

Member Spotlight

January 2022

South Yorkshire HA





South Yorkshire Housing Association

We asked James Smith from South Yorkshire HA to share what they are up to.

If you'd like to contact James about any of the below click [here](#)

Give us a little known fact about your organisation

Ken Loach's 1966 film about homelessness 'Cathy Come Home' shocked the nation and led to the development of many charities and Housing Associations across the country, including us.

Shelter was one of the first charities born out of Cathy Come Home, and it was the Sheffield-based Shelter Group who initiated the development of a housing association to support people in our city.

John Belcher became the founding CEO of Sheffield Family Housing Association in 1972 (and our first office began in his kitchen!).

We've provided homes and support for people who need them ever since and we're proud of the journey that has led us to South Yorkshire Housing Association as we know it today.

Tell us about a time that engagement has made a difference to your services or communities

We recently involved customers in co-designing a set of customer promises. The promises are based around the National Together With Tenants Charter (we are early adopters), and we wanted to make them our own.

We worked hard to ensure we got a good range of customer voice and sent targeted questionnaires to a diverse range of over 100 customers, including people that don't live in our properties, but may access support from our teams.

We also invited 10 customers to be part of a working group, so we could have some good conversations and take the questionnaire feedback to another level, to co-design our completed set of promises.

We didn't stop there and we're involving customers in the roll out and monitoring, to ensure our promises are brought to life and our performance is measured from a customer perspective.

What are you currently working on when it comes to engagement?

We've worked with customers to co-design a new way of doing co-scrutiny at SYHA, and we're nearly ready to start our first exercise, which is a health check of how we're doing against our 7 customer promises.

We'll use our findings to map out more exercises to work on over the following 12 months.

It's been fantastic to start from afresh with scrutiny, and to be working with 8 enthusiastic customers who responded to a blanket text we sent to all our customers asking if they'd like to help shape our services.



Anna O'Halloran from Tpas has been helping us with some of the training too, which has been fantastic. So thanks for that, and we'll be sure to keep in touch about our progress.

Why did you decide to join Tpas?

We already had good links with Tpas before becoming members and we worked with one of your mentors who helped with our previous scrutiny arrangement. He let me know a bit about the membership offer, so I did a bit more research and I liked what I saw.

We joined because we want to connect with other Housing Associations and provide ourselves and our engaged customers with opportunities to network with peers, share our learning and experiences, and access your fantastic range of training and events.

What is your top engagement tip?

There is no one size fits all for Engagement. People want to engage at different times and in different ways. A flexible approach to Engagement with lots of options for customers to share their views works well for us. So be brave, be prepared to try new things, and always evaluate along the way and learn from what you do.

Also, people who may not have had the best experience with your business, have wonderful insights to share about how to improve things. Try your best to involve these people too.

What's the one thing you are really proud of when it comes to engagement?

I'm proud about how we've adapted throughout the pandemic cos we've produced some fantastic work in difficult circumstances. We've involved hundreds of customers in our decision making over the past 18 months and I'm so pleased that people have told us that they've felt listened to, and that they feel their views have made a difference to what we do.

I think it's vitally important to get back to customers and let them know how we've used their insights and suggestions. Even if we haven't managed to do everything people have asked us to, I think people really appreciate it when we let them know why.



If you have any questions regarding this document or if we can help in any other way, call us on [0161 868 3500](tel:01618683500) or email info@tpas.org.uk



The Scrutiny Panel

