



# Resident Involvement Handbook



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# How to get involved in Resident Involvement

## Dear Resident,

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We hope this will provide you with information that will encourage you to take part in resident involvement activities with us in the future.

We recognise that excellent services are achieved through genuine and active involvement of our customers. As a social landlord, we have a duty to keep residents informed and to consult with them on proposals and changes which will affect them. We therefore give a genuine commitment to develop and expand our existing methods of involvement to make sure this continues to happen.

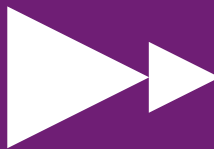
The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) has recognised our commitment to resident involvement and has granted our resident involvement service a national accreditation award. With your help, we will continue to remain one of the best resident involvement services in the country.

If you are interested in any of the involvement opportunities available then please contact us on **01724 279900** or **0800 032 6363** or email the resident involvement team direct on **[resident.involvement@nlhomes.org.uk](mailto:resident.involvement@nlhomes.org.uk)**.

You can also register your interest to become involved by completing the Menu of Options found at the back of this booklet. If you have any special needs such as a larger print, Braille, translation, audio or if you require any other form of support then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours,

*Resident Involvement and  
Community Development Team*



## North Lincolnshire Homes Resident Involvement Strategy

We have a Resident Involvement Strategy that demonstrates North Lincolnshire Homes commitment to resident involvement. This document provides detailed information on the core values and principles which govern how North Lincolnshire Homes operates its resident involvement service. To obtain a full copy of the strategy please contact the Resident Involvement Team or visit our website on [www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk)

### Why get Involved?

Getting involved and participating is an important way for individuals to get their views and needs heard, and to influence decisions which affect their homes and communities.

Residents should all have an equal opportunity to become involved regardless of their means. It is important that residents are not out of pocket as a result of attending meetings or other resident involvement activities (e.g. conferences or training events). This is why North Lincolnshire Homes covers most out-of-pocket expenses for travel and other reasonable costs to encourage residents to get involved with us.





## Resident Involvement Team

We have a dedicated Resident Involvement Team to offer help, advice and support to any resident who wants to be involved in working in partnership with us to influence improvements to the services we provide.

We will, along with other officers, offer ongoing support when a group of residents' wish to set up a residents' group.

### The support available at the early stages includes:

- Finding a venue for meetings and leaflets to advertise them.
- Administrative support for producing agendas, minutes of meetings and newsletters.
- Providing useful contacts for other agencies and staff that can help them, e.g. North Lincolnshire Homes Officers and partners such as the police and the council.

We also offer residents free training and support so that they can improve their own knowledge and skills to participate effectively.

*For more information, please see our [Volunteer Expenses leaflet](#) available from our website [www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk) or by contacting our Resident Involvement Team on 01724 279900.*



**We work with North Lincolnshire Homes to help build a stronger community. We get to see others enjoying themselves and this makes you feel good about the positive impact you can have.**



*GND Hibaldstow Residents Association*

# How can you be involved?



North Lincolnshire Homes provides many ways in which you can participate. Resident associations are the most popular form of involvement but there are many other structures and opportunities available. Information on some of the structures are detailed below, and the full range of opportunities are listed in the Menu of Options included at the back of this handbook.

## Examples of Involvement

### Resident associations

A residents association is a group of people living in a neighbourhood/residential area, block or street who want to improve the quality of life on their estates.

A residents association works to promote the interests of all residents and brings local communities together.

There are many reasons why people wish to get together to form associations:

- To campaign for something – e.g. A better repairs service, better grass cutting service, activities for youngsters.
- To campaign against something – e.g. New housing policies, closure of community facilities.
- To increase community spirit.
- To make sure people are informed of issues that may affect them.
- To arrange social events and meet people – e.g. Coach trips, jumble sales, summer fayres etc.



