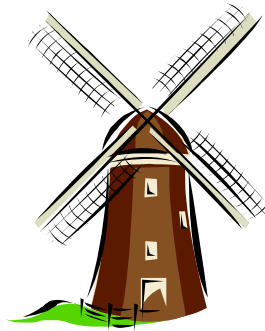


Blenheim Gardens RMO

Resident Involvement Policy



Version No.	Date.	Version	Author	Board
1	21.01.09	1	DH	4.3.09
2	06.09	2	DH	Residents
3				

Document Control

Changes History

Issue No	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1	21.01.09	Danny Howcroft	New policy

Reviewers

Role	Name	Approval Date
United Residents Housing (ALMO)		

Approval and Authorisation

Role and review responsibility	Approval Date
Governance Board	4.03.09

Distribution List

Name	Organisation
Chief Exec.	United Residents Housing
Governance Board	Blenheim Gardens RMO

Equality Impact Assessment

Date	By Whom	Details
21.1.09	Danny Howcroft	

Risk Assessment

Date	By Whom	Details
20.01.09	Danny Howcroft	

Review Period 2010

By Whom: Danny Howcroft/Board

Strategic Context:

Blenheim Gardens RMO manages 440 units on Blenheim Gardens Estate on behalf of the local authority, Lambeth council. The estate consists of a number of small blocks (Glanville Road, Prague Place, Ramillies Close and Blenheim Gardens) and a compensation of houses and flats en block. The estate also services sum 204 under croft garages, 200 (non-allocated) parking spaces and a number of service roads.

Blenheim Gardens RMO aims to manage resident involvement strategically and in doing so contributes towards the local authorities 'Community Plan and the Housing Improvement Plan'. The RMO's overarching mission strategy is to build a cleaner, safer and more prosperous future with the residents we serve.

The area covered by this policy is primarily Blenheim Gardens, Glanville Road, Ramillies Close and Prague Place



1. Introduction

1.1 Blenheim Gardens RMO is committed to involving, consulting and informing its residents living on Blenheim Gardens Estate on a range of issues that affect them and the community they live in. By adopting a diverse approach to resident involvement, Blenheim Gardens RMO will support opportunities for groups and individuals who don't participate through the traditional structures to have their voices heard. With the introduction of Resident Involvement, residents will be empowered to have every opportunity to play a role in what they have helped to create.

2. What is resident involvement?

2.1 Resident Involvement is about providing all residents with an opportunity to have a say in the way that BGRMO provides housing services. It means that residents will be able to influence the decisions that affect them, their homes and their communities.

3. Definition of a Resident

3.1 Anyone living in on Blenheim Gardens Estate and receiving one of our services or a service related to housing. This includes:

- Tenants
- Leaseholders
- Freeholders (with or without a service charge attached)
- People in temporary accommodation (Private lettings or Lettings first, but who live on the estate)
- Tenants of property owners

4. Policy Statement

4.1 This is a policy to help encourage residents and the wider community to become fully involved with the work of BGRMO and the housing services provided, their homes, the local environment and the way that they are managed. This policy will detail how residents can participate in the services provided for them. Blenheim Gardens RMO is committed to the involvement of its residents to improve services, improve the standard of housing stock, increase the RMO accountability to residents and adopt a sense of community well being.

BGRMO aims for residents to become involved in the ways that they want and at a level they want to get involved at.

4.2 BGRMO has legal obligations under housing legislation and regulation to consult residents, seek customer involvement and listen to their views and opinions to enable the enable empowerment. A legal right for council tenants to be consulted on issues affecting the management of their homes was first introduced in the 1980 Housing Act and subsequent Tenants' Charter. Following on from this, laws and codes of practice affecting tenant consultation and participation have been introduced. BGRMO also has to follow guidance regarding resident involvement set out in the Residents Estate Compact.

