

Gwalia Housing Group
Resident Participation Strategy
October 2005

Meaning

*Resident – the term resident is used throughout this strategy document. It is used to incorporate anyone living **legally** in accommodation provided by Tai Cymdogaeth. This includes tenants, shared-owners, leaseholders and service users.*

1. Mission Statement

- 1.1 Tai Cymdogaeth is committed to working in partnership with its residents to enable them to have the opportunity to have full effective involvement in all the strategies, subject to commercial confidentiality, planning and delivery of services in connection with their homes and environment.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Housing for Wales Circular 6/98 requires RSLs with stock of 100 or more dwellings to adopt a 3 - year strategy based on the applicable Regulatory Requirements, i.e.:

- 6.2: Information to Tenants

- 6.3: Tenants' views

- 6.4: Tenant Involvement

- 2.2 Gwalia Housing Group fully embraces The Regulatory Requirements, which requires associations to show how they are involving residents in governance, management and development activities. This strategy seeks to connect these areas and others, as can be seen from the Action Plan, which forms the basis of this strategy. In doing so we will be able to demonstrate openness to stakeholders and a willingness to incorporate the views of service users into our working practices.

- 2.3 Gwalia Housing Group Board, Group Chief Executive and the Directors' Team recognise that meaningful resident participation will facilitate improved service delivery and assist in instigating possible community development initiatives. Gwalia also recognises the business benefits of resident involvement and community development.

- 2.4 Because these issues are important Gwalia Housing Group is committed to resident participation. New and practical methods of encouraging residents to get involved have been developed within the strategy and action plan. It is

anticipated this dynamic approach to resident involvement will enable a more representative and comprehensive participation of residents in the future.

2.5 The Group ethos is not to view resident participation as a separate role within the organisation but to ensure it forms the basis of all the activities/services provided.

2.6 This strategy document should be read in conjunction with the Tenant Compact (2002) which establishes the full procedures for supporting and resourcing resident participation.

3. Background

3.1 It is increasingly obvious that fewer people *want* to be involved in Tenant Participation in the way it has previously been packaged. In the past this process has been formal and based upon resident/landlord issues and has been little more than a mechanism to put forward resident complaints. It can be seen from recent survey results that the majority of residents are broadly happy with the services provided by Tai Cymdogaeth and the Technical Services Department.

3.2 As a result of discussions with residents, it has emerged that many do not want to take part through formal channels of participation. These discussions have also highlighted the increased interest of individuals regarding local, rather than strategic issues. It is evident from these discussions, and survey results, that there is increasing concerns regarding youth issues, lack of public transport and other interrelating aspects regarding 'community.'

3.3 In view of this shift from resident/landlord issues to resident/community issues, resident participation within the organisation has assimilated a community development approach. This approach has resulted in a broader community involvement and has led to issues being addressed at community level, whilst at the same time dealing with issues regarding the housing services provided by Tai Cymdogaeth.

3.4 This strategy acknowledges that some residents may not feel part of a particular group or community and this can create a barrier to becoming

involved. Options have been incorporated into the strategy to encourage individuals to participate by enabling them to pursue a method that feels right for them. It is for this reason that the methods of participating are varied (See Tenant Compact for examples of participation methods).

4. Vision for Participation

4.1 Gwalia Housing Group has always been committed to working with residents as a means to address issues and determine residents priorities. Therefore Gwalia Housing Group's vision is to build on past experience and embrace the future by creating an environment where residents can influence the decision making process through a range of involvement opportunities. By working in partnership with residents Gwalia Housing Group will be able to deliver a housing service that meets the needs of residents.

4.2 Over recent years it has been increasingly apparent that 'some' resident associations have not been representative and have failed to address this issue. It is also apparent that many people no longer want to be involved in formal groups and would rather meet on a more informal basis. This concern has been taken on board with the introduction of Resident Panels and the funding of Community Groups. However, to enable an increase in participation of new and current residents a menu of options must be available that encourages, acknowledges and supports those individuals that do want to become involved.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 The budget for Resident Participation will be agreed following consultation with The Resident Partnership and Tai Cymdogaeth Board. The budget will be divided into 4 separate headings. These will be:

- Funding, including:
 - Core Funding
 - Community Chest
 - Additional Funding
 - Resident Suggestion Scheme
- Training and Capacity Building
- Information and Publicity
- Travel

5.2 Throughout the financial year stakeholders will be invited to suggest projects for the coming year that contribute towards the aims of resident participation. These suggestions will be taken into account for the coming financial year.

5.3 An annual review of costs and benefits gained will be carried out. This review will include:

- Type and number of events held
- Number of participants
- Number and type of new groups formed
- Number and type of disbanded group and reason why
- Type of issues dealt with by participants
- Number and type of issues consulted on
- Suggestions made, via Suggestion Scheme, and outcomes of suggestions
- Participants views on the Participation Strategy