

The Tenant's Voice

Impact and Riverside are committed to involving you as tenants and residents in how we plan and deliver services. You need to have a strong voice so that you can influence repairs and improvement priorities and ensure that we deliver all of the promises set out in the Partnership Pledge. We will continue to support existing tenant involvement arrangements, as well as opening up wider opportunities so you can make your voice heard across The Riverside Group.

Will existing tenant involvement arrangements remain?

We will continue to work closely with recognised tenant groups, including the Salterbeck Tenants' and Residents' Association, Carlisle and East Cumbria Rep Group and The Informed 50 panel. Once Impact joins The Riverside Group, we will review opportunities for tenant involvement and scrutiny with you, to ensure effective and inclusive engagement remains at the heart of how we operate. This will build on previous work which looked at the role of scrutiny at Impact.

Riverside will also encourage Impact tenants to get involved in Riverside's own customer involvement structure, in particular the Tenants' and Residents' Federation (The Fed) who bring together tenants from across the Group to help shape policies and services. A place will be available for an Impact tenant on the Fed Executive and its National Scrutiny Panel.

Impact tenant groups have already met with the Riverside team, and have helped shape the material being used as part of this consultation.

It is also important that tenant voices are heard on Impact's Board, to check that the pledges we are making are kept. We will look to fill at least one place on the Board with a tenant who is committed to working together for a better future.

What about the repairs and improvement programme?

We will make sure that tenant representatives are involved in planning and overseeing the repairs and improvement programme, as well as agreeing neighbourhood plans. We will work with tenants to:

- Agree a new repairs and improvement standard, and any immediate priorities for works.
- Choose a list of builders who can bid for the work.
- Check how well the building works are being done, through looking at survey results and any complaint trends.

We will also work very closely with individual tenants before and during the building works by:

- Providing information on the works well in advance, through newsletters and home visits, where this is appropriate.

- Giving as much choice as possible – for example the colour of kitchen units and tiles.
- Providing a main point of contact whilst the works are being done, through a tenant liaison officer.
- Asking ‘how did it go?’ after the works are completed.

What other ways can tenants and residents be heard?

Not all tenants want to get involved in meetings or formal structures so there are a number of other ways in which you can get involved:

- Through The Informed 50, our panel of individual tenants who have agreed to provide feedback on new policies and ideas. This will continue.
- Through a monthly telephone satisfaction survey of a sample of customers which is carried out by an independent company on behalf of Riverside. This will be extended to Impact customers, meaning that the Impact Board can compare how we are doing against other parts of Riverside and other housing associations.
- Through drawing lessons learnt from complaints and compliments.

How will tenants be kept informed?

Riverside produces a tenant newsletter which is sent to customers three times a year. This will be sent to all Impact tenants, and will include stories which are relevant to communities in Cumbria and Lancashire.

Like Impact, Riverside also uses social media to connect with tenants and residents, using Facebook to provide useful service updates and local information, and Twitter to spread news to other partners. All comments made by customers are actively monitored and responded to. Take a look at Riverside’s Facebook page at <https://en-gb.facebook.com/RiversideHousing/>. You can also follow them on Twitter through @RiversideUK.

We will continue to use Facebook and Twitter at Impact, and encourage you to look at Riverside’s pages to get an idea of what is happening across the wider Group.

What about the future?

We have already said that the way we deliver services to customers won’t change very much in the first three years after we join The Riverside Group. The main focus will be on financial stability and repairing and improving your homes.

But in the longer-term Impact and Riverside want to look at how we can work even more closely together, to improve services for the customers of both organisations. This will provide greater consistency and could save money by making the best use of modern technology, which can be re-invested in new and better homes.

As we do this, we will want to tap into your experience as customers, and formally consult you before any major changes are made.