5. Resident Involvement- Aims for:

5.1 Blenheim Gardens RMO Is aiming to:

- Create a culture of involvement, which will in turn increase resident satisfaction
- Create co-operation, trust and equal partnerships between BGRMO and its residents and local community
- Ensure greater resident involvement and consultation
- Seek the views of groups and consult residents about major changes to BGRMO services
- Create community cohesion and establish links with the local community

- Increase community wide involvement in decision making at BGRMO
- Enable BGRMO to support the local community
- Empower residents to take ownership of their estate
- Help make BGRMO more accountable to residents
- Help make services more transparent
- Maintain cost effectiveness
- Enable BGRMO to strive for excellence
- To ensure equal opportunities and diversity for all residents
- To achieve involvement from under represented groups
- Establish links with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other under represented groups and groups representing a specific interest i.e people with disabilities and so on

6. Objectives

6.1 BGRMO hopes to reflect the strategic priorities of its residents and community in its resident involvement policy. These objectives are as follows:

1. Deliver and maintain decent housing
2. Provide excellent and value for money housing management services
3. Provide effective environmental management
4. Develop safer and cohesive communities
5. Provide responsive planning for repairs and major works
6. Increase community engagement

7. Background

7.1 Existing arrangements for resident involvement:

- Newsletters which are distributed on a quarterly basis
- Estate Notice boards situated in each block
- Becoming a board member
- Becoming a Sub-committee member (finance sub committee, members of the residents panel)
- Becoming a Shareholder
- Becoming a block champion
- Participating in Estate Inspections (Walkabout Wednesday's)
- Residents have consulted on BGRMO policies and service standards via focus groups
- Resident have had an input into the refurbishment of residents homes
- Residents have an input into financial bids (play area, betting shop, gardening club)
- Provided training for residents which is advertised
- Good neighbourhood Agreement
- Coffee Wednesday mornings
- Board meetings (Part A is open to all residents)

- General and special meetings
- Exclusive trips and events for estate residents via our partner organisations

7.2 BGRMO intends to:

- Increase resident involvement, for residents of all ages
- Increase resident involvement for residents of BME and other unrepresented groups
- Publicise resident involvement at BGRMO events/newsletters
- Introduce a menu card/reply slip for residents detailing all of the ways to become involved (Appendix 1)
- Introduce Questionnaires/Suggestion Box Scheme
- Introduce Post/Email/Telephone Consultations
- Introduce 'Block Champions' whereby resident work with the RMO and report matters which affect a specific location on the estate i.e. their landing, walkway, road or block for example.
- Encourage Residents to join organisations such as InSTEP, TPAS, NFTMO and TAROE (Tenants and Residents Organisations of England)
- Set up more sub committees (environmental subgroup, decent homes, leasehold and repairs forum)
- Increase the number of members in the RMO
- Introduce service improvement panels
- Introduce Broadband for the use of tenants in a community facility
- Provide community activities and a community facility
- Ensure feedback to residents on a number of issues of concern
- Improving communication and information provided to residents
- Increase the involvement of the wider community, including; local schools, young people, local businesses, community centres and all residents living in the Brixton Hill area

8. Priorities

Consultation and engagement with residents is the key focus of this policy and accordingly we have based the direction of our resident involvement upon the priorities our residents put forward, also being mindful of the recommendations of the 'Key Lines of Enquiry' (KLOEs). These views were collected from focus groups, informal discussions with involved and uninvolved residents, and particularly from Governance Board Members.

Residents highlighted a number of priorities, and this policy has been designed according to the seven broad themes residents have brought up. Each of the themes incorporates resident suggestions and feedback from various focus groups held in 2008 (affiliated by Acclaim Consulting) in the development of the RMO's ***Business Plan entitled Blenheim 2012, Resident Estate Compact and Good Neighbourhood Agreement.***

- **Your services**

Residents want us to get the basics right. The main priority is to see regular, routine services that affect the majority of residents delivered efficiently, effectively and in a way that takes into account residents' needs and costs. This should take priority over developing elaborate schemes that benefit a few residents.

- **The way we talk to you**

Residents want to be able to communicate with us on their own terms (by telephone, in person or electronically, taking into account their own personal circumstances and needs). We should communicate in the same manner, efficiently and effectively, to let the resident know the outcome of their enquiry.

- **How you can get involved**

Residents want a variety of ways to get involved that allow them to participate effectively, in a way and at a level that suits their personal circumstances. They would like a say in the design, management and performance of all housing services. The ways to be involved should provide a means for any resident to get involved regardless of their circumstances.

- **Involving you**

Residents recognise and want to promote the need for us to engage all members of the community in resident involvement, particularly the younger and harder-to-reach groups of residents. To do this, we need to have a clear understanding of our local community and resident profile and clear equality and diversity policies in place.

- **Being accountable to you**

Residents wanted to see that we continuously evaluated our services and performance and informed them of the results. We should produce information about and involve residents in making management decisions, through a wide variety of formats.

