

## Customer Engagement Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	<i>Customer &amp; Community Network</i>		
<b>Effective date:</b>	01/04/2017	<b>Review date:</b>	01/04/2019
<b>Author &amp; responsible officer:</b>	Brian Daniels, Digital Transformation Manager		
<b>Status:</b>	<i>Approved</i>	<b>Version:</b>	0.3

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Aim

The aims of this policy are to ensure that Aster's customers are meaningfully engaged and involved in the:

- Development of organisational strategy and policy
- Design, delivery and evaluation of services through a range of methodologies
- Supporting Aster's digital ambitions in the context of customer engagement and involvement
- Provision of opportunities for customers to be become financially and digitally included
- Ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework.

#### 1.2 Scope

This policy relates to all Aster customers and its implementation is the responsibility of all Aster colleagues.

#### 1.3 Corporate Plan

This policy will help us to achieve our ambitions and strategic aims to:

- Transact and communicate digitally with our customers
- Deliver value and offer choice
- Be brave and bold
- Being financially strong and well governed
- Increase focus on efficiency, reducing non-core activities to fund more housing
- Continue our work on corporate social responsibility.

## 1.4 Aster Foundation

This policy will enable us to support the work of the Aster Foundation through the commitments of Aster's corporate social responsibility to customers.

## 1.5 Outcomes/benefit(s)

- Customers are given the option to provide meaningful input toward service change and design.
- Options are accessible to customers with a range of diverse needs.
- Customers are supported in becoming financially and digitally included.
- A variety of customer related transactions can be completed digitally.
- Aster's plans, strategies, policies, procedures, services are improved.

## 1.6 Compliance framework

The HCA Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2012 outline the regulatory framework Aster must comply with when delivering a service to engage customers.

Regulation 17 of the 2014 Regulated Activities Regulations to the 2008 Care Act requires Aster to seek and act on customer feedback in order to continually evaluate and improve services.

The Care Quality Commission's handbook for providers of Adult Community Services expects Aster to:

- Routinely listen and learn from customers, through accessible, tailored and inclusive ways
- Promote an open, inclusive and empowering culture that actively involves customers in feeding back on quality and developing the service.

## 2 Policy statement

### 2.1 In delivering this policy we will:

- Provide customers with different choices and methods to become engaged and involved in strategy and policy formulation and in the design, delivery and evaluation of services that are accessible in order to meet the information and communication needs of the individual. This may include involving third parties e.g. advocates
- Support the work of formal customer groups such as the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP), Customer Overview Group (COG) and the

Designated Complaints Panel (DCP) in reviewing Aster services and performance

- Support the formation and activities of customer groups
- Support the overall objectives of the Customer and Community Network (CCN)
- Ensure customer consultation and testing is at the heart of developing digital services where a customer transaction is involved
- Transform customer engagement to use digital methods by default and maintain a range of alternative involvement methods, maintaining regulatory compliance
- Ensure service leads consider and support customer consultation when service changes or reviews are proposed or required
- Publicise the outcomes CSP scrutiny exercises and consultations via the website and other digital communication channels, showing customer's how their involvement has made a difference
- Promote digital and financial inclusion, support customers to improve their digital literacy and employability skills through training opportunities
- Maximise the use of digital technology in the implementation of this policy to offer the maximum value for money
- Ensure involvement activities carried out by different teams within Aster are complementary to improve the customer experience and Aster's efficiency
- Annually review the impact of this policy and report on policy outcomes
- Encourage and support customers to be involved in initiatives/consultations led by other organisations that impact on Aster services.

## 2.2 Roles and responsibilities

- The Head of Housing for Dorset has portfolio responsibility for monitoring the service and ensuring it complies with the requirements of this policy.
- The Customer Engagement Team should ensure all colleagues are aware of engagement opportunities and support the aims of this policy.

## 3 Policy Implications

### 3.1 Service/performance standards

- Customer scrutiny exercises and scrutiny outcomes.
- The number of services changed implemented or withdrawn as a result of customer consultation.
- Consultations and outcomes shall be reported on the Aster group website.
- The number of customer engagement activities completed digitally.
- The number of customers completing employability activities and training and a reduction in rent arrears of those gaining employment.
- Care services assessed through inspections as “Good” (according to Care Quality Commission criteria) in customer engagement.

### 3.2 Risk

By failing to meaningfully involve our customers and understand their priorities and preferred methods of communication Aster risks:

- Investing in services that are not used or wanted
- Non-compliance with HCA and CQC standards, and Care Act regulations.

### 3.3 Equality and diversity

- Aster will maintain/update customer profiling information, and record customer engagement activity on an on-going basis, Where gaps are identified Aster will take action to engage with hard to reach groups, using external partners if necessary.
- Methods of engagement will promote equality and take account of diversity.
- Involved customer groups will be expected to adhere to relevant codes of conduct to ensure their activities are inclusive and non-discriminatory.

## 4 Related Policies and Procedures

### 4.1 Associated policies and procedures

- [AC SH Procedure for reimbursing customers](#)
- [Person Centred Working policy and its care planning procedures](#)