

Policy Name	Engagement Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	March 2020
Category	Operations
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Engagement Policy	
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Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
1.0	03.06.19	<i>Draft for consultation with Residents Forum</i>	<i>Richard Keeley</i>	
2.0	13.11.19	<i>Draft for consultation with Residents Forum</i>	<i>Richard Keeley</i>	<i>Resident Forum</i>
3.0	13.12.19	<i>Final version for Board approval incorporating Forum recommendations and Resident Voice Governance report</i>	<i>Richard Keeley</i>	ELT / Board March 2020

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1. Policy Purpose & Aim

ExtraCare are passionate about understanding the needs of our residents and engaging with them to improve their experience of living in an ExtraCare location. Through engagement, we seek to establish positive partnerships with residents to build strong and cohesive communities. We also wish to engage customers and volunteers to improve and shape services.

This policy sets the ways in which residents, customers and volunteers can engage with us and outlines the principles of engagement at ExtraCare. This policy supports engagement that is based on mutual respect, co-operation and inclusivity by both residents and ExtraCare.

This policy also aims to ensure that we comply with our regulatory and legal obligations for involving residents.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To support ExtraCare to work in partnership with residents to create strong and cohesive communities and improve residents' experiences of living in an ExtraCare location;
- To ensure ExtraCare has a range of ways for residents, customers and volunteers to engagement with us so that we understand their needs and so that their voice is heard in decision making;
- To ensure staff and residents are clear as to how residents can be involved to improve services and have an influence over decisions (local and organisation-wide);
- To ensure staff and residents are clear as to how we engage residents in the running of their location and give them opportunities to scrutinise our performance;
- To improve how we inform residents, volunteers and customers on decisions made;
- To listen to and act on feedback, ensuring that technology is utilised to make this as effective as possible, through 'We're Listening';
- To make clear the issues we will inform, consult and involve residents on and clearly set out the purpose of engagement activity;
- To set out the expectations / boundaries of engagement;
- To meet our regulatory requirement set out in the Regulator of Social Housing Governance Standard to 'be accountable to tenants'¹;
- To meet our regulatory requirements set out in the Regulator of Social Housing Involvement & Empowerment Standard;
- To meet the CQC's expectations that our care service is safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led; and
- To meet our legal requirements to consult residents on the setting of variable service charges, ensuring formal consultation under the Landlord & Tenant Act, 1985 is applied where relevant.

¹ We include all residents in this, not just tenants

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3. Scope of Policy

This policy principally applies to all residents of ExtraCare. By resident, we mean any tenant or leaseholder (outright owner / shared owner) in one of our locations, regardless of whether we own the location or run it on behalf of another landlord ('partner landlord').

This policy also covers customers, volunteers and potential residents of a village that is in commissioning stage.

4. Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy and ensuring ExtraCare inform, consult and involve residents appropriately. All staff should understand the policy, promote the range of feedback and involvement activities and be responsive to feedback.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring the resident's voice is heard at Board level. All Board and Committee papers will contain a section on 'Resident impact / consultation undertaken'. The Operations Committee will receive a quarterly report on involvement activities, complaints and satisfaction. The Board will ensure that a Trustee attends all meetings of the Residents Forum. The Operations Committee receive a report from the Residents Forum authored by the Chair / Vice Chair of the Forum (with the assistance of the Housing & Customer Engagement Manager), who will be invited to present the report in person to the Committee once a year.

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are responsible for ensuring that their directorates take ownership of engagement to ensure that the principles of this policy are embedded within their teams. They are to ensure that decisions are cascaded appropriately, and that decision-making includes appropriate consideration of resident, customer and volunteer needs and is evidenced in the 'residents' impact /consultation undertaken' section in all ELT / Board reports. They are to respond to recommendations from the Resident Scrutiny Group.

Heads of Service

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that decisions are cascaded appropriately within teams, and that decision-making includes appropriate consideration of resident, customer and volunteer needs and that delivery of changes to services and / or properties / facilities are taken in line with this policy.

Housing and Customer Engagement Manager

The Housing and Customer Engagement Manager has specific responsibility for facilitating the implementation of this policy by supporting managers as required; for assisting the formation of, and guidance to, Residents Associations in locations; facilitating and servicing the Residents Forum; assisting the Chair to ensure actions are completed; and reporting to the Operations Committee.

