and experiences of our services when making decisions about the services and homes we provide. Consultation and engagement enable us to find out those views;
 - Will consult when we are required to do so by law, regulatory standards, or under the tenancy agreement, licence agreement or lease;
 - May also consult if we decide it is appropriate and reasonable to do so. In particular, we may use consultation to help us meet some of our regulatory responsibilities;
 - Will engage with residents to ensure that their voices are heard when we develop our thinking and take decisions in relation to their homes, neighbourhoods and the services we provide;
 - Will ensure that our communications are timely, accessible and clearly explain our proposals so that residents understand what we are proposing to do, why, how and when;
 - Will take reasonable steps to ensure that all residents have an equitable opportunity to be involved in consultation and engagement;
 - Will take residents’ views into account when we make relevant decisions;
 - Will make and record decisions appropriately; and that we
 - Will share information about the decision made with residents involved in the relevant consultation and any wider group of residents affected by the decision.
5. This policy applies to consultations affecting our tenants, licencees and homeowners. Where it applies to tenants and licensees only, the word “tenants” is used. Where it applies to tenants, licensees and homeowners, the word “resident” is used.

Background

6. There are some legal, regulatory, and contractual circumstances where we must consult on a decision. These include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Tenancy Agreement requirements, which may include:

- i. That we must consult before making changes to housing management or maintenance services which are likely to have a substantial effect on our tenants, their homes, or their tenancies. If this applies, we will consult relevant tenants;
 - ii. Before making or changing local agreements. If this applies, we will consult tenant representatives;
 - b) Residents paying variable service charges. This applies if we need to carry out qualifying work or if we enter into a long-term agreement for services. See [section 20 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#);
 - c) Where the law specifically requires consultation (for example to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the [Equality Act 2010](#));
 - d) If we are proposing a change in landlord for one or more tenants or a significant change in our management arrangements, as set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#);
 - e) Where we are undertaking estate regeneration. If this applies, we will also carry out a ballot;
 - f) Where a Stock Transfer Agreement requires us to do so; and
 - g) Where we have previously committed to consult, and therefore residents expect us to consult them.
7. In addition, it is a requirement of the RSH's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard that we engage and communicate with residents in relation to their homes, neighbourhoods and services so residents understand what to expect from us and how to hold us to account (including in circumstances where there is not a decision to take or we must act in a particular way).

Further detail

How we decide whether we will consult

8. We will assess and record the need to consult when we put together a decision making process and timetable. This will involve:
 - a) Checking the law, regulatory standards and tenancy agreements to find out whether we must consult, and then if none apply;
 - b) Considering whether there are other reasons why we should consult (see below).
9. However, it will not always be appropriate to consult, including if there is only one course of action we can take. If we decide not to consult, we will still normally engage with residents so that they understand what we are intending to do, how it potentially affects them, and so that they can hold us to account. Further detail is set out at Paragraph 24.

How we decide whether there are other reasons why we should consult

10. We will check whether we should seek tenants' views and inputs, so that we meet our responsibilities under regulatory standards (including the [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#) at Annex 1). We will only consult where there is a decision to be made, and it is appropriate to consult. We aim to consult residents on the things that matter to them about their homes, neighbourhoods and services. For example, we would consult residents about the introduction of new car parking arrangements, or on matters relating to planned and major works to their homes
11. However, it will not always be appropriate to formally consult, including if there is only one course of action we can take. For example, the law, regulatory standards or contract might set out the action we must take. In these situations, consultation about the course of action may not be appropriate, because there is no decision to consult on. However, there may still be arguments in favour of carrying out a

consultation for example, where the views of residents on the course of action to be taken may influence *how* we take that action or may inform of us any specific resident circumstances of needs that should be taken into consideration. The Director of Governance and Legal Services will advise in these circumstances.

12. The person making the decision on whether to consult is responsible for ensuring they have enough information about whether requirements such as those in Paragraph 6 apply. Where they don't apply, they are responsible for considering whether there are other reasons why we should consult.

How we decide who we will consult

13. We take the nature of the decision and the residents who could be affected by it into account. We use this information to help us decide who we should consult and how we will consult them. We may consult all residents affected, tenant representatives, or a sample of residents. We may seek advice from a specialist group (including specialist third parties) if this is the best way of finding out what impact our proposal might have on a protected group. We will target our consultations to make sure we gather representative views and gather enough information to help us identify the views and needs of all those who may be affected.