- **Giving you the power**

Residents want to be able to involve themselves more in the way decisions are made, and take part in more training and events. They would like to see the impact they have on services.

- **Benefits for you**

Residents would like to see wider involvement encouraged through a flexible range of incentives to enable participation.

9. Ways to get involved

9.1 BGRMO is aiming to involve the whole community in its decision-making in a number of ways:

- To use local venues such as Church Hall or the Clapham Youth Centre for general/special resident meetings, discussions, public meetings and workshops
- To involve older people in the community
- To involve younger people in the community
- To involve those who are from BME and under represented groups including vulnerable groups

9.2 The amount of time and commitment that a resident invests depends on individual circumstances. BGRMO is aware that residents of all ages on Blenheim Gardens Estate would like to become involved. BGRMO therefore have proposed a number of different ways that residents can become involved. These proposals are categorised according to the amount of time and commitment required for ease of understanding.

10. Low Level Commitment- Time commitment of between 1 and 3 hours on an ad hoc basis

10.1 Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires

Residents will be sent a questionnaire or survey regarding the services that BGRMO provides them with. Residents will be asked to complete these and send them (collection can also be arranged) back to the Estate Office. The issues can include:

- Customer satisfaction after repairs/tenancy
Review / complaints / reporting Anti Social Behaviour and so on
- Cyclical decorations
- Major works
- Capital works
- Decent homes work
- Environmental improvements
- Aids and adaptations
- New tenancies and lettable standard
- Crime prevention and Anti Social Behaviour
- Tenancy Reviews

10.2 Suggestion Box Scheme

Residents are asked to provide any comments and opinions to BGRMO regarding any issues surrounding resident involvement or satisfaction via post and/or email. A suggestions box is also placed in the reception area. BGRMO's aim is to operate a successful customer feedback procedure.

10.3 Post/email/telephone consultations

Residents are to be consulted on issues that arise in board, sub and/or general meetings. BGRMO will feedback the results of consultations that are undertaken directly to those involved and through the quarterly newsletter. These can also be used for:

- Random surveys
- Satisfaction monitoring for repairs (including Gas servicing)
- Service specific Surveys
- Complaint handling

10.4 Tenants Newsletter

Tenants will receive a copy of the newsletter quarterly. An annual report and a homeowner's bulleting is also produced. If you require the newsletter in other formats such as another language, large print, Braille, audio, please contact

the Estate Office on  020 7926 0158.

10.5 Website

BGRMO website contains a range of information about Housing Services and ways for residents to contact us at www.bgrmo.org.uk

10.6 Focus Groups / Residents Panel

A focus group will normally bring together a few people to discuss specific issues, such as repairs, improvement schemes or consultation. It will aim to gather views about a particular subject. These meetings will normally be one off's or held over a short period of time. They do not need long-term commitment.

10.7 Membership to the RMO

Membership to the RMO is open to all estate residents by paying 10 pence into the organisation. The purchase of a share provides a life time membership as well as the right to be nominated and be nominated to be a Governance board member. The purchase of a share also provides members with voting rights at general / special meetings.

10.8 Attending general / 'special' meetings

The RMO holds 4 general and 1 Annual General Meetings each year. All estate residents are invited to attend such meetings and the agenda and previous meetings minutes are circulated to each and every property on the estate respective of tenure and RMO membership.

10.9 Attending Leaseholder Annual Forum

This is an annual event that is open to all leaseholders, enabling them to meet each other and our staff and review performance over the previous year, plan services for the year ahead and find ways of improving services for all leaseholders.

11. Medium Level of Commitment- Time commitment of between 2 and 4 hours on a regular a quarterly or annual basis

11.1 Newsletter Editorial Committee

Residents can contribute by providing articles, contributing to the design and layout and bringing new ideas. Residents are encouraged to respond to articles in the magazine.

11.2 Estate Inspections

Quarterly Estate Inspections are held with the Estate Director, members of the board and a member of the estate cleaning DLO team. This will be a chance for residents to monitor the standards of cleaning, grounds maintenance, and communal repairs and to provide their feedback to the RMO. Estate Inspection dates will be published in the RMO's newsletter.

11.3 Block Champion

Individual tenants and leaseholders can volunteer to become block champions. This would be someone who lives in a particular Block or Road on the estate and who represents the views of the area. We will consult these individuals about issues that affect this area.