Managers

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Managers are responsible for ensuring that the principles of this policy are applied in practice, specifically the Principles for Engagement. Managers are to lead on engagement in their location or service area.

Managers have the responsibility for ensuring the Code of Conduct for engagement meetings are understood and adhered to. Location Managers have specific responsibility for ensuring that that Residents Associations within their locations are supported, are representative and work in the spirit of collaboration.

Housing Staff

Housing Officers and local housing support teams (managers where there are no housing support teams) are responsible for updating ExtraCare's Customer Portal to ensure that involvement preferences are recorded at sign-up and updated at the annual resident visit.

5. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be subject to a full review by the Residents Forum every three years. We will assess the effectiveness of the policy by the criteria set out in the policy objectives.

6. Risk Management

Adherence to this policy mitigates the risks of not ensuring effective consultation and involvement. These risks are:

- Not delivering services that meet needs of residents, customers or volunteers;
- Missing opportunities to improve services and deliver value for money;
- Loss of trust in ExtraCare and unwillingness from residents, volunteers, customers to be further involved; and
- Not meeting our regulatory requirements to ensure effective involvement structures are in place.

7. Statement of Commitment

7.1 Our approach

Our policy is to actively understand the needs of our residents, customers and volunteers and engage them in relevant local and corporate decisions. This will ensure we understand and improve the resident experience of living in an ExtraCare location and that we to deliver services that meet users' needs. We will do this via a wide variety of formal and informal engagement opportunities available.

How we engage with residents falls into three categories:

- **Involve:** We will ensure that there are formal processes in place for residents to be actively involved with scrutinising the performance and running of our locations, reviewing operational policies and the contributing to the strategic development of services;

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- **Consult:** We will ensure that residents are consulted on the content of the Corporate Plan, our performance against that plan and performance in general. We will consult on the changes to services or to our buildings where relevant to do so; and
- **Inform:** We will ensure that residents are informed of the outcome of both consultation and involvement activities. We will provide appropriate and relevant information to support effective participant in consultation and involvement activities. We will provide information on ExtraCare’s performance, wider issues facing ExtraCare, the retirement living sector generally, and other factors (legal / regulatory issues).

7.2 Principles of Engagement

ExtraCare aims to ensure we appropriately involve, consult and inform residents, customers and volunteers principally on issues of:

- Key policies that affect residents, volunteers or customers when they come up for review;
- New services or changes to existing services, where they may affect residents, volunteers or customers; and
- Legal obligations or requirements such as changes to variable service charges.

We will be clear when we are involving, consulting with or simply informing residents of any issues. We will provide accurate and balanced information to support engagement activity and we will always feedback on the outcome of the engagement.

We will ensure that engagement activities are conducted in line with our Community Charter and Code of Conduct for involvement meetings. We reserve the right not to act or respond to views expressed through any engagement activity that is contrary to our Community Charter or Code of Conduct.

We reserve the right to challenge or disregard the outcome of any engagement activity if such an activity is not inclusive, has not taken into account the views of a wide range of residents, actively discriminates against a particular resident group (either with intent or not), or if the activity creates disharmony in our communities through intent or consequence.

Where disputes arise through engagement activities, either between residents, or between residents and ExtraCare, we will take reasonable steps to resolve those disputes.

7.3 Engagement Framework

Our formal consultation framework consists of the following elements:

Corporate Consultation and Influence

Activity	Remit
Membership of the Trust	The Resident Forum Chair and Vice Chair will be members for the Trust by virtue of their office. This will allow them to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Trust and vote on key issues in terms of new trustees, the chair and any changes to the mission and values of the organisation.

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Activity	Remit
Feedback to the Operations Committee	ExtraCare's Operations Committee receives a regular summary report on engagement activities across ExtraCare, including a report from the Forum Chair and the minutes of each Resident Forum meeting. Once a year, the Forum Chair will attend the committee to present this report. One Board member attends each Resident Forum meeting.
Residents' Forum	<p>The main conduit to influence corporate policies, topics for scrutiny and feedback on corporate wide issues.</p> <p>The composition of the forum is made up of three possible representatives from locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One elected member; • One Resident Associations Committee member; and • One person in receipt or living with someone in receipt of care. <p>These representatives will be appointed as per the Residents' Forum specific terms of reference and voting procedures.</p> <p>The Forum will meet at least quarterly and administered by the head office team.</p> <p>A member of the Board of Trustees will attend each meeting, alongside senior members of staff.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice – Chair of the Forum are appointed as members of ExtraCare, and are able to attend the ExtraCare AGM and vote on important matters, including the selection of Trustees.</p>
Register of involvement	<p>ExtraCare holds a register of residents who have indicated that they would be happy to be invited to take part in involvement activities. The register is used to facilitate involvement both locally and organisationally.</p> <p>New residents are asked if they are interested in being invited to take part in one or more of the five opt-in groups, as part of the sign up process. Residents are asked to update their preferences at the Annual Resident Visits. The opt-in groups are to be kept up to date by location staff in the Customer Portal within 5 working days of any change.</p> <p>Managers are to remind residents of the opt-in groups and promote them at Street Meetings.</p>

