Residents’ voices at the heart of what we do
Having an engaged resident structure means we can be transparent about how we work and continue to build trust with our customers.

It’s just amazing the amount of work our resident groups have done, in partnership with us. Through working with our residents at a strategic and operational level, as well as on the ground in our communities, we can really demonstrate the difference they’ve made.

The commitment they’ve shown and the outcomes they’ve achieved are really positive and I think it shows why our groups are award-winning.

Aasia Nisar
Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager
Sovereign Housing Association
Resident and Board Partnership (RBP)

Our Resident and Board Partnership has had a big impact on our policies and procedures. Members of the group have also shared their voices on the national stage, talking about subjects that affect all social housing tenants.

- Over 300 hours volunteering from RBP members
- 10 policies, standards and statements reviewed
- 14 housing topics including homelessness discussed and reflected on
- 10 appearances at MP events, housing conferences and research meetings
Reviewed and contributed towards:

- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Domestic abuse policy
- Empty homes standard
- Safeguarding policy
- Strategic review
- Succession policy
- Tenancy policy
- Tenancy fraud policy
- Value for money statement

Discussed and reflected on:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Being a housing officer
- Communities
- Complaints
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) and seeking customer feedback
- Safeguarding
- Safety and compliance, particularly the topics raised from the Grenfell Tower tragedy
- Service charges
- Our Workplace strategy
- Supported housing
- Tenancy support
- Welfare reform and Universal Credit
National voice

- Met Dominic Raab, MP, then Housing Minister
- Met Alok Sharma, MP, Minister of State for Employment
- Attended Houses of Parliament discussion on benefit of social housing to society
- Attended Chartered Institute of Housing’s Rethinking social housing conference
- Hosted talks and input into National Housing Federation’s Great and trusted landlord research
- Attended National Housing Federation’s Customer experience conference
- Input into National Housing Federation’s Together with tenants initiative
- Member Nick Williams has been invited to be part of Consumer Standard Working Group with Tpas - tenant engagement experts
- Member Joyce Ward is part of the new national advisory panel for the National Housing Federation, in line with the Together with tenants initiative
We’re all committed to making sure the voices of residents are heard and that they receive great services from Sovereign. It’s about building a team: the Board, residents and employees agreeing a shared vision for the future.

It’s a genuine partnership, where residents and Sovereign are working together to make things better for everyone.

Joyce Ward
Chair of the Resident and Board Partnership
Our Scrutiny Coordination Group works with resident Scrutineers to review our services in-depth, giving us a resident perspective on how, when it’s needed, we can make changes to improve them.

- **Over 300 hours** volunteering from SCG members
- **Over 120 hours** volunteering from Scrutineers
- **80 residents** spoken to during scrutinies
- **45 employees** spoken to during scrutinies
So far, the group’s carried out four scrutinies: engaged resident structure; lettings; repeat calls; complaints (underway).

Some recommendations to come out of the scrutinies:

**Lettings**
- Create a plan to help teams promote properties that are taking longer to let.
- Continue discussions with local authorities on how to improve the housing nominations process.

**Repeat calls**
- Agree a Sovereign-wide definition of ‘right first time’ for repairs, in line with the housing sector.
- Make sure communications are clear and look at how we manage repair call-back requests.
- Report the average number of contacts before a repair’s completed and agree a new performance indicator.
- Align all complaints compensation budgets so we can report on repairs compensation.
- In the future, develop a fully-automated residents’ portal repair and appointment service.
It’s great to be able to review how Sovereign works, at such a detailed level. It does take a lot of time and effort to do these scrutinies but our Scrutineers and SCG members are really committed and Sovereign has put processes in place to help us get the most out of each review.

It means our voices as residents can be used constructively to recommend different ways of doing things when it’s needed.

Paula Grebot
Chair of the Scrutiny Coordination Group
Community Engagement Groups

We have nine Community Engagement Groups, made up of 69 Sovereign residents and 48 other members of the community.

Located across our divisions, they’re working with us to make a difference in their area.
Grove Generations
Basingstoke

They initially ran an exercise class for all abilities and a coffee and cake group. They’re now focusing on their neighbourhood.

They’ve done a litter pick and have plans to paint a mural on the walls of an old, run-down, graffitied under pass. This damage puts people off using it but the group hope the change will encourage more to go through it to visit the woodlands and ponds just beyond.

