

Tpas Member Spotlight



Member Spotlight - North Star Housing

We asked Peter Locke, Head of Engagement and Insight at North Star Housing, to share some of the work they are currently doing.

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

Give us a little known fact about your organisation

Our organisation began as Endeavour Housing Association in 1974 (50 years old last year!) We still have original trustees visiting us to make sure we are holding true to the community focussed values the organisation was founded with.

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

I can think of lots of examples but, the one that really stands out is the development of our Customer Commitments. They were developed with feedback from over 200 tenants and 50 staff and based on the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants charter. They underpin how we deliver our services and are the basis for how tenants can hold us to account. They have re-shaped our conversation and engagement with tenants from a focus on assurance that services are being delivered well to a genuine curiosity around how they can be improved.

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

We have recently revamped our entire structure and have redesigned our Scrutiny Panel to reflect the more dynamic nature of our engagement activities. We were lucky to have a great Scrutiny Panel for 13 years but we worked with tenants, board, staff and engagement experts to reimagine a model that shared decision making power, tracked tenant feedback from recommendation through implementation to evidencing the impact of change.

We are still on this journey and know there's more to do but, being able to evidence these individual change journeys and work with tenants on what we do with this insight, is really rewarding.

Why did you decide to join Tpas?

We have been members for a long time! We really value the access to the expertise of the Tpas staff, to network with like-minded colleagues and also to hear how things can be done differently. We really appreciate the breadth of events and resources that are available and the opportunities it affords for both North Star and our tenants.

What is your top engagement tip?

Make sure you are talking to the right people at the right time. I know that is easy to say and harder to do but, since 2020 we have been working with dynamically formed groups based around issues. I know lots of colleagues are doing this too but, I think it's important to point out that taking this approach has massively helped to improve the diversity and difference of opinions we hear. In our team we have called it 'harnessing energy'.

We know people are more likely to talk to us about something they have recently experienced, has caused them problems or is likely to affect them. Finding ways to hear from people when they want to talk to you is key. Making it as easy possible is the real challenge!

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

In the past two years we have implemented monitoring systems that can evidence that our engagement activities are representative of the communities we serve. We report on this every quarter and I'm really proud to say that we can give our senior staff and board assurance that we are hearing voices from Black and global majority communities, from people with disabilities, from all age groups and from across the organisation's geography.

This isn't the end of our journey, by any means. In fact, it's just the start. But we can now work on more complex intersectional issues with confidence. We can work with partners knowing where our gaps may be and use our resources effectively to meet those needs.



