



**Date:** 26 February 2014

**Subject:** Communications (Residents Meetings)

**Report Author:** R2R Resident Inspectors

**Purpose:** To provide findings and recommendations from residents scrutiny of Communications (Residents Meetings)

## Introduction

The R2R panel decided on Communications (Residents Meetings) as the fourth topic to be scrutinised by the panel. This report outlines the key findings from the scrutiny panel and provides a number of recommendations where the R2R resident inspectors feel that communications at residents meetings could be improved.

## Methodology Used for Scrutiny

The R2R resident inspectors decided that both a desktop review and visits to residents meetings across SAHA services would be the best approach for reviewing the process.

As this topic impacts all SAHA residents, it was agreed that both the Foyers and Agency Managed Services would also be involved in reviewing the communications at residents meetings; this report takes into consideration their feedback too.

We looked at using the following 3 approaches in gauging feedback from the different housing streams:

### 1. Within General Needs/Sheltered Housing:

The R2R panel's approach for observing residents meetings was to pair each member up, from the two different housing streams, and get them to visit a service/scheme they hadn't been to.

In order to facilitate the scrutiny of residents meetings, an email was sent out to the Housing Services Managers in early December 2013 for a list of residents meetings that were taking place in January and mid February 2014. In total the R2R panel members attended 9 residents meetings across the North and South regions.

### 2. Within Foyer Services:

The approach to Foyers was slightly different. Each Foyer service was asked to nominate two residents to be impartial observers at the residents meeting and to list the positives, negatives and make two recommendations for improvement.

### 3. The Agency Managed Services:

The Agency Managed Services approach was again slightly different, as we used the Resident Involvement section of the IQI Inspection Reports to measure the effectiveness of residents meetings.

We used data held on the system to obtain details of the number of inspections that took place from April 2013 - December 2013 (31) and how these were scored during the inspection process using the IQI's Red, Amber and Green scoring system.

A set of guidance notes was issued to both the R2R panel and Foyer residents, informing them of:

- Their role at the residents meeting i.e. impartial observers.
- Looking at key areas such as venues, meeting times, agenda items etc.
- How to judge the effectiveness of a residents meeting.

The scrutiny meetings took place at SAHA's Head Office in London, Regional Office in Bolton and Doncaster Foyer on 26 February 2014.

In order to gain a better understanding of the various elements involved in the residents meetings, the panel assessed and reviewed the following key documents:

The Association's:

- Residents Involvement Strategy, Leaflets and Resident Involvement (RI) Exception Report
- Residents Meeting Case Studies.
- Feedback on Residents Meetings from the Panel.
- Guidance on Running Effective Residents Meetings.

### Scrutiny Findings:

#### Residents Involvement Strategy, Leaflets and Resident Involvement Exception Report

In order for the panel to fully understand the various residents involvement activities that are carried out by the Association, they reviewed the current RI strategy and leaflets.

The panel also reviewed the Resident Involvement Exception report, (which captures all the residents involvement activities that take within the Association) for the last 6 months, which looked at key data:

- Types of different residents involvement activities.
- The number of activities in the last 6 months.
- How much these had cost i.e. for refreshments, venues etc. from a value for money perspective.

Types of resident involvement	Number of residents involved	Costs
Residents meetings	13	£180
Focus Group	2	
Informal Meeting	105	£2,791
1-2-1 meeting	5	
Peer Group	5	£2,050
Rent service charge	77	£21
Survey	34	
Training	4	£2,080.00
<b>Total costs in the last 6 months</b>		<b>£7,122</b>

#### Positives:

- The strategy is a good document as it is informative/explanatory.
- The RI leaflet is easy to read and understand.
- The RI leaflet is attractive and eye catching.
- Residents thought that the costs per meeting were very good as there were a lot more residents involved in a meeting such as a coffee morning where the social inclusion benefits for residents were very important.
- The costs were felt to represent value for money from this type of involvement activity.