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Activity	Remit
Scrutiny groups	<p>Scrutiny groups are short-life, start / finish projects, where a group of residents are tasked with scrutinising an organisation-wide service. This will include assessing performance in that service area with the aim of recommending improvements to ExtraCare.</p> <p>The Residents Forum will choose two topics per annum to be subject to a resident scrutiny group. The Resident Scrutiny Group is made up of up to 4 Resident Forum reps (self-selected) and a further 4 – 5 invited residents, invited to take part based on relevant skills, experience and stated involvement subject preferences that we collect through our customer database (or 'portal'). The membership of the Group will change based on the service area under scrutiny.</p> <p>The Resident Forum, with support from the Housing Services Manager will write a terms of reference for the scrutiny, to ensure the aims and objectives are clear from the outset</p> <p>The scrutiny group will produce a written report which presented back to the Residents Forum and will be forwarded by the Chair to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) at ExtraCare for their consideration; these should also be presented to the Residents' Forum.</p> <p>The ELT will formally respond to the Chair after consideration, outlining how recommendations will be implemented, or give reasons where implementation is either not possible or practical.</p>
Roadshows	Once a year, members of the Executive Leadership Team will tour locations to present information about the Charity and to consult residents on key issues.
Corporate Plan Consultation and Monitoring	Annual Corporate Consultation Plan Event with Resident Forum Representatives – facilitated by ELT members. This is an opportunity to review progress against the Corporate Plan.
ExtraLife Magazine and Annual Report to Residents	We will provide a quarterly magazine covering activities of the ExtraCare and we will consult with residents annually on its content. We will also supply an annual report to residents covering our performance.

In addition, residents will be involved in recruitment panels for of key members of staff, reading groups and ad hoc consultation groups and surveys.

7.3.2 Local Consultation and Influence

Activity	Remit
We're Listening Feedback Survey	Residents can give feedback and rate their experience at any time via the tablets in locations, an online survey or via feedback cards. This feedback will be reviewed by managers monthly and used to produce 'You Said, We Did' posters each month in each location on the top issues.

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	The rating will also be used corporately to track performance of the village and overall resident satisfaction with ExtraCare.
Tell Us Your Concern / Complaints	Residents can raise concerns or complaints which will be resolved as per ExtraCare's complaints policy. ExtraCare will share learning from complaints with managers across locations, and report complaints trends and issues to ExtraCare Operations Committee.
Managers Surgeries	Each manager is to hold a regular surgery for residents to speak with the manager with any concerns or comments face to face.
Street meetings	Updates and feedback on key local and ExtraCare wide issues. These will be held monthly and will follow a standard agenda.
Resident Associations	<p>Resident Associations (RAs) are the legally recognised group for engagement with regards to service charges under the Landlord & Tenant Act, 1985.</p> <p>All existing RAs are recognised by ExtraCare. ExtraCare will recognise a new RA by approving their constitution. The Housing and Customer Engagement Manager will write to the RA Secretary to confirm.</p> <p>ExtraCare will supply model constitution to new Resident Association, and will recognise a new Resident Associations where the following are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A robust and inclusive constitution; • They can demonstrate they represent at least 50% of the current residents; and • The commit to holding annual AGM's and sign up to the Resident Association Code of Conduct. <p>Where there are Resident Associations, all residents are members of it. We will agree to assist facilitating the formation of a Resident Association in a new location when that location is at least 60% occupied, for the RA to have an appropriate mandate.</p>
Resident Association Committees	<p>Our Resident Associations are managed by Resident Association committees, who are elected by the membership. ExtraCare goes beyond our legal duties (outlined in Appendix D) and use Resident Association Committees as the primary, although not only, resident engagement route in our locations.</p> <p>The aim is to work in partnership with the Resident Association Committees to ensure residents have a positive experience of living in an ExtraCare location.</p>
Service Charge / Budget consultation	<p>In variable service charge locations each year in the autumn we will meet with Resident Associations members (often the finance sub-committee) to discuss the services delivered in that location and the proposed level of services large for the following year.</p> <p>In fixed charge locations we are not legally required to do this, however managers supported by their regional accountant, will meet with Resident Associations Committee members to discuss the budget for the following year and any changes expected to the services delivered.</p>

