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Introduction

This strategy document outlines the importance of actively involving BHT Sussex clients and tenants in shaping and delivering the future direction of the organisation. We are passionate about having a culture of genuine involvement embedded within our organisation, with clients and tenants placed at the heart of service delivery. We believe that this is fundamental to achieving our core values. This document is aimed at and values contributions by all stakeholders who have experienced disadvantage and have required support services.

Experiencing disadvantage early on or at any point in life can be an isolating experience. It leads to people falling through the cracks or further experiencing lifelong difficulties. However, if one can access support that places them and their experiences at the core, they will be more able to overcome difficulties.

People facing disadvantage are also able to build coping mechanisms and use their lived experiences to not only improve one's own life but also play a leading role in shaping the systems and services in place to support them. Subsequently, if these services and organisations place lived experiences at the heart of what they do, they will be able to provide support that is more effective in delivering the best outcomes for the people they intend to serve.

Clients and tenants are central to the services we provide and are best placed to tell us what works well and what could work better; fully involving them, their needs, priorities and aspirations will form the basis of any service development. Working in partnership like this, BHT Sussex services and operations will reflect clients and tenants' views and needs, thus creating a learning and evolving organisation that enables BHT Sussex communities to thrive and prosper.

We believe that working collaboratively with those who use our services can transform us as an organisation and lead to services that are safe, effective, inclusive, flexible, caring, responsive and well-led. ***Co-production is where people who use services, and those who support them, work in partnership towards shared goals.*** It is about a dialogue between those partners, where clients and tenants are listened to, feel valued, share views, make, and implement decisions and solutions together. While we believe that co-production is a worthwhile aspiration it is important to recognise there may be several methods of involvement that might be meaningful, see Appendix 1 - Ladder of Engagement.

1. Vision

This strategy aims to inspire, support and champion co-production and engagement, placing clients and tenants at the heart of everything BHT Sussex undertakes to ensure the work the organisation does reflects their views, needs and aspirations.

We want clients and tenants to be regularly involved in a wide range of key decisions across the organisation, including not only the planning and delivery of services but also in checking and challenging the decisions made relating to those services.

BHT Sussex will become an organisation where people who use our services are at the forefront of change and are treated as equal partners in decisions made about their lives.

BHT Sussex wants to nurture and maintain a stimulating, innovative and creative culture within the organisation which appreciates and values equally the expertise and contributions of all those that use its services, ensuring the most effective use of these skills are adopted and utilised.

To assist in delivering this vision we have already committed to adopting the NHF 'Together with Tenants' Scheme. In addition, The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has published its initial plans setting out how it will inspect and regulate housing associations regarding their treatment of tenants. The regulator has identified six themes: safety, quality, neighbourhood, transparency, engagement and accountability, and tenancies and we will ensure any regulatory requirements are taken forward as part of this Strategy.

2. Objectives of Involvement at BHT Sussex

1. BHT Sussex will develop a structured programme of engagement:

- Activities will be meaningful with goals and objectives defined by clients and tenants
- There will be a range of ways, including digital technology, for people to share and express their views, contributing to shaping and improving services
- There will be physical and online spaces where clients and tenants will be able to access information about engagement activities and peer groups.

2. BHT Sussex employees will help develop and promote the programme and will receive appropriate training and support to help deliver it. All involvement will be based on a set of values, these are:

- Reciprocity
- Equity and choice
- Accessibility
- Diversity and inclusion

- Transparency and responsiveness
- Consistency
- Sensitivity and awareness
- On-going learning
- Pioneering spirit
- Collaboration

In addition, quality will be achieved by including involvement practices in employee 1-2-1 supervision and appraisals sessions.

3. All involvement activities will be tailored to services and departments within the organisation:

- Each service will develop its own engagement plan using the Ladder of Engagement (see Appendix 1)
- The organisation will develop a menu of involvement to facilitate engagement at all levels across BHT Sussex services
- Services will aim to develop activities to be led by clients and tenants
- Services will create more opportunities for creative recovery group sessions.

4. Involvement and representation will happen at all levels including:

- Policies and procedures
- Recruitment of employees and board members
- Monitoring central services
- Setting budgets
- Conferences and events.

5. Representation at strategic meetings where decisions are made including BHT Sussex Board:

- Client and tenant involvement in snapshot surveys: planning, distribution, participation, collection, and evaluation.
- Creating students' placements
- Input in commissioning decisions - what contracts we go for, quotes in bids
- Training sessions assisted/led by clients and tenants
- Clients and tenants will be encouraged to be involved in the ideas, planning, design, promotion, and implementation of activities
- Cohort of Client and Tenant Representatives trained and supported as go-between to service management

- Regular clients and tenants' presence at employee meetings
- Review of relevant policies and procedures.

6. Enhanced, encouraged, and valued peer support:

- Build on best practice currently existing the organisation, i.e., Pathfinder model
- Welcoming new clients and help transition and move on
- Volunteering opportunities for former clients and tenants as mentors, and buddying systems.

7. Clients and tenants receive support to be engaged:

- Training and support will be available so that clients and tenants can make the most of involvement options
- Access to suitable premises.

8. Resources needed:

We will provide additional resources of £5k (currently £5k) and seek to appoint a full-time apprentice (£20k) to achieve these objectives to include:

- Training for clients, tenants, volunteers, interns, employees, and Board members funded
- Relevant information and guidance available for all, user friendly, easily accessed, well promoted and with regular review and update
- A community of practice encouraging knowledge and resource sharing across the organisation, ensuring best practice is captured and shared
- A dedicated funded lead to implement this strategy
- A budget
- All participants in SUI must have support and resources to be able to contribute equally to the process including practical aspects such as checks-ins before and after meetings, travel tickets, reimbursements, and appropriate provision for volunteers (refreshments, lunch, etc.).

9. Measurement and evaluation:

It is vital that BHT Sussex does not stand still with regard to client and tenant involvement. We are a learning organisation in this regard, utilising feedback from clients and tenants to continuously transform our organisation to better reflect their needs and aspirations. Quality assurance to facilitate this will comprise of the following:

- We will use the 4Pi framework to measure and evaluate the quality and impact of our involvement practices, see Appendix 2

- We will use an annual impact analysis to measure and report on the value for money of involvement and social value created on the organisation and its stakeholders, including clients and tenants
- We will use national data relating to client and tenant involvement in smaller housing associations and similar services to benchmark client and tenants' involvement provision and the benefits it has provided over the year
- We will use the annual snapshot survey to ask clients and tenants about their experience of clients and tenants at BHT Sussex and their perception of its success
- An annual report on progress will be presented to the Operations and Personnel Committee