#### Negatives:

- RI strategy has too much jargon, too wordy.
- RI strategy is too regulatory.
- Information in the strategy and leaflets is slightly out of date.

#### Recommendations:

- To reduce the jargon and make it simpler for residents.
- The RI strategy to include information on the Cowan Fund (assist residents with travel and clothing costs associated with a job, work placement or training interview)
- RI leaflet to incorporate more pictures.

- RI leaflet to review the contents of the leaflet, i.e. key, timescales and have a section on R2R.

### Residents Meeting Case Studies

In order for the panel to understand the various different residents meetings that take place within SAHA services and the process involved in organising a residents meeting, the panel reviewed two cases studies looking at the key documents that are issued to residents before and after the residents meetings, i.e. letters, agendas, posters, minutes etc.

Case study 1: was an informal coffee morning meeting at Ramford & Hammond Street. The panel reviewed the letters, posters that were sent out to all residents.

Case study 2: was a formal residents meeting at Youell Court. The panel reviewed the letters and minutes of the residents meeting.

Positives:

- The letters used at Ramford & Hammond Street were very good especially the reply slip at the bottom of the letter.
- Having lots of promotional information, i.e. posters around the scheme ensured that residents were still able to participate even if they didn't read the letters.

Negatives:

- None

Recommendations:

- All letters relating to residents meetings should have a reply slip with an anonymity box in case a resident wants to raise a topic in confidence.
- Minutes from meetings to be sent to residents.

### Feedback on Residents Meetings from the Panel

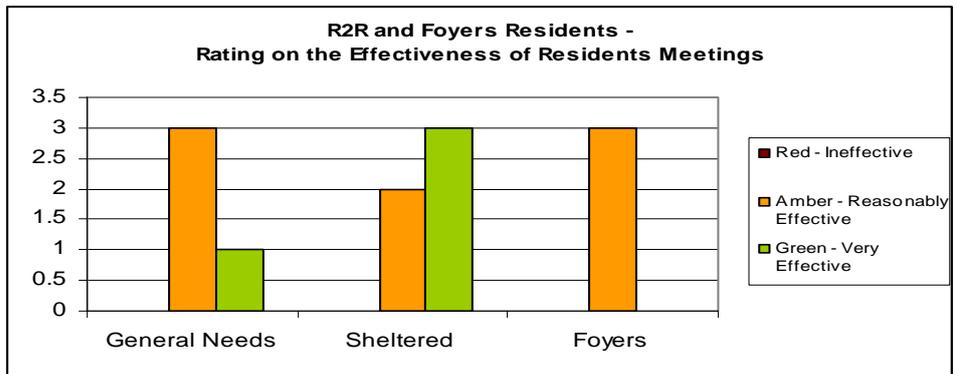
The R2R panel had an opportunity to share their experiences with each other and analyse the feedback that they had collected on residents meetings. (Please see Attached Appendices A & B). This also included reviewing the Foyers and Agency Managed Services feedback.

As part of the guidance notes the R2R panel members and foyer residents were asked to rate each residents meeting they attended with:

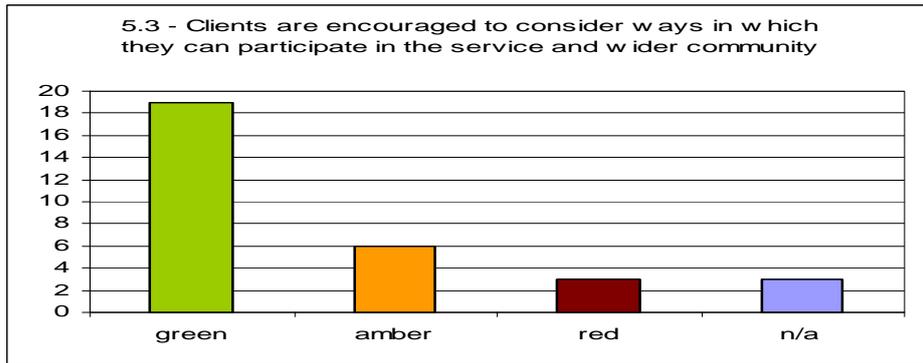
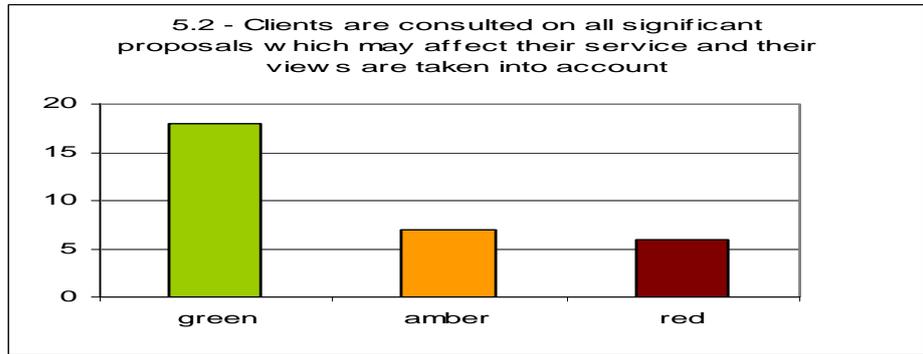
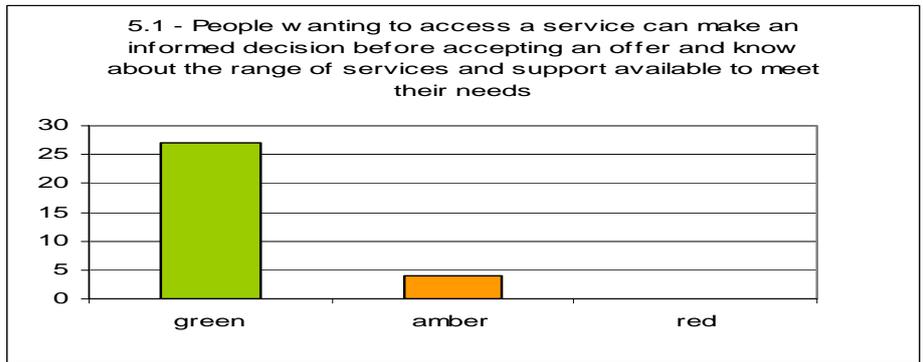
- Red – being ineffective residents meeting.
- Amber – being reasonably effective residents meeting.
- Green – being very effective residents meeting.

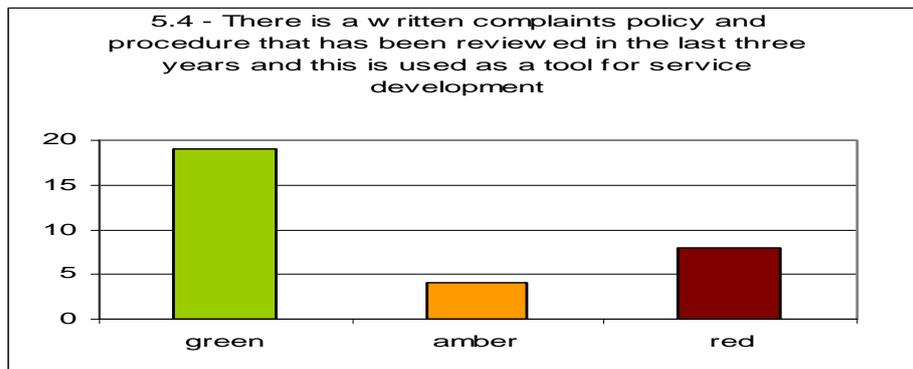
And using the data collected from the IQI inspection reports of 31 services.