North Lincolnshire Homes has a responsibility to ensure that resident associations are being truly representative and are accountable to their local communities. We need to ensure that the relevant resources and support are available to resident associations so that they are able and empowered to operate efficiently and effectively. A recognition criteria has been produced which provides details of how we expect resident associations to operate. For example:

**In order to qualify for North Lincolnshire Homes recognition, a residents association must:**

- Represent an area where the majority of residents are North Lincolnshire Homes tenants or leaseholders.
- Elect a committee and officers who will be responsible for running the association.
- Adopt a constitution (operating rules) and adhere to it. A model constitution is provided by North Lincolnshire Homes and includes details of:
  - The boundary area to be represented.
  - The aims and objectives of the association.
  - The minimum number of general meetings to be held during a calendar year.
  - The minimum number of committee meetings to be held during a calendar year.
  - The AGM (Annual General Meeting).
  - Financial Information and accounts.
  - A commitment to equality and diversity.

The model constitution is considered as a good practice guide that the residents association can amend to reflect their specific requirements and objectives. However, as a minimum, all of the above bullet points must apply.

- Copies of the criteria are available from North Lincolnshire Homes upon request and can be found on our website **[www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk)**.
- Any residents group must sign up to the North Lincolnshire Homes Volunteer's Code of Conduct. This is a document that covers issues such as showing respect for others, equality of opportunities and a commitment to confidentiality where appropriate. To obtain a full copy of the Volunteer's Code of Conduct please contact the Resident Involvement Team or visit our website on **[www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk)**.

# Community Voice

Community Voice is the main constituted umbrella resident group structure that is supported by North Lincolnshire Homes. This group consists of residents working together to influence improvements to North Lincolnshire Homes policies and services, with the aim of creating a better quality of life for all North Lincolnshire Homes residents. Community Voice meetings usually take place on a monthly basis in a formal meeting setting. The membership of the group includes two representatives from each residents association, two Sheltered Panel representatives, two Black & Minority Ethnic representatives, two young persons' representatives, one leaseholder representative and one tenant from each of the five geographical areas.

Any tenant can observe a Community Voice meeting by contacting the Resident Involvement Team on **01724 279900**.



## Tenant Board Members

The Board of North Lincolnshire Homes has overall legal responsibility for governing the organisation. All our Board Members are volunteers who are unpaid (other than for claiming out-of-pocket expenses).

The North Lincolnshire Homes Board is made up of 15 volunteers - five tenants, five independent members and five North Lincolnshire Council nominated representatives.

Each year a set number of Tenant Board Members will step down and there will be interviews and elections to select who will replace them. Being a Board Member is of huge importance to North Lincolnshire Homes with one of the most important roles being the involvement in the direction of the organisation.



**Being active helps keep you active. By being involved with North Lincolnshire Homes you are able to meet with people from across the whole region.**

*Healey Road Residents Association*



# Residents' Scrutiny Panel

The panel is a group of tenants that carry out scrutiny reviews of different parts of North Lincolnshire Homes services. The group assess current procedures and customer satisfaction levels, look to identify best practice elsewhere, and make official recommendations for improvements where required.



# Tenant Inspectors

Tenant Inspectors are residents who carry out reality checks on all aspects of the housing service. Some of the inspections they can carry out include:

- Acting as Mystery Shoppers.
- Estate inspections.
- Inspection visits on high rise flats.
- Empty homes visits.
- Open door visits to inspect different service areas.
- Public information checks on the main Customer Centre.
- Public information checks at sheltered schemes.
- Testing access to the website and information available.
- General enquiries and reporting repairs via the Contact Centre.
- Telephone surveys for various services, e.g. repairs, improvement works.
- Ground maintenance surveys.
- Quality checks on improvement works.

**What are your benefits of getting involved?...**



**Getting to know all of the North Lincolnshire Homes staff whilst also making new friends.**



*Epworth Residents Association*





## Sheltered Housing Panel

The Sheltered Panel is a group of tenants who represent the interests of our dedicated older persons' blocks (blocks that include common areas such as a communal room). The panel meets quarterly to discuss scheme related issues. Locations of meetings are rotated between the schemes which provide representatives, with the opportunity of seeing other sheltered schemes throughout North Lincolnshire.

## Diversity Working Group

This is a group of tenants and staff who are responsible for making sure all North Lincolnshire Homes customers are treated fairly and equally and have access to quality services and involvement.