In addition, residents will be involved in local groups and ad-hoc consultation groups and surveys.

How these fit together are outlined in appendix A.

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7.4 Behaviour

Residents, volunteers and customers are required to conduct themselves appropriately when responding to ExtraCare in all of our involvement activities. Behaviour in person or in writing should be polite, respectful and in line with ExtraCare's Community Charter, and in line with Code of Conduct for meetings (appendix B). ExtraCare reserve the right to request perpetrators of unacceptable behaviour to withdraw from the activity and action can be taken as per the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

8. Information, Training and Support

ExtraCare will offer a variety of support options to enable residents to get involved, including:

- Providing communications in a range of formats;
- Assistance with travel costs and out of pocket expenses (see appendix C);
- For care representative on the forum, we will cover the cost of a carer to allow an individual to attend the Residents Forum, either for themselves or the individual they care for;
- Stationery and IT equipment where appropriate to support scrutiny activity;
- Training, advice and support is to be made available to all scrutiny members to ensure that they are able to be as effective as possible; and
- Any specific needs to ensure participation should be given reasonable consideration.

9. Other Relevant ExtraCare Policies & Documents

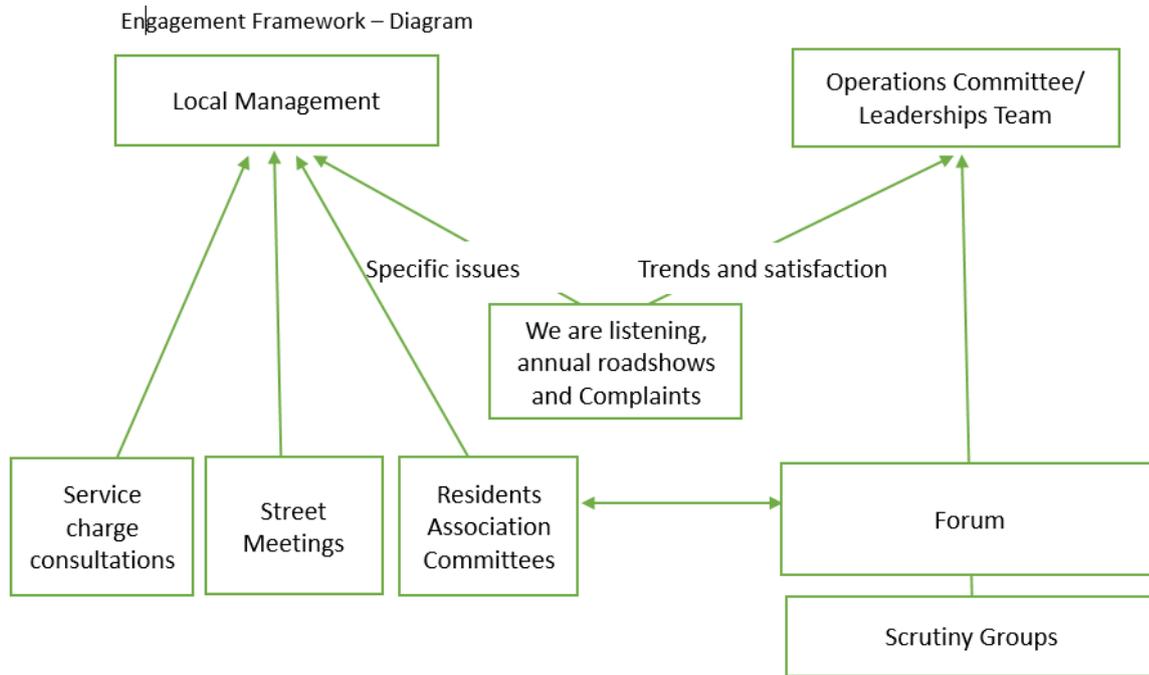
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unacceptable Behaviour Policy • Code of Conduct for Involvement meetings • Residents Forum Terms of Reference • Residents Associations Code of Conduct • Residents Handbooks • ExtraCare model constitution for Resident Associations
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10. Relevant Legislative & Regulatory Requirements