Boscombe Action Group
Bournemouth

The Boscombe Action Group wants to reduce anti-social behaviour and increase community safety in Boscombe.

They’ve worked with the police, NHS and local drug rehabilitation charities.
Christchurch in Action

Christchurch in Action is addressing environmental issues, isolation and the health, wellbeing and safety of all residents in Christchurch.

Some of their projects have included looking at speeding issues, the environmental redesign proposal for Monkswell Green and a planning proposal to move a pedestrian crossing.

Digby in Action

This group wants to improve community relationships in the area by putting on free and low-cost events for everyone.

They’ve been meeting since the summer of 2018 and have spent time getting to know each other and discussing how best to run events for the area.
Common Ground
Faringdon

Common Ground is focused on bringing the town of Faringdon together to enjoy outdoor space and improve the appearance of the town.

They’ve recently refurbished the raised beds at Faringdon Infant School and will be supporting the school and its pupils to plant produce in the raised beds.

All Aboard
Hungerford

All Aboard aims to reduce social isolation. Its regular meetings in the lounge of our extra care scheme Redwood House offer a time to chat, play board games and enjoy guest speakers over a cup of tea.

During the summer months they also arrange trips, which have included a cream tea cruise on the Rose of Hungerford canal boat and a day out at Cotswold Wildlife Park.
Ryde Alive Ryde

Ryde Alive launched a new social café, aimed at reducing social isolation and increasing friendship. Aptly named “Friends Together”, it’s based at Wootton Bridge Community Centre and meets monthly. Anyone can come along to enjoy a cuppa and a chat, plus play board and card games or try a game of table football or pool. In the future, the group hopes to organise bingo and quizzes, plus outings.
Nelson Road Playpark Group Newport

Nelson Road’s play park was well used but tired, with equipment in need of regeneration. They’ve now secured a grant to install new apparatus for younger visitors and they’ve also been successful in bringing back community events to the area.

Alongside this, they want to improve safety and reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour in and around the park. They’ve looked at requesting speed restrictions on the surrounding roads and prohibiting dog walking and fouling.

Smiles Matter Speedwell, Bristol

Smiles Matter’s aim is to “create a safer and better place for children and families to grow”.

They’re working in conjunction with an older people’s charity, the local community centre and the local children’s centre to put on a series of intergenerational events around Speedwell.
Awards for our resident engagement

The dedication of our engaged residents, and the team that supports them, has been recognised across the housing and tenant involvement sector.

- UK Housing Award 2017/18 - Outstanding approach to customer engagement - Shortlisted

- TPAS South 2018 - Excellence in Tenant Engagement Award - Winner

- TPAS National 2018 - Excellence in Tenant Engagement - Finalist

- Housing Heroes 2018 - Tenant Innovator of the Year
  Joyce Ward, Chair, Resident and Board Partnership - Highly commended

- 24housing Awards 2018 - Tenant Champion
  Joyce Ward, Chair, Resident and Board Partnership - Highly commended

- TPAS National 2019 - Team of the Year
  Community Engagement and Scrutiny team - Finalist

- 24housing 2018 - Housing’s 40 over 40
  Aasia Nisar, Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager - Top 10
Speakers

Residents and members of our engagement team have been invited to speak at numerous conferences and events, showcasing the effectiveness of our involvement model.

- **Accent Housing** (2017)
  Joyce Ward, Chair, Resident and Board Partnership
  Our new resident engagement structure

- **National Housing Federation’s governance conference** (2018)
  Aasia Nisar, Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager
  Our engagement journey

- **National Housing Federation’s national summit conference** (2018)
  Aasia Nisar, Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager
  Panel expert on resident engagement

- **National Tpas conference** (2018)
  Aasia Nisar, Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager
  Our triangle of engagement

- **National Housing Federation’s customer experience conference** (2019)
  Jenny Dykes, Resident Board member and Luke Bingham, Divisional Director
  How digital transformation can create a great customer experience
• **Advance Housing and Support** *(2019)*  
  **Joyce Ward**, Chair, Resident and Board Partnership  
  How we created our ‘triangle of engagement’

• **Chartered Institute of Housing conference** *(2019)*  
  **Joyce Ward**, Chair, Resident and Board Partnership and  
  **Aasia Nisar**, Community Engagement and Scrutiny Manager  
  Great tenant engagement
For the latest updates on what our engaged residents have been up to, please visit

www.sovereign.org.uk/involved