11.4 Residents Training

From time to time and as required, training is available for residents and members. Residents can take part in BGRMO resident training events to further their skills and assist with their involvement with BGRMO. The available training will also be advertised in the RMO's newsletters. For further details please contact the Estate Office on 020 7926 0158.

11.5 Improvement Panels

Improvement panels can be established to work with the RMO/United Residents Housing on major planned environmental improvement schemes / Decent Homes work. These groups will meet to plan the works, while the schemes are carried out to enhance the practicality of an area/ specification, for example through the provision of implementing a play area or type/design of new kitchen, front entrance door offered and so on.

11.6 Attending Events

Residents can attend occasional events such as conferences (National Federations of TMO's and so on). Conferences may discuss particular issues or raise awareness about involvement. Conference dates will be published in the Newsletter and displayed throughout the estate.

11.7 Members of Sub Committee

Residents may become a member of any of the RMO's subcommittees. At the present time of RMO operates a finance sub committee and repairs forum. Training for these committees are provided free of charge.

11.8 Mystery Shopping Programmes

Residents help us undertake checks of our services through taking on a role in a designed scenario and evaluating staff response.

Any resident can volunteer to be part of a pool of mystery shoppers, subject to training. This might include telephoning and asking for help, and noting the quality of the response. Please contact the estate office on 020 7926 0158 for more details.

11.9 Void Property Inspectors

Residents may help us to undertake checks of our void standards in regard to the RMO's lettable standard. The inspector is required to ensure the property has met to RMO standard and to sign off the work in advance of the new tenant moving into the property. Training for this role will be provided by a member of the RMO management team. Please contact the estate office on 020 7926 0158 for more details.

12. High Level of Commitment-Time commitment of between 5-10 hrs each month

12.1 Resident Board Members

Blenheim Gardens RMO governance board consists of 17 members (2009), these members, with the exception of 1, live on the estate.

The Governance Board is responsible for the long-term strategic direction of the organisation and ensuring that the RMO team turns strategies and policies into reality.

12.2 URH Board Member / Meeting Observer

Board members / residents also have the opportunity to become a board member of United Residents Housing. Residents are also able to observe Part A of both the URH board meeting and BGRMO Governance Meetings.

12.3 Signing up to the RMO's Good Neighbourhood Agreement (GNA) and or Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Blenheim Gardens RMO has developed its own GNA and encourages all residents to sign up to the agreement to ensure it becomes an effective tool for improving the life of all residents on the estate. The RMO also coordinates a neighbourhood watch scheme which residents are encouraged to sign up too. Please contact the estate office for more details.

13. Support

13.1 Funding

13.1.1 A dedicated budget exists, which is split into various categories for resident involvement, including the production and distribution of the newsletter, refreshments at meeting, sponsorship of estate activities, Windmill festival fun days and so on. Also included in this budget is training and social events. All costs of resident involvement are charged to this budget.

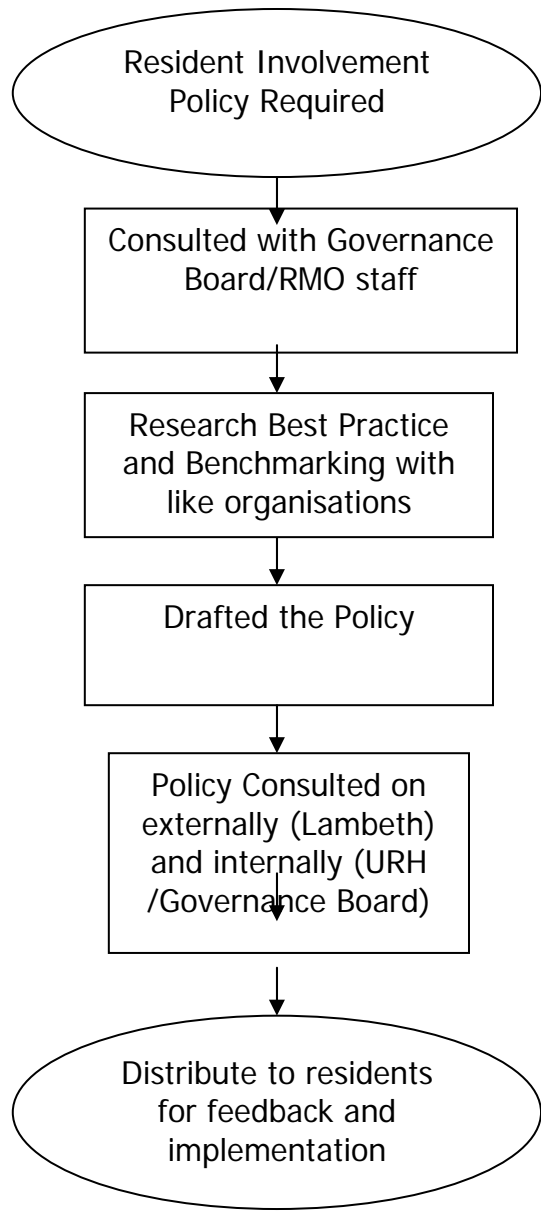
13.1.2 In appropriate cases BGRMO will reimburse expenses for residents travel costs, childcare, or help towards costs if you are a carer.