## BME Special Interest Group

Black & Minority Ethnic community representatives and tenants who discuss specific requirements in terms of culture, tradition, religious beliefs and language.

## Home Improvement Panel

This panel looks at customer added value and customer focus when North Lincolnshire Homes is choosing contractors and products. The panel are involved in selecting the choices of products that are to be made available to our customers.

## Repairs Panel

Residents are involved in this panel to ensure the repairs service meets the needs of our customers and that customer satisfaction is achieved by a process of continual improvement.

## Disabled Adaptations Panel

A panel that influences policies and procedures in relation to disabled adaptation works to homes.

## Grounds Maintenance Panel

Residents that live within North Lincolnshire Homes neighbourhoods that work together to ensure a good grounds maintenance service is delivered.

## Key News Group

Residents that are involved in developing the content and style of the North Lincolnshire Homes newsletters.

## Internet Group

This group regularly checks the North Lincolnshire Homes public website to identify any improvements that can be made.

## Environmental Panel

The panel involves tenants and leaseholders who prioritise proposals for environmental works and monitor the satisfaction of works once they have been carried out.

## Learning Disabilities Group

This group is made up of tenants that have learning disabilities, their carers, social services support staff and private care support. The group meets on an annual basis.

## Rural Voice

Transport issues can make it difficult for tenants who live in rural areas to become involved to influence decisions that affect them. This barrier has been addressed in the form of a participation structure that tenants can be involved with, without them having to leave the comfort of their own home.

Tenants from rural villages have the opportunity to be involved either by post or by email. This means that tenants who register their names with us can receive a regular North Lincolnshire Homes questionnaire or survey form that they can complete from their own home. This allows them to put their views across to us so they can influence improvements to services.

This type of involvement structure is also attractive to tenants who prefer to tap into modern technology, with the option to receive and complete survey forms via email.





## E-Mail Quick Response Panel

Tenants who put their names forward who are willing to comment on the text of standard letters and publications. We send information to them via email and ask them to check the text for jargon and understanding. They then provide a quick email response to us of their views.

## Scheme Panels

When we are carrying out improvement works to a Sheltered Scheme, we invite tenant representatives from the scheme to meet with us to monitor the progress of the works.

## Focus Groups

A one off meeting to discuss a specific topic which would normally include a small group of residents and one or two North Lincolnshire Homes Officers. The residents will be encouraged to put forward their own personal views on the particular topic in question. For example, the focus group could involve young people and the North Lincolnshire Homes officers may be asking them what kind of support they would find helpful to assist them to maintain their tenancy.



## Estate Inspections

All residents are invited to take part in estate walkabouts, together with Housing Officers and Tenant Inspectors. Each week an estate inspection takes place in a different neighbourhood. The rota that includes dates, times, locations and meeting points can be found on the North Lincolnshire Homes website, [www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk) or published in our quarterly magazine Key News.

## Surveys

Residents have the opportunity to let North Lincolnshire Homes know their views about their homes, services and other issues through a range of surveys. Surveys can be postal, email or by interview either over the telephone or face to face.

## Individual Consultation

Residents involved in giving their views on any aspects of our services.

## Community Investment

We are keen to support communities in developing ideas and projects which will enhance the quality of life for our residents. We offer professional help and advice and also award grants to community groups who wish to do things in their neighbourhoods. The grants can fund a wide variety of things including purchasing equipment (e.g. computers, gardening equipment etc.) or can even pay for events and outings which bring individuals together and break down barriers.

### Grants available for Community Groups:

#### Start Up Grants for resident associations

A Start Up Grant will be given as a one off payment to all new resident associations to help with the cost of getting the group up and running and to pay towards items such as leaflets to publicise the new group.

**To qualify for this grant the following criteria needs to be met:**

- The group should be willing to represent views of all tenants and residents living within an agreed boundary area. The area they represent will be detailed in a constitution developed in partnership between the association and the Resident Involvement Team.
- Support will be provided from the Resident Involvement Team for a period of 3 months to help an association to become established and the committee developed in their roles.
- The association must adopt a formal constitution that is recognised by North Lincolnshire Homes and sign up to the Volunteers Code of Conduct.
- A bank account for the association to be opened.

