

# **Bield tenants to shape the future of housing for thousands of older people**

**Tenants are being given the opportunity to shape the future of housing for thousands of older people across Scotland.**

Bield is giving their customers the opportunity to influence their strategy for the next five years at a pivotal time of leadership change and recovery from the pandemic.

The organisation is hosting various events, including a joint engagement session in June and an AGM in September, to get feedback from the people who know their services best: their tenants.

Approximately 15 customers will take part in the first event; a summit in Hamilton on 21 June which will also be attended by Bield's Directors and the CEO, along with a further 20 staff from across the business.

It will be the first such event in almost three years as a result of the Covid pandemic and the first opportunity for Bield customers to meet the refreshed management team – at a time when the sector faces numerous challenges including soaring energy prices, the introduction of new legislation and climate change.

Zhan McIntyre, Bield's Head of Policy and Customer Standards, was responsible for organising the session and said: "The timing feels absolutely essential.

“Our last few annual engagement events were halted by the pandemic – a period when both Bield and the rest of society were dealing with profound change.

“There are so many big issues on the horizon, and it couldn’t be a more important time to listen to our customers as we set out our strategy for the next five years.”

The event in Hamilton will begin with tenants – who come from Bield developments all across Scotland – giving unvarnished accounts of their experiences during the pandemic and explaining how they feel the housing provider could improve in future.

Dr Lynne Douglas, who took over as Bield CEO just months before lockdown started, will then talk about the challenges of steering the organisation through the pandemic, including rebuilding the Senior Management Team.

This will be followed by a discussion on Bield’s new five-year strategy, which is due to commence in March 2023.

Tracey Howatt, Director of Customer Experience; Val Hunter, Director of Business Development; Paula Rice, Director of Finance and Resources; and Nikki Ritchie, Director of People and Organisational Development will answer questions from customers and ensure that their views are captured to help shape the roadmap for the organisation.

Topics on the agenda include how Bield will introduce modern technology to help people live independently for as long as possible and how they will tackle the soaring cost of energy, whilst combatting climate change.

The afternoon will conclude with a tour of the BE-ST Innovation Factory (formerly the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre), giving the attendees an insight into the latest technology being used to help transform housing and the built environment.

Dr Lynne Douglas, Chief Executive at Bield, said: “There is no better way for us to hear from our customers than finally being able to meet with them like this. This is a hugely important event for us.

“Engagement with customers and staff is vital to us to ensure that we continue to develop innovative ideas that support all of the Bield community, now and in the future.

“As an organisation, we must be ready to adapt and change to meet the demand both now and in the future and take our services to new levels. Events like this help us to keep our customers at the very forefront of what we do, even in these most challenging of times.”

Bield is a registered charity which began with one housing development in Bo’ness and is now a leading provider of housing and care services for over 5000 older people across 23 local authority areas in Scotland.



Bield Housing and Care Senior Management Team