13.2 Practical Support

13.2.1 Practical support from Board members and RMO staff will be provided to new and established board members/ residents/ groups to help develop policies, apply for funding and co-ordinate meetings. For new board/Sub committee members, the RMO operates a 'buddy system' whereby an experienced board member mentors a newer member

13.2.2 Basic administration support will be provided to all residents and groups. Support will include items such as photocopying, the production of agendas and minutes and so on.

14. Policy Flowchart



15. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

15.1 This guidance is to be submitted to the RMO Governance board in March 2009 and will be take effect following board approval of the policy and resident consultation. The responsibility for this policy is with Blenheim Gardens RMO Governance Board but the implementation and monitoring of the policy has been delegated to the Estate Director.

15.2 BGRMO will monitor this policy and measure its effects through feedback from individuals. This will be carried out using questionnaires or surveys twelve months after the date of its implementation. Findings will be published in the RMO's newsletter.

15.3 A full review of this guidance will be take place two years from the date of implementation.

16. Monitoring and Measuring our Performance

As part of our action plan, we are in the process of developing Performance Indicators (P.I's). We commit to monitoring our performance to allow for monitoring trends and to help identify weak areas that need improvement, and P.I's provide the figures to help us do this.

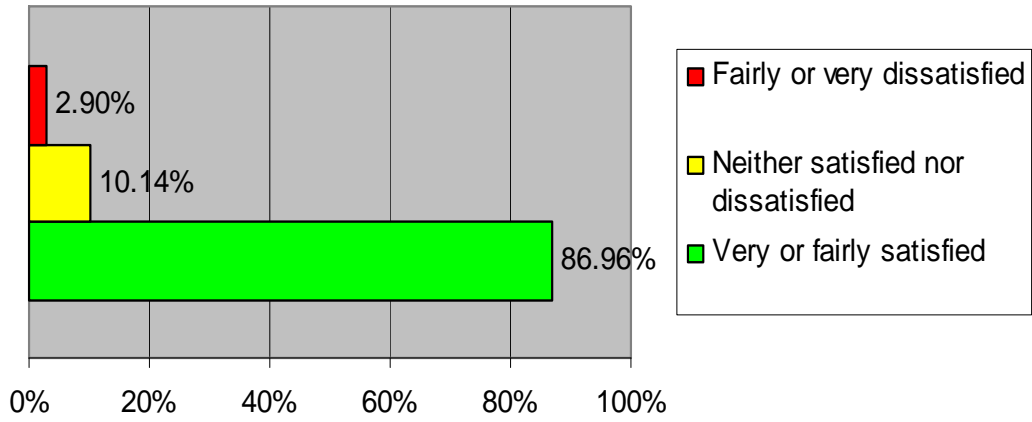
Our performance in relation to tenant involvement needs to be monitored to make sure that it is meeting the targets and standards detailed in the compact. By monitoring how well we are performing, we can identify at an early stage any likely failure to meet a target or standard and can agree a course of action to put this right.

