



# Resident Involvement & Engagement Strategy 2022-2025



## About us

We are SJMT: a family of charities & community of people supporting those most in need in the West Midlands.

We want everyone, regardless of age or circumstances, to feel secure, have opportunities and to thrive.

The services we provide include:

- Safe, affordable and well-maintained alms-housing
- Residential and extra care
- Community and housing related support
- Services to advance the opportunities of children and young people in need

Everything we do is rooted in our 370 year history and driven by our vision for the future.

The Trust is made up of six separate charities governed by one board of trustees. We are also a Housing Association registered with Homes England and our care services are CQC registered.

### Our Vision

We want everyone, regardless of age or circumstances, to feel secure, have opportunities & to thrive

### Our Mission

To offer people in need access to opportunities, hope and a place where they belong through the provision of quality housing, care, support and

### Our Values

**Personalised** – because no two people are the same

**Dignity** – because everyone is worthy of honour and respect

**Innovation** – because we are original and creative in our thinking

**Excellence** – because we want to be recognised for providing quality services & support

**Honesty** – because we are transparent and accountable in all that we do

**Fun** – because we want to be a great place to work and receive support

## Background

Over the past 10 years, SJMT has recognised the importance of and made an increased commitment to the involvement and engagement of residents in matters of operations, strategy and governance.

### **Resident Representatives**

This began with the introduction of elected Resident Representatives across each of our 3 original sites. These Representatives were involved in listening to the concerns and ideas of residents and raising these with the Leadership Team and Trustees as well as organising social events and activities at their respective schemes.

### **Resident Meetings & Surgeries**

For many years, residents meetings have been held at each of our larger schemes. These meetings have taken place monthly and have been facilitated by a member of staff (most recently the Housing Manager) and are often attended by a senior member of staff, and historically a trustee may also have attended. In 2019 we also introduced a range of monthly surgeries including Property Services and Money Advice. This enables residents to drop in and speak directly with the most appropriate member of staff who will hear and or/resolve their problem.

### **Housing & Care Services Committee & Connect**

From the early 2010's and 2019, elected Resident Representatives attended the Housing & Care Services Committee, a sub-committee also attended by Trustees and senior staff. This was a large meeting during which a significant amount of reporting took place and there was limited opportunity for residents to share information. In 2018, this Committee was replaced by the Finance & Performance Committee which had a far greater focus on trustees' responsibility to scrutinise finance and operational performance and residents were provided with a new way of engaging with Trustees' and the Chief Executive. This group was called Connect and was a relaxed space where all Residents Representatives could meet with two nominated Trustees (reviewed annually) and the Chief Executive to receive a strategic update and to share any concerns or ideas raised by residents across the Trust. This was a popular group but lacked structure and this was put on hold due to Covid-19.

### **Resident Scrutiny Panel**

The Residents Scrutiny panel was launched in 2018 and brought together residents from Sir Josiah Mason Trust and other local Almshouse charities: Yardley Great Trust, Harbourne Parish Lands and Lench's Trust. The Panel was a new way of involving residents in improving the services we provide to our residents and is ran by an external Facilitator who is an expert in resident and tenant engagement. In 2019, the Panel reviewed our Complaints Procedures which led to a brand new resident focussed process and in 2020-2021, a review of resident engagement was completed and this has resulted in some of the proposals in this Strategy. In June 2019, this project received an award from the National Almshouse Association for

## The current situation

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought into focus some of the challenges that have been or would have occurred to our current involvement and engagement processes. The activities of Resident Representatives had to cease due to lock down restrictions and this led to every single Representative

reviewing the huge commitment of time and energy required of them in fulfilling this role and they all decided they no longer wished to continue.

We have been aware for some time that the role places a huge amount of responsibility on an individual who is required to undertake two distinct types of activities:

- Representing residents views, concerns and ideas;
- Liaising directly with Leadership Team;
- Organising and often running residents activities and outings and;
- Involvement in organisation wide projects

Initial consultation with residents following the easing of lockdown restrictions has reinforced that the expectations of the traditional Resident Representatives are too high and that whilst some residents have skills and an interest in some aspects of the role, they did not wish to commit to all aspects of the role.

## Resident involvement in developing this Strategy

### Resident Meetings

Throughout July and August 2021, the Housing Manager engaged with residents individually and in residents meetings in order to gather their views on the existing Resident representative role and any alternatives that could be considered in order to achieve the same outcomes. All residents felt that the role was too large, required too much of a time commitment and was too formal and could at times prevent the organisation of informal social events. Residents did express a concern about not having someone to organise social events and to manage their funds.

