

JON WARNOCK

INDEPENDENT ADVISOR & CRITICAL FRIEND

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Once upon a time, not so long ago the world of resident involvement was a simple one. Landlords were told what was expected of them and knew that sooner or later they would be inspected to make sure they were doing it.

How things have changed! We do of course still have standards but they are cursory and open to a huge amount of interpretation. We still have a regulator but it won't intervene without serious detriment. Instead it's up to tenants to hold their landlord to account if it doesn't deliver effective resident involvement but this in itself relies on the landlord having adopted effective processes for accountability and challenge. Is it only me or is this a classic Catch 22 situation? Whatever it is, it is the reality of consumer regulation.

So what is it in this time of austerity, scarce resources and the drive for value for money that compels so many landlords to continue to embrace resident involvement? One thing's for certain... they'll have established a business case for it. In other words working out how expending resources on resident involvement supports the delivery of key business needs.

The best landlords will know that their business needs to provide quality services, delivered efficiently and cost effectively and they will realise that this can only be supported if they know who their customers are and what they want. They understand that customer insight is the currency of good decision making and must be collected and applied at every opportunity. They understand that complaints and feedback should be viewed as a positive that drive improvement if lessons are learnt. They understand that working collaboratively with residents at a strategic level to interpret intelligence, design services and make decisions, results in better more sustainable outcomes. They understand that giving residents real opportunities to hold them to account makes them stronger, fitter and more responsive organisations. They understand that all this results in improvements in performance and in higher levels of tenant satisfaction. They also know that if their staff feel that they are delivering a good quality service that meets the needs and aspirations of residents then they themselves will be more satisfied and motivated. All this adds up to a compelling business case for resident involvement.

There is one phrase that for me sums up why resident involvement is so integral to being a successful landlord. I didn't get it from a text book or hear it on a training course... I saw it pinned up on the wall of a tenant managed community room and it read 'If you want to know if the shoe fits, ask the person who's wearing it, not person who made it'. Enough said.

Jon Warnock
Independent Advisor & Critical Friend
phone: 07963564561
e-mail: jon.warnock1@gmail.com
web: www.critical-friend.org.uk