Every five years we carry out a satisfaction survey (STATUS) to provide the Governance Board with information about:

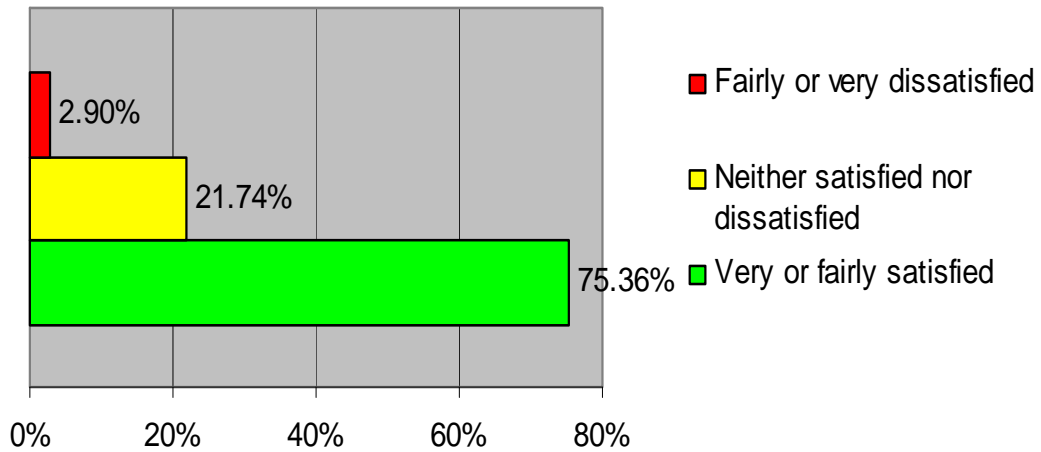
- How satisfied you are with the overall service that we provide?
- How satisfied you are with the opportunities that we provide for you to get involved in our services?

When we carried out this survey in 2007, of the 70 returned surveys, 86.9% of residents said that you were either very or fairly satisfied with the service we provide as your landlord.

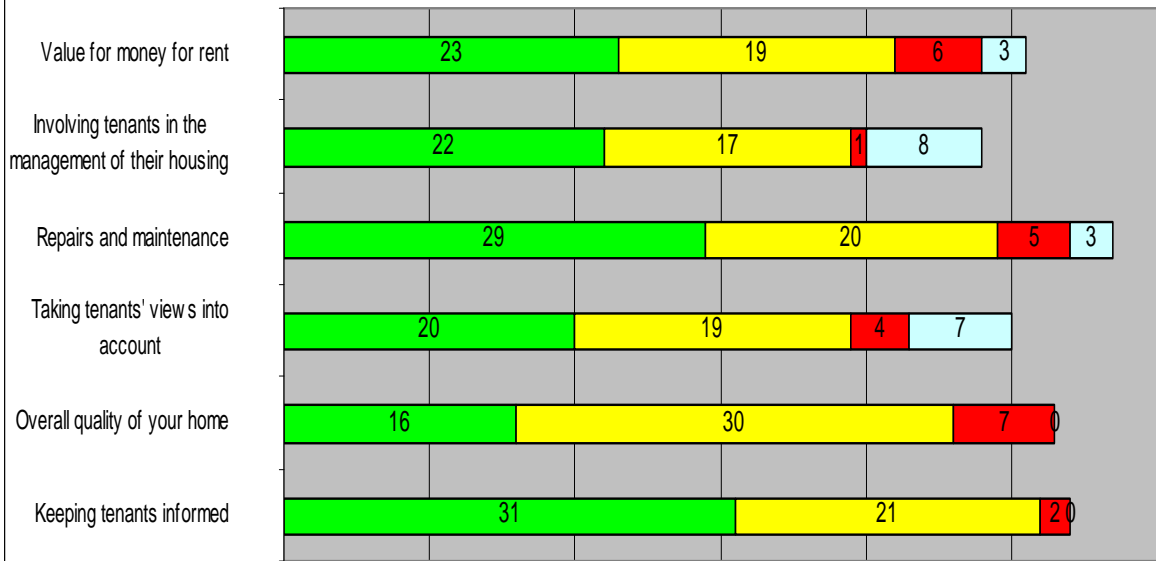
Satisfaction with the overall service provided by Blenheim Gardens



Opportunities for participation in management and decision-making



How much do services need improving?



■ No improvement needed ■ Some improvement needed ■ Much improvement needed □ No opinion

15. Equality and Diversity

15.1 We are committed to giving an equal service to all. This means we will not treat individuals any differently because of your: sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national original, age, marital status, ability, disability, vulnerability, political or religious belief, income level, sexuality or class. It also means our work will focus on individual groups within our community who may be disadvantaged and therefore require help the most.