Legislation	Regulation	Guidance
<i>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</i> (EU) 2016/679	RSH Standards (especially Governance & Involvement and Empowerment)	ARHM: Forming a Residents Association https://www.arhm.org/publications/forming-a-residents-association/
Housing Act 1996		
Localism Act 2011		
Equality Act 2010		

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Appendix A: Diagram of Engagement Framework



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Appendix B: Code of Conduct for Resident Engagement Meetings

Code of Conduct for street meetings and engagement meetings

December 2019

Introduction

This Code of Conduct is for Street Meetings and other engagement meetings with ExtraCare (ECCT). It sets out what is expected of everyone attending any such event. Attendance at an engagement meeting hosted by ECCT means you agree to follow these rules and standards of behaviour.

This is so that everyone is able to attend without harassment, interruption, fear or intimidation.

The primary purpose of engagement meetings are to facilitate feedback to ECCT; as an opportunity for ECCT to disseminate news/information; to understand views on local service delivery; and to seek constructive dialogue on potential service improvements.

Any individual with a specific complaint should direct this through ECCT's Complaints Management Policy and not through a public meeting.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, Street Meetings and other engagement meetings are for residents only. Non-residents will be asked to leave, unless they have lasting Power of Attorney for a particular resident and are attending to represent that resident's interests.

ECCT's responsibilities

At Street Meetings or other involvement meetings, ECCT will:

-  Provide a welcoming environment.
-  Act in line with ECCT's Values, Community Charter, and this Code of Conduct.
-  Listen to residents in order to improve and aim for excellence.
-  Be open and transparent.
-  Allow maximum participation through giving reasonable advance notice of the meeting time and venue.
-  Treat all with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude.
-  Communicate in advance any information necessary to help them at the meeting or event.
-  Ensure a slot for the location's Resident Forum representative and the Residents Association (RA) representative to provide relevant feedback (applies only to Street Meetings).

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Code of Conduct:

ECCT expects that attendance at an ECCT Street Meeting or other resident involvement meeting means that, through their presence, residents' (or their Power of Attorney) will abide by the following behaviours:

-  Be respectful to others, particularly those who find speaking in public a challenge.
-  Speak in a polite and respectful manner. We will not accept rude, obscene or abusive language or violent behaviour.
-  Focus on the issues not individuals. We will not accept public criticism of individuals.
-  Respect and follow the instructions or directions of the Chair / facilitator of the meeting.
-  Do not consume alcohol or illegal drugs in meetings or be intoxicated during meetings.
-  Do not limit the ability of others to participate in the meeting, by allowing one person to speak at a time and not interrupting speakers.

Breaches of the code of conduct

The Chair, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member present will be responsible for dealing with breaches in this Code of Conduct.

If the chairperson, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member believes the Code of Conduct is breached during a meeting the following steps will be taken with the objective of restoring order:

- The individual will be given the opportunity to rectify their behaviour in the first instance; the Chair, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member present will explain that the specific behaviour or language that is unacceptable and allow the person a chance to remedy, moderate or change the behaviour;
- The Chair, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member present has the authority to request the person or people to leave the meeting; this could be for a specific length of time to allow the person or people to cool-off; or for the rest of the meeting or event;
- The Chair, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member present has the authority to suspend the meeting in the event of one or more individuals making offensive, insulting, threatening, provocative, slanderous or obscene remarks, to allow order to be restored; and
- Where breaches of the Code mean that the meeting has become unmanageable then the meeting will be ended.

In order to establish whether a breach has occurred, they will consider if there are any mitigating factors for the behaviour. These may include health reasons, and any known history to the issue being raised.

In reviewing a breach of this Code of Conduct, the chair, facilitator or most senior ECCT staff member present shall judge whether the behaviours of individuals in the meeting will need to be dealt with via ECCT's Unacceptable Behaviour Policy. If this is the case this may result in the person(s) being barred from attendance at future meeting for a set amount of time.

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If attendees are unhappy with how breaches in the Code of Conduct for street meetings resident involvement meetings were handled, this should be reported and investigated via ECCT's Complaints Management Policy.