### Resident Scrutiny Panel

In September 2019 approx. 16 resident representatives from across the 4 Almshouses charities forming the Resident Scrutiny Panel met and made plans to review resident engagement and involvement. Between September 2019 and March 2020, this group reviewed:

- Policies, where they were present
- Procedures and approaches adopted for formal and informal complaints
- Performance and feedback
- Leaflets and forms
- Adverts on events and activities
- Examples of how residents could access events and involvement opportunities
- The Social Housing Green Paper (Involvement Section)
- Together with Tenants – proposed NHF Charter (Involvement Section)
- Research into what each of our Almshouse Charities offer, relating to resident engagement and activities

They also held a 2-hour discussion and interview with each CEO. Following this, Representatives were due to meet residents at each of the Almshouses to see what they felt about resident involvement and resident activities. Covid 19 prevented this from happening and therefore, the final Report and Recommendations were completed by the external Facilitator but based of the views of the Panel at that time, based on work complete and what panel members agreed was important. The Action Plan developed by the Facilitator was reviewed by the Leadership Team and the Finance and Performance Committee of SJMT in August 2021 and the agreed actions have been incorporated into our Strategy.

## Involvement & Engagement Plan 2022-2025

We recognise that there are many things that we do well and we don't want to change these if they work well and we do not want to over complicate the ways in which residents can get involved. However, we do want to provide a range of opportunities for residents to get involved in ways that benefit them, their fellow residents and the organisation. We believe that committing to the following actions will enable us to be even better and involving and engaging our residents:

What we will do	Lead	Timescale	
Resident Meetings	We will continue to provide scheme based Residents Meetings every month at Olton, Shirley and Erdington (Mason Cottages). At smaller sites, the Housing Manager will visit schemes monthly. The meetings will have set Agenda. And be attended by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At each meeting a key members of staff from across the organisation including the Senior Leadership Team will attend</li> <li>- Outside agencies and speakers on topics of particular relevance and interest</li> <li>- SJMT Ambassador to be invited</li> </ul>	Housing Manager	In place and ongoing
Money Advice Surgery	Monthly meeting at Olton, Shirley and Erdington (Mason Cottages) on a drop-in basis.	Independent Living Officer	In place and ongoing
Resident Scrutiny Panel	Quarterly meetings ran by and independent facilitator. Between 1-2 themes per year.	Chief Executive	To relaunch 2022
LGBTQ+ Champion	To ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The views of LGBTQ+ people are heard and considered at a strategic level.</li> <li>- Our training offer improves the understanding of LGBTQ+ lives.</li> <li>- They input into any consultation with LGBTQ+ residents</li> <li>- To be available to hear any concerns or comments from LGBTQ+ residents in confidence</li> </ul>	Trustee – Gareth Moore	In place and ongoing
Black or Asian Minority Ethnic Champion	To ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The views of Black or Asian Minority Ethnic people are heard and considered at a strategic level.</li> <li>- Our training offer improves the understanding of Black or Asian Minority Ethnic lives.</li> <li>- They input into any consultation with Black or Asian Minority Ethnic residents</li> </ul>	TBC	To launch early 2022

	To be available to hear any concerns or comments from Black or Asian Minority Ethnic residents in confidence		
Residents Forum	A new Trust wide Forum held quarterly focussing on housing related policy/practice, strategy, reporting/performance and change. To be attended by up to 10% of all residents. Attendees will be volunteers who are to represent the resident voice on behalf of all residents at SJMT.	Chief Executive Director of Operations	From January 2022
Working Groups	Short term groups which explore and provide an input to any specific developments or projects. Volunteers to be identified at the time.	Senior Leadership Team	From 2022
Annual Star Survey	An annual resident Satisfaction Survey undertaken in March and presented in the Annual Impact Report each August.	Senior Leadership Team	In place and ongoing
Impact Report	An annual report which shows the achievements during the previous year, presents feedback from residents and outlines our commitment to continuous improvement for the coming year.	Senior Leadership Team	In place and ongoing
Newsletter (Trust Times)	A quarterly newsletter which provides useful information and updates from the Trust.	Central Services	In place and ongoing
Resident Activities Coordinator	A brand new paid role which will work with residents from across the Trust to facilitate and organise resident's engagement, social activities and outings.	Housing Manager	April 2022
Tenants Charter	We will sign up to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter.	Chief Executive Director of Operations	Summer 2022

 New initiatives during the life of this Strategy

This Strategy is owned and reviewed annually by the Residents Forum.