15.2 This Policy confirms Blenheim Gardens RMO's equality statements and policy. Blenheim Gardens RMO is committed to providing information and services, equally and without discrimination, to meet the needs of all sections of the community managed by Blenheim Gardens RMO or seeking access to information on housing services in the Borough of Lambeth.

15.2 To help overcome barriers to effective participation Blenheim Gardens RMO promises to:

- Collect resident data to accurately record and report the demography of our residents
- Review our activities and events to ensure a broad representation of residents are able to participate if they wish
- Provide a range of options for being involved to encourage special interest groups (such as leaseholders etc) or difficult to reach groups to participate
- Offer equalities and diversity training as part of the training program for board members and interested residents
- Monitor equal opportunities in our Resident Involvement Structure

16. Other Policies / Documents that apply

- Equality and Diversity
- Customer services
- Residents Estate Compact
- Estate services and standards
- Complaints.
- Equality and diversity
- Consultation
- Housing management.
- Board recruitment packs.

17. Communication

17.1 Residents will be informed of any changes to this policy and any changes in the ways to get involved. The RMO has a developed and published communication strategy entitled the **UNITY plan**.

18. Complaints

18.1 BGRMO is committed to delivering the highest possible quality and level of service to its residents.

18.2 The RMO intends to provide services through best practice and in line with resident's needs and legislative framework. The RMO seeks to continually improve the services it provides by seeking the views and acting upon these to inform service delivery outcomes.

18.3 BGRMO will:

- Ensure your complaints will be dealt with properly
- Seek to match your needs in service delivery and quality
- Publish and report back on our performance

18.4 Wherever possible, BGRMO will endeavour to resolve your complaint immediately. If we cannot do this we aim to respond in writing to you within 10 working days of receipt. We will keep you regularly updated of progress until your complaint is fully resolved.

18.5 If you are still not happy with the time BGRMO took to respond, with the way BGRMO kept you informed, or with the manner in which you were dealt with then please tell us and we will make sure your complaint is investigated by a member of the Governance Board and/or a member of United Residents Housing or the Council. If you are still not happy, you can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who is not part of Lambeth Council. Alternatively you can discuss your complaint with your Ward Councillor, Steve Reed.

18.6 Contacting BGRMO:

- Telephone 020 7926 0158, or write to:
- Blenheim Gardens RMO, 24 Prague Place, Blenheim Gardens Estate, Brixton, London, SW2 5ED.
- Email: BlenheimGardens@lambeth.gov.uk

19. Further Information

19.1 For any further information relating to this guidance please contact the Estate Director, Danny Howcroft 020 7926 0158.

20. Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
BGRMO	Blenheim Gardens RMO
URH	United Residents Housing
Tenant	A person who pays rent to live on someone else's land
Leaseholder	A Leaseholder is an individual who buys the right to occupy land or a building for a given length of time
Freeholder	
Tenure	Describes the manner in which the property is held by the owner ie either Freehold or Leasehold
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service
TAROE	Tenant and Residents Organisations of England

If you would like this information in large print, in Braille, or in another format or language, please contact us on 020 7926 0158.

Español: Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al 020 7926 0158.

Français: Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 020 7926 0158.

Português: Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para 020 7926 0158

Twi: Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre 020 7926 0158.

Yoruba: Tí ẹ ba ẹ imoràn yíí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjṓ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 020 7926 0158.

21. Appendix 1

Resident Involvement Menu Card

I am interested in becoming involved with Blenheim Gardens RMO as a resident shareholder/ board member/ finance sub member/ block champion / mystery shopper (please delete as appropriate).

I would like more information on the following, and/or I would like to become involved in the following ways:

(Please tick any boxes that apply)

- Customer satisfaction, Service and/or STATUS questionnaires
- Signing up to the Good Neighbourhood Campaign
- Suggestion Box Scheme
- Quarterly post/email/telephone consultation
- Tenants Newsletter
- Focus Groups / resident panel (repairs, environment, decent homes)
- Residents Meetings
- Estate Inspections
- Void Inspector
- Becoming a block Champion
- Residents Training / Attending Events
- Estate Panel (recruitment, environmental, Decent Homes and so on)
- Estate Gardening Club member
- Board Member or URH board member
- Sub committee Member
- Coffee Mornings
- If you would like to get involved in away that is not listed, please let us know here.....

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	Preferred contact method:
Email Address:	Preferred language:

Please return this sheet to the estate office or arrange for its collection by telephoning the estate office on 020 7926 0158