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Appendix C: Expenses guidance for resident's engagement activities

ExtraCare are keen to ensure that residents are not financially worse off by their volunteering to take part in engagement activities, which includes the cost of travel to the engagement activity.

This guidance covers all ExtraCare residents, who participate in formal engagement activities. This guidance does not cover any other activity that sits outside the agreed engagement framework detailed in the Engagement Policy.

It covers expenses relating to travel, subsistence, translation services and care provision.

Mileage

ExtraCare will pay mileage to residents using their own vehicles undertaking engagement activities. The mileage rate is set in line with our staff expenses policy.

To ensure value for money, and limit the carbon footprint, car sharing will be actively encouraged. It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and carries the appropriate MOT and insurance.

Parking

ExtraCare will pay parking fees, where necessary. Parking fees will only be paid for the length of the engagement activity.

Progress Housing Group will not pay any parking or traffic related fines.

Taxis

Where a resident has no access to alternative transport, and there are no other residents who can offer them travel, a taxi can be arranged and paid for by ExtraCare. All taxis must be arranged and paid for by the location where the resident resides.

To ensure value for money, residents will be asked to share taxis with residents travelling from the same location.

If a resident has carer responsibilities or needs to be accompanied by a carer, which would prevent them from participating in engagement activities, ExtraCare will pay reasonable costs to enable them to participate.

ExtraCare will pay at the Accompanying Services rate per hour relevant to the location for the length of the engagement activity. No expenses will be paid to a household member or other close family member. However the resident must contact the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager ahead of attending the activity, and provide evidence of the support cost.

How to Claim

Mileage Claim

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To claim mileage, customers must complete a mileage claim form (available from the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager), detailing journey information including date, post codes of places from and to travel, reason for journey, passenger names, and mileage claimed.

All mileage claimed will be checked against AA Route Planner.

Mileage must be claimed with 3 months of the journey being completed. Mileage claims older than three months will not be paid.

Residents must also provide details of the bank account they wish mileage to be paid into, including proof of account, such as paying-in slip or bank statement.

All Other Expenses

Any other expense incurred by residents attending corporate engagement work must be agreed in advance by the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager. Residents must complete an expense claim form (available from the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager) providing full details of the expenses incurred including activity attended, date, type and value of expense.

Any other expense incurred by residents running location engagement work would usually be funded out of Residents Association funds. However, some expenses may be agreed in advance by the Location Manager if the event is in support of ExtraCare or local objectives. Residents must complete an expenses claim form (available from the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager) providing full details of the expenses incurred including activity attended, date, type and value of expense.

Original receipts must be provided with the expenses claim form when claiming. If receipts are not provided the expense cannot be reimbursed.

All expenses must be claimed within 3 months of the expenditure.

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Appendix D: Legal Rights of Resident Associations and their Committees

This information is taken from the lease hold advisory service.

Resident Association Committee Legal Rights

The rights conferred by Statute on Residents' Associations:

- (a) Obtain statutory recognition of the Association either through landlord recognition or recognition from the First Tier Leasehold Tribunal.
- (b) Propose to the landlord or agent and require the due consideration of estimates for major works obtained by an Association; (Section 20 Landlord & Tenant Act 1985) as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold reform Act 2002).
- (c) Apply for a determination of the reasonableness of the service charge costs (Section 19 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by Section 83 of the Housing Act 1996)
- (d) Require the landlord to consult with the Association in regard to the appointment of the managing agent; (Section 30B Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by Section 44 Landlord and Tenant Act 1987)
- (e) Exercise rights as to information about Service Charge accounts (Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 Section 21 as amended by Landlord & Tenant Act 1987 Schedule 2 Para 5) and as amended by the Housing Act 1996 Sections 83 and 84.
- (f) Facilitating consultation and obtaining consensus amongst tenants as to the possible exercise of the rights of those tenants qualifying under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act, 1993 to make a collective purchase of the freehold vested in their landlord*.
- (g) Facilitating consultation and obtaining consensus amongst tenants as to the possible exercise of the 'Right to Manage' under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002*.

*Points (f) and (g) are currently not applicable to ExtraCare's properties as the property must not have one third or more apartments held by shared owners or rental tenants.

Resident Association Committees may also engage other public bodies on behalf of the residents on topics such as local authority in regards to planning issues or the local Clinical Commissioning Group on health care provision.