
WORKING TOGETHER

In brief: Our Resident Participation Compact

What is 'Resident Participation' all about?

Hackney Homes in partnership with Hackney Council want to give all residents a real say on matters that directly affect them, their homes and their neighbourhoods. This is best achieved by everyone working together.

The term 'resident' refers to tenants, leaseholders and freeholders who receive services from Hackney Homes.

What is the relationship between Hackney Homes and Hackney Council?

Hackney Homes was set up by Hackney Council in April 2006 to look after council homes and provide services such as repairs, maintenance, collection of charges and tenancy relations. Tenants remain council tenants, and their rights are not affected in any way.

Hackney Council is responsible for making sure that Hackney Homes provides good quality services to council tenants. The Board of Directors at Hackney Homes, which includes council tenants, elected councillors and others with specialist knowledge, have the responsibility to make sure that tenants' homes are well managed and maintained.

What is a Resident Participation Compact?

A compact is an agreement between two or more groups. The Resident Participation Compact explains how everyone should be working together to achieve the best for tenants. It has been agreed by residents, Hackney Homes and Hackney Council.

Do residents have the right to information and participation?

Yes. Residents have the following rights:

- Right to be consulted and have a say about how your homes are managed, maintained, and about any changes which may affect you.
- Right to have information about the terms of your tenancy, arrangements for services, and any other non-confidential information that you need to make decisions or give views.
- Right to manage your homes, provided you meet certain conditions.

What will the Resident Participation Compact achieve?

Hackney Homes has several aims. These are to deliver excellent, responsive housing services with decent homes and estates, and to help residents lead healthy lives in safe and sustainable communities.

Hackney Homes values the involvement and empowerment of residents so that services can be improved. In order to achieve this, Hackney Homes promises to:

- Provide resources to enable you to get involved, participate and receive training and support.
- Encourage you to have a say in making decisions about your homes, services and neighbourhoods.
- Provide lots of ways to get involved so that you can choose the way you want to take part.
- Give you good quality information so you can have a real say.
- Help local involvement by making available funds and grants for groups to be set up on estates and in neighbourhoods to improve local services.
- Practice fairness by making resident involvement as inclusive as possible so that everyone is treated fairly and given the same opportunities.
- Communicate with everyone in an effective manner.
- Encourage involvement so that other services provided by Hackney Council continuously improve.
- Involve you in reviewing the standard of our services and whether we are meeting our promises.

Are there any targets in the Resident Participation Compact?

The main targets are to:

- Increase the number of residents involved by 10% during 2008/09.
- Check the availability of venues for residents meetings.
- Set up focus groups for Black and Minority Ethnic and other hard to reach groups to explore ways of wider involvement.
- Recruit and train mystery shoppers for all neighbourhoods.
- Ensure that Tenants and Residents Associations are operating properly and their details are up to date.
- Encourage Tenants and Residents Association to increase the level of resident involvement. The target group for the first year is to involve more young people.
- Establish an effective way to monitor the Resident Participation Compact.
- Develop the use of computers and internet so that various involvement groups can share information more readily and effectively.
- Encourage Tenants and Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Panels to work closely with other agencies such as the Police.
- Raise awareness of external resources such as grants from the Housing Corporation.
- Actively work towards raising the number of resident groups in the borough.

What evidence is there that Resident Participation Compacts work?

Here are some examples of what has been achieved under previous compacts by everyone working together:

- A 'Community Leadership Award' has been created to recognise the enormous efforts that residents put in as volunteers (now known as the Active Residents Awards).
- Two new Tenant Management Organisations have been set up so that tenants can have more control over the management of their homes.
- Arrangements for resident involvement have been reviewed so that there are even more opportunities for everyone to participate and give their views. Examples include involvement of residents in deciding priorities and appointing contractors for long term maintenance of properties, setting up special interest groups and organising events to gather views of young people, people with disabilities and other under-represented groups.
- Different ways to get involved are listed and everyone has access to information about Tenants and Residents Associations in their area.
- More information is now available for residents who wish to set up local groups.
- Residents views have been obtained through a survey and results published.



How can residents participate?

The level of involvement is a matter of individual choice. Therefore, Hackney Homes provides a variety of ways in which residents can get information and be involved.

1) Informal and individual contributions

Contributions from those people who wish to get involved on a one-off and individual basis are very welcome. You can do the following:

- Read the monthly Hackney Homes News for residents and give views and opinions on the information and articles.
- Complete survey forms and questionnaires.
- Become a 'mystery shopper'.
- Attend special interest focus group meetings.
- Observe non-confidential parts of Hackney Homes Board meetings.
- Contact any member of staff to give views and suggestions.
- Give opinions via the Hackney Homes website.
- Attend conferences and other events run by Hackney Homes.

2) Formal and group involvement

There are a vast number of ways in which people can help us to make the right decisions, including:

Local level

- Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)
- Quarterly Estate Walkabouts
- Neighbourhood Panels

Special interest groups

- BME Forum meetings
- Disability Forum
- Estate Development Committee (EDC)
- Youth Committee
- Street Property Sounding Board

Borough-wide level

- Hackney Homes Board
- Tenant Levy Steering Group
- Resident Liaison Group
- Borough-wide Leaseholder and Freeholder Forum
- Quarterly Neighbourhood Performance Monitoring Meetings
- Reading Panels
- Resident Compact Review Panel

How much time is needed to take part?

People can choose how much or how little time they wish to spend on getting involved. Everyone's views are equally valid. Talk to the Resident Participation Team about what you are interested in and how much time you want to give. We will support you in finding the best way of getting involved.

How will this Resident Participation Compact be monitored?

The Board of Hackney Homes is responsible for making sure that Hackney Homes' promises are delivered. Regular updates will be published via the website and within the monthly newsletter. In addition, the Resident Liaison Group will receive written reports every six months so that progress is discussed and monitored. The Resident Compact Review Panel will meet annually to review progress and make recommendations for improvement and enhancement.

Where can I get more information or a full copy of the Resident Participation Compact?

You can get a copy by contacting any of our offices, member of staff or via the website.

Our Resident Participation Team can be contacted on **020 8356 7845** or by email **getinvolved@hackneyhomes.org.uk**