



CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT INCENTIVES POLICY

1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to incentivising the involvement of customers who volunteer their time with us to improve our services.

2. Underpinning principles

We believe that incentivising customer involvement increases the quantity and range of involved customers. Incentives encourage new and varied voices and can prevent barriers to volunteering.

The Social Housing Regulator's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 2024 is relevant to this policy. This is where the Government outlines expectations around involving tenants and customers in the work of their housing providers.

We define a volunteer as a person who works or carries out activities for us without being paid, except for travel or reasonable out of pocket expenses. In some cases, we will offer incentives as an acknowledgement of a volunteers' input.

3. Policy details

Where we need customers to volunteer to be involved, we can offer a range of incentives, as well as reimbursement for expenses, to help us get a good sample of views and opinions, and to thank people for giving up their time. Some of the activities and opportunities for customers that come within the scope of this policy include:

- Getting involved in projects that put customers at the heart of shaping and influencing our services.
- Attending focus groups or workshops.
- Carrying out desktop activities such as reviewing letters or documents.
- Completing customer questionnaires or surveys.
- Becoming a member of a customer group such as our Scrutiny Team and our Customer Complaints Forum.
- Taking part in staff recruitment or the selection of contractors.
- Involvement in neighbourhood improvement activities.

Policy owner: Laura Pictor Group customer involvement & communities manager

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We offer various incentives depending on the type of involvement. These may have a monetary value, or they may be an acknowledgement of thanks, or they may provide learning, or an experience.

In some situations, we may offer entry into a prize draw as an incentive. If shopping vouchers, gift tokens, gifts or other prizes are being given as a result of a customer being successful in a competition, our competition terms and conditions policy will apply, a copy of which can be found on our website.

Our regular customer involvement includes a rolling programme of policy and strategy reviews plus opportunities to influence other changes in service delivery. We generally hold focus groups or workshops to gather customers' views where we require a customer to give their time and their constructive input to assist in reviewing & rewriting these documents. In these instances, customers will receive an incentive as an acknowledgement of their contribution. These sessions may be held in person or online and at times we ask customers to carry out a desktop task, such as reviewing a document and providing feedback. The incentives may differ depending on the complexity and/or size of the task.

Scrutiny Team and Customer Complaints Forum incentives package

To recognise the commitment of customers volunteering on longer-term basis by joining a permanent group we offer an incentive package.

For our Scrutiny Team there will be monthly incentives. In this team the members meet regularly to carry out in-depth reviews into our service areas and report their findings and recommendations to Board. Scrutiny team members are loaned a laptop for the duration of their membership and any necessary basic IT training. They are given a monthly contribution to help with their Broadband costs due to the requirement to be online. They are provided with free TPAS membership (or similar) and access to training courses. This may include developing their skills such as chairing meetings, report writing and teamwork. They may also have the opportunity to attend conferences and training specialising in tenant engagement and the scrutiny role. Each month, members will each be offered an incentive as an acknowledgement of their contribution.

The Customer Complaints forum meets once every quarter to help us assess the performance of our complaints process. They are given a

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quarterly contribution to help with their Broadband costs due to the requirement for occasional online work. They are provided with free TPAS membership (or similar) and access to training courses. This may include developing their skills such as chairing meetings, report writing and teamwork. They may also have the opportunity to attend conferences and training specialising in the complaints' role. Each quarter, members will each be offered an incentive as an acknowledgement of their contribution.

If we create similar customer teams in the future, we will consider how to best incentivise those volunteers.

Incentives and process

Customers can choose to receive a shopping voucher for their incentive after volunteering, or they can ask for the equivalent monetary amount to be donated to Selwood Housing's charity of the year. A third option is open to customers that either have rent arrears with Selwood Housing or have a shortfall in their Housing Benefit or Housing Element payment of Universal Credit. In either of these circumstances, customers could opt for a credit to their rent account as their incentive.

Customers will receive incentives and expenses in the month following the month they were involved, if they have submitted a claim. It is the responsibility of the customer volunteering to ensure they claim any expenses and incentives due, via this process. Claims should be made by the first of each month for the month that has just ended. Late claims won't be processed until the next month and must be made within three months of the involvement activity. Claims cannot be made ahead.

The rates of our customer incentives offer will be reviewed annually by the Group Customer Involvement and Communities Manager. Broadband costs are reviewed annually against current costs from a range of providers.

To prevent barriers to customers volunteering we cover expenses such as mileage or public transport, subsistence and caring costs. All these costs are covered by our company Expenses Policy which is owned by the HR team at Selwood Housing and applies to staff and customers.



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Tax, benefits and receiving shopping vouchers

We can't advise customers on how receiving vouchers, or any other incentives might impact on personal situations in terms of income tax, benefits, or both.

As everyone's situation is different with some of our customers in work, some in receipt of benefits, and some in work and receiving benefits, it's our customers responsibility to seek professional advice to understand how receiving shopping vouchers might change their situation.

Monitoring

The Customer involvement & communities team will make sure that a record is kept of all costs linked to this policy, along with the names and addresses of any recipients of incentives. This list will be kept securely.

4. Signposting

- [Competition-entry-policy.pdf](#)
- Expenses policy
- Gifts and hospitality policy

Decision-making record

Date	Meeting/Minute Reference	Version /Amendment
11 January 2018	Verena Buchanan	1
16 March 2021	Executive	2
30 June 2022	Pete Davies	3
30 June 2023	Laura Pictor (minor change to remove the amounts which are subject to change)	4
29 April 2025	Executive	5

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