

Terms of Reference: Scrutiny Panel

Purpose

The purpose of the tenant Scrutiny Panel is to take an independent and objective view of the housing services provided by Berneslai Homes and make evidence based recommendations for ongoing service improvements.

Role

To ensure that Berneslai Homes and partners deliver their services to the agreed specification.

This will be achieved by:

- Taking an impartial view of the services delivered by Berneslai Homes by using the information and reports provided by the Tenant Voice Panel to conduct in depth examinations of policy, practice and procedures
- Decipher information and undertake/commission further consultation/service testing as required as directed by the Tenant Voice Panel
- Commissioning reviews of policies and processes if applicable
- Providing the Tenant Voice Panel with timely updates on progress
- Monitoring and review the agreed recommendations made following the tenant scrutiny reports
- Offering assurance to the wider tenant base that the services provided by Berneslai Homes and partners meet the specified standards
- Producing evidence based reports that detail recommendations for service improvements
- Providing timely reports to Board on scrutiny exercises
- Ensuring the reports are published and findings are shared with the wider tenant base

How the panel will fulfil their role

1. The panel will receive reports/findings and recommendations from the Tenant Voice Panel, along with the specific evidence to enable them to carry out a scrutiny exercise
2. The Panel will have access to sensitive and confidential information and will sign a confidentiality agreement
3. The Panel can request further evidence or documentation from service managers

4. The Panel can request further/additional service checking to be carried out via the Tenant Voice Panel in order to further clarify areas for further scrutiny. This could be carried out by existing groups such as Service Excellence Assessment Programme, (SEAP)
5. The Panel will produce scrutiny reports and will present them to the Tenant Voice Panel before going to Customer Services Committee
6. The Chair of the Panel and one other member may attend Customer Services Committee or the Board with the Tenant Voice Panel representative.

Practicalities

- The Panel will be a task and finish group and meet when a project is up and running
- Members will be expected to meet the role competencies and or be able to demonstrate their willingness to undertake any training to meet the competencies.
- Initial informal, “chat”, sessions will be held by a panel including the Tenant Voice coordinator, Independent tenant and a representative from a voluntary group, to ensure the applicant is suited to the panel.
- A learning lunch may be offered to all interested tenants and leaseholders, to ensure that they are aware of the level of commitment expected from them.
- The make-up of the panel will aim to be representative of the tenant base as is practically possible.
- The Panel will select a Chair per project
- Meetings will be facilitated by the Tenant Voice Coordinator
- The quorate for the panel will be 2/3rds of the membership
- The panel can take referrals from managers within Berneslai Homes as well as the Tenant Voice panel.
- Meetings will be minuted and the minutes will be distributed to members within 5 working days of the meeting. The minutes will be shared with SMT, Customer Services Committee and the Tenant Voice panel.
- The Panel will have the support of the Berneslai Homes Tenant Voice Coordinator and the Tenant Voice Administration Officer
- Members must undertake the required training
- Members will only be permitted to serve on the panel subject to an annual tenancy/rent check. (Arrears due to administration of UC will not be taken into account)
- Members will report back into the Tenant Voice panel regarding progress and any additional information that may be required to complete the scrutiny project

Membership

- Membership will be made up from tenants and leaseholders within Berneslai Homes
- Membership will not be permitted from: Berneslai Homes Staff, BMBC Staff, Partner Staff, Councillors, tenants or leaseholders that sit on any other involvement panels where this will cause a conflict.
- Berneslai Homes will hold a register of members/database, from which interest will be sought on a project by project basis
- Membership will be fluid, with members selected from the database for each project.
- Members will be permitted to serve on a virtual panel and will be asked to send in views via email or social media.
- Membership will be determined via an informal, “chat”, process, with members selected on their skill set relevant to the specific project.
- The chair will be elected on a project by project basis.
- Members will only be permitted to serve on the panel following a positive tenancy/rent check.
- All members will be expected to go through a thorough training programme.
- Members will undertake skills analysis, with bespoke training arranged if necessary.
- Input may be sought from other engagement groups such as PRIP, Neighbourhood Services etc., depending on the project to offer their skill set, but will not be permitted to serve on the scrutiny panel whilst on the aforementioned groups.

Member conduct

- Members are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis and if they are unable to do so, they must send apologies. If members miss two consecutive meetings, without valid apologies, they will no longer be classed as a member.
- All members must respect and adhere to confidentiality and must sign a confidentiality agreement, code of conduct and role profile.
- All members are expected to follow the agreed Code of Conduct and behave in a courteous and respectful manner to each other, Officers and Board members.
- To Tenant Voice Coordinator can take action if they witness or receive reports of misconduct or behaviour that is not in line with the Code of Conduct.

- Any action in respect of member conduct must be conducted by the Tenant Voice Coordinator or their representative and agreed prior with the Chair of the Panel and one other member. Action could be an official warning about their behaviour or dismissal for gross misconduct or serious persistent behaviour for which they have received at least 2 warnings.
- If the Chair of the panel is acting outside the Code of Conduct, then action must be agreed with at least two other members of the panel.
- If a member is dismissed by the group, they will not be able to reapply.
- Any member, who receives any sanction for their behaviour, can ask for a review of the decision. Any review will be undertaken by a panel of three involved tenants which should include one Tenant Board member. The decision of this panel is final.

Training and support

Members will be expected to undertake any training that is deemed necessary to enable them to perform their role. This may include:

- The regulatory requirements
- Understanding performance reports
- The link between co regulation and governance
- Team working
- Deciphering statistics/information
- Understanding Tenant scrutiny
- Introduction to Berneslai Homes

We will work with members to ensure that we try to accommodate personal circumstances, with every effort being made to deliver training that is supportive of need

Ongoing training and support will be given to all members by an annual development review conducted by the Tenant Voice Coordinator

Work programme and support

- The panel will be responsible for setting their own work schedule after a referral from the Tenant Voice panel, staff or other involvement method
- Berneslai Homes will provide the panel with all information relevant to the area of service in question. This may take the form of reports, attendance at meetings, satisfaction information, complaints information, strategies and policies, improvement plans and minutes from meetings.

Expenses

Members will be issued with a £10 voucher as a thank you for participating in the panel. This covers the time spent at the meeting and a contribution towards any travel costs incurred.

A taxi may be arranged but if this is the case then a £5 voucher will be issued.

Members will not exceed £40 thank you vouchers in one month.