How we will we consult

14. We will use a range of consultation methods including, but not limited to on-line surveys and focus groups, (and ballots where required). Appropriate methods will be used for residents who are disabled. Annex 2 sets out the guidelines we use to help us achieve good consultations.
15. We will provide choices, information, and communication that are suitable for the different needs of our residents, in line with the Regulator's [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#). In some cases, legislation, an agreement, or the local authority may set out the consultation method, or the length of the consultation, or the method and length of the consultation. We will find this out before we consult. Depending on the consultation, information provided may include explanations about complicated issues, the positive and negative effect of various options, and how this will affect the cost of services provided.

How many consultations will there be for each decision?

16. Some decisions may require consultation to take place more than once, and in different ways with different residents. The process and ways of consulting will normally be set out before the consultations begin and we will let residents know about the number of consultations planned.
17. If the consultation is expected to take place over a long period of time (for example some months), we will keep residents informed during the consultation process, so they know what is happening and what is due to happen next.

Recording consultation outcomes

18. The consultation responses will be gathered accurately in a standard a way, and clear records of the outcomes will be kept. We will treat all information, including any personal data, appropriately and in line with data protection law. Consultation responses will be analysed and presented to the decision maker in an appropriate way during the decision making process.

Making the decision

19. We will be clear who has the authority to make the final decision. This may be an individual, or a group (for example, our Executive Team or the Board).
20. We may reach an "in principle" decision before we consult residents. This means we generally support the proposal being consulted on, but we may not have all the information we need to make a decision. For example, if we wanted to demolish a building and replace it with new homes, we would consult

residents on an “in principle decision” to demolish and rebuild. The final decision to proceed would not be taken until after residents had been consulted and their views taken into account.

21. However, we reserve the right to not agree with or implement the result of the consultation in the decision.

Informing residents

22. We will keep appropriate records of the decision and how opinions were considered so they can be shared and referred to later.
23. We will inform residents involved in the consultation, and all residents affected by the outcome of the decision, about the decision and the reasons for it.

Resident engagement

24. Consultation is one way we can find out residents’ views. Engagement is another. Like consultation, engaging with residents helps us to provide homes and services that better meet their needs.
25. However, engagement is different to consultation. It happens every time we communicate with residents, and in particular when residents share their experiences, views, feedback, concerns, or ideas. This includes when we engage with residents individually, or as part of a survey or focus group on a particular subject. It is therefore typically less formal than consultation.
26. We will particularly engage with residents to ensure that (*even where there are not decisions to consult on and take*) they are given the opportunity to help formulate policy and understand our intentions and plans in relation to their homes, neighbourhoods and services (for example the nature, reason for and scheduling / sequencing of works) and so they can hold us to account.
27. Guinness has a Customer Engagement Strategy which sets out broad approach to engagement. It includes information about how we will engage with residents and how we will measure and report progress on our engagement activities.

Planned and major works to homes

28. Planned and major works to homes can include but are not limited to:
 - Planned maintenance of their homes and buildings (e.g. to lifts, other electrical / mechanical equipment and entry systems)
 - Internal communal area and external decoration
 - Major work on their homes and buildings (including kitchen, bathroom, window and roof replacement)
 - Complex or potentially long-running repair work (which is sometimes required to address issues such as damp and mould)
 - Building Safety (including Fire Safety) works
 - Estate and neighbourhood services.
29. We will consult residents where there are decisions to be taken and we will communicate and engage with residents in all circumstances.

Period of review

30. Our review programme is driven by risk, service improvement initiatives, changes to legislation, regulation, practice or as a result of feedback from customers and other key stakeholders. Typically, we review policies on a three yearly cycle.

Key legal and regulatory references

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Regulatory Standards for Social Housing, with particular reference to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, April 2024
- Greater London Authority Capital Funding Guide, May 2024.