#### Annual Grants for resident associations

The Annual Grant is for established resident associations to help with the running costs involved in sustaining the group and to pay towards venue hire, stationery, leaflets and advertising.

The amount of grant available will depend on the number of North Lincolnshire Homes properties covered by the group.

This grant is in addition to individual associations raising their own funds from external sources.

**To qualify for this grant, the following criteria needs to be met:**

- Each individual association to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and accounts to be checked prior to the meeting taking place.
- Election of the officers and committee as stated in their constitution.

# Community

## Development Grants for Community Groups

Development Grants are for groups who are interested in community projects that will be of benefit to people living in local neighbourhoods within North Lincolnshire.

For groups to progress with a project for their individual area or to work with other agencies, they may need assistance in terms of conducting consultation exercises. This grant could help pay towards producing surveys, gaining external advice and any training requirements.

The amount of grant that an individual group can apply for will be agreed by North Lincolnshire Homes and will depend on the type of project put forward, e.g. Purchase of computer equipment, large community event, match funding when bidding externally.

Guidance notes on these grants are available upon request from North Lincolnshire Homes and can be found on the website [www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk).

If you would like to know more information on the items included in the handbook please contact North Lincolnshire Homes on **01724 279900** and ask to speak to a member of the Resident Involvement Team or email [resident.involvement@nlhomes.org.uk](mailto:resident.involvement@nlhomes.org.uk).

Alternatively you can write to us as at:  
North Lincolnshire Homes, Meridian House,  
Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, DN15 8QZ

### To qualify for a grant the following criteria needs to be met:

- All groups to have a formal constitution.
- The project must be within the North Lincolnshire Boundary.
- Only one application per financial year.
- An application form must be completed.



# Menu of OPTIONS

Would you like to be involved? Here is a brief summary of all the options available.

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	TIME REQUIRED
Starters	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Basic information on resident involvement opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Becoming an Ordinary Member	Half an hour for a chat. Yearly Annual General Meeting.
Special Offers	<b>Which of these service review areas would you like to influence?:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Costs and budgets <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Customer services, publicity & information <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Disability and special needs housing <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Neighbourhoods & environment <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Housing allocations <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Local housing policies <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Nuisance & disorder <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Rent & rent arrears <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Repairs & improvements <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Service charges <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Sheltered housing <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Welfare & support services	Example - One 4 hour meeting per week for 6 weeks.
Main Courses	<b>Becoming part of a regular group that works in partnership with us on a regular basis:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Resident Associations <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Tenant Inspectors <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Sheltered Housing Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Leaseholders Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Community Voice <input type="checkbox"/> 6 BME Special Interest Group <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Disabled Adaptations Group <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Environmental Panels <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Home Improvement Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Repairs Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Resident Scrutiny Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Tenant Board Member <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Grounds Maintenance Panel <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Newsletter Group <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Young Persons Panel	Regular meetings held either on a monthly, quarterly or half yearly basis.
Side Dishes	<b>From your own home:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Rural Voice Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> 2 E-Mail Quick Response Panel	Occasional input from home.
Desserts	<b>One off, quick hit involvement:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Focus Group <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Mystery Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Estate Inspection	One off session, lasting a couple of hours.

# Please return the completed form to the address below or fill the form in online at [www.nlhomes.org.uk](http://www.nlhomes.org.uk)

Are you happy with resident involvement opportunities available to you?

Yes  No

How satisfied are you with the overall service provided to you by North Lincolnshire Homes?

very satisfied  satisfied  dissatisfied  very dissatisfied  no opinion

I am usually available (please tick):

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						

I have my own transport (for which mileage allowance will be paid) Yes  No

I would need any transport to be arranged for me and paid for Yes  No

I would need crèche places or childminder expenses paid for Yes  No

I would need carers expenses paid for Yes  No

My name

My telephone number is (Home)

(Work)

My e-mail address is   
(if applicable)

Address

Signed

Dated