Below is an overview of the scoring the R2R and Foyer residents used to rate effectiveness of residents meetings within SAHA services:



Below is an overview of the questions asked within the “Residents Involvement section” of the IQI Inspection Reports for Agency Managed Services:





#### Positives:

- Residents were able to express their views and bring up any problems.
- Residents all participated in the meeting.
- Residents were supportive of each other and helped each other, especially in the sheltered services.
- Residents had the opportunity to set agenda items.
- Very positive feedback regarding on-site support workers (Lynne Dixon and Julie Livesley).
- Access to support workers freely available as and when required.
- Generally a good atmosphere among residents and staff.
- There's genuine resident involvement at schemes.
- "The agenda was set up very well and the resident meeting was very effective".
- "One of the best residents meetings that I have attended".
- Residents run the scheme in a well maintained way and there is minimal need to have SAHA staff on site.
- "Loads of different points were raised and everyone was able to chip in with valid points".
- Informative as to what's happening with the Foyer services.
- Allows residents to inform staff of any changes that could be made at the Foyers.

#### Negatives

- Minutes not available from previous meetings.
- The room used in the church next door had access by two small flights of stairs - this was difficult for some people, especially older residents.
- The meeting was on a small landing and there was not a lot of space, especially as a lot of people attending were in wheelchairs.
- Refreshments not always provided at residents meetings.
- Some residents don't get a chance to speak because of others.

#### Recommendations:

- To ensure that where possible refreshments are provided at residents meetings.
- Residents to be encouraged to create/set residents meeting agenda items.
- To arrange residents meetings at a suitable time for all residents, i.e. morning, lunch time, afternoon, evening.
- To have an introduction section on the resident meeting agenda to help all new and existing residents to get to know who their neighbours are.
- To have the local Asset Manager present at residents meetings as he/she can deal with any maintenance issues relating to the service.
- For the scheme/service to have a revolving chair (where possible).
- To involve external agencies in residents meetings (where possible).
- Where there's a need, to arrange residents meetings in large meeting rooms.

- To ensure residents meetings are suitable for all residents, i.e. wheelchair access.
- Residents meeting minutes to be available to residents.
- To improve/increase residents attendance at residents meetings.

#### Guidance to Running Effective Residents Meetings

The panel looked at and agreed that a set of key guidelines should be issued to all residents and relevant staff explaining how to run effective meetings and what they can expect from residents meetings. The guidance is attached at Appendix C.

#### Recommendations:

<b>Residents Involvement Strategy, Leaflets and RI Exception Report</b>	
1	To reduce the jargon and make it simpler for residents.
2	The RI strategy to include information on the Cowan Fund.
3	RI leaflet to incorporate more pictures.
4	RI leaflet to review the contents of the leaflet, i.e. key, timescales and have a section on R2R.
<b>Residents Meeting Case Studies</b>	
1	All letters relating to residents meetings should have a reply slip with an anonymity box in case a resident wants to raise a topic in confidence.
2	Minutes from meetings to be sent to residents.
<b>Feedback on Residents Meetings from the Panel</b>	
1	To ensure where possible that refreshments are provided at residents meetings.
2	Residents to be encouraged to input into setting meeting agenda items.
3	To arrange residents meetings at a suitable time for all residents, i.e. morning, lunch time, afternoon, evening.
4	To have an introduction section on the resident meeting agenda to help all new and existing residents to get to know who their neighbours are.
5	To have the local Asset Manager present at residents meetings as he/she can deal with any maintenance issues relating to the service.
6	For the scheme/service to have a revolving chair (where possible).
7	To involve external agencies in residents meetings (where possible).
8	Where there's a need, to arrange residents meetings in large meeting rooms.
9	To ensure residents meetings are suitable for all residents, i.e. wheelchair access.
10	Residents meeting minutes to be available to residents.
11	To improve/increase residents attendance at residents meetings.
<b>Guidance to Running Effective Residents Meetings</b>	
1	Guidelines for all tenures on what residents can expect from residents meetings.