Related policies

- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

Version number		2.2	
Policy approved by		The Guinness Partnership Ltd Board	
Policy approval date		18 May 2022	
Policy effective from		18 May 2022	
Policy review date		May 2025	
Equality analysis approval date		10 May 2022	
Policy author		Marion James, Housing Policy Manager	
Lead director		Jack Lee, Director of Strategy and Policy	
Policy owner		Catriona Simons, Group Chief Executive	
Version history			
Version number	Review trigger	Date of approval	Brief description of the main changes
1.0	Business requirement	November 2017	This is the original version of the policy
1.1	Business requirement	January 2018	It was agreed that the name would be changed to “Customer Consultation Policy”.
1.2	Cyclical review	May 2019	It was agreed that: • The policy expressly makes reference to licensees • The policy make reference to ballots where we are undertaking estate regeneration Reference should be made to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard which requires Registered Providers to consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of Guinness’s housing management service.
2.0	Cyclical review	22 June 2022	The policy includes information on engagement and scrutiny.

			Information is provided about the consultation methods we use, and the information we may provide before we consult. The recording consultation outcomes etc. section has been strengthened to include more information about record keeping. The policy underwent a plain English review. It was agreed the name would be changed to “Resident Consultation Policy”.
2.1	Regulator of Social Housing’s new regulatory standards from April 2024 Business requirement	27 November 2024	Updates have been made to take account of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard which came into effect from 1st April 2024. Removal of reference to Tenant Scrutiny Panel and its replacement with Customer Committee. Additional information included covering our approach to engagement. Changes to policy principles. Change of name from “Resident Consultation Policy” to “Resident Consultation & Engagement Policy”. Additional section included relating to consultation and engagement when we carry out planned and major works to homes.
2.2	Change of Lead Director and Policy Owner	September 2025	Updated Lead Director to Jack Lee and Executive Owner to Catriona Simons

Annex 1: Regulatory Standards

Relevant extracts in relation to engagement and consultation from the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards are detailed below.

Governance and Financial Viability standard

Required Outcomes

"Governance arrangements shall ensure registered providers:

- ...are accountable to tenants..."

Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard

Required Outcomes

"Engagement with tenants"

Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered".

Specific Expectations

"Engagement with tenants"

2.2.1 Registered providers must give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.

2.2.2 Registered providers must assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.

2.2.3 Registered providers must provide accessible support that meets the diverse needs of tenants so they can engage with the opportunities in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

2.2.4 Registered providers must support tenants to exercise their Right to Manage, Right to Transfer or otherwise exercise housing management functions, where appropriate.

2.2.5 Registered providers, working with tenants, must regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. They must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims.

2.2.6 Where a registered provider is considering a change in landlord for one or more tenants, or a significant change in management arrangements, it must consult affected tenants on its proposals at a formative stage and take those views into account in reaching a decision. The consultation must:

a) be fair and accessible

b) provide tenants with adequate time, information and opportunities to consider and respond

c) set out actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term, and

d) demonstrate to affected tenants how the consultation responses have been taken into account in reaching a decision”.

Annex 2: Consultation guidelines

Consultation is often in writing, but other methods can be used (for example, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls or use of social media). The guidelines below should be interpreted for the consultation method that is being used.

1. Consultations should be clear and relevant

Use plain English and avoid acronyms. Be clear what questions you are asking and limit the number of questions to those that are necessary. Make them easy to understand and easy to answer. Avoid lengthy documents when possible and consider merging documents about related topics.

1. Consultations should have a purpose

It will not be appropriate to consult in every situation. Consultation may not be appropriate where there is no decision to consult on. Seek advice from the Director of Governance and Legal Services, particularly where there may otherwise be legitimate expectations of consultation. Always take consultation responses into account when taking a decision forward.

2. Consultations should be informative

Give information to residents so that residents being consulted understand the issues and can give responses based on their understanding. When possible, include confirmed assessments of the costs and benefits or disbenefits of the options being considered.

3. Consultations should last for a proportionate amount of time

Judge the length of the consultation considering the nature and impact of the proposal. Take advice from the Director of Governance and Legal Services where the impact is high. Consulting for too long will unnecessarily delay progress. Consulting too quickly will not give enough time for consideration and will reduce the quality of responses.

4. Consultations should be targeted

Always consider the full range of residents affected by the proposal. Consider targeting specific groups if appropriate. Ensure all residents affected are aware of the consultation and can access it and participate. Consider how to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups being consulted, such as older people, younger people or people with disabilities that may not be able to respond to traditional consultation methods.

5. Responses to consultations should be published in a timely way

Inform residents affected by the outcome about the decision, and the reasons for it, in a timely way.

The person designing a consultation should decide how, and whether it is appropriate to, brief other staff who have contact with the residents being consulted, including the Customer Service Centre.