

## Scrutiny Panel

### TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

#### Purpose

The Resident Scrutiny Panel will challenge the performance of the organisation, influence change in strategies, policies and services and drive improvement as well as having clear routes of access to officers and the Board.

#### Aims

- To inform Board and Senior Management Team where service standards do not meet customer expectation.
- To challenge the Management Team where it is identified that performance falls below expected standards by monitoring and reviewing the Company's performance in relation to service delivery against service commitments and local and national service standards.
- To make recommendation to the Board where the panel finds performance has fallen below the expected level.
- To facilitate these aims the Scrutiny Panel will be given access to strategic and performance management information.
- To develop best practice models through benchmarking.
- To empower tenants to be involved in the decision making processes of the organisation and inform the workload of other resident involvement groups within the organisation.

#### Membership

The committee shall consist of between 7 and 9 members who will represent a broad cross section of the Company's customer base which understands the diversity of the provider's tenants.

With some exceptions all tenants or joint tenants or leaseholders or shared owners of Futures Homescape are eligible to apply.

Members of Neighbourhood Forums, Quality Circle Group, Mystery Shoppers, Tenant Quality Inspectors, the Company's Board or any other Boards within the Group will have to resign from these groups if elected/selected onto the Scrutiny Panel.

No member of the Panel can be employed by the Company or other Companies within the Group.

Any applicant served with a current anti-social behaviour order is not eligible to apply.

Applicants engaged in the possession process or who have rent arrears will be eligible so long as any agreements with the company are being met.

Where Futures Homescape is taking any other legal action against the applicant or the applicant is currently engaged in legal action against Futures Homescape, the applicant is not eligible to apply.

The criterion for serving members are list below under cessation of membership.

Only one representative from each household can serve on the Panel at any one time.

Founder members will be elected through a voting process. The election will be by ballot of the customers who are actively involved with Neighbourhood Forums, Quality Circle Group, Voices of Youth, Tenants and Residents groups or any such constituted forum the company may have at the time.

Should a founder member wish to resign from the panel due to ill health or change in personal circumstances prior to their agreed retirement date, the panel will be responsible for appointing a replacement in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection process.

From April 2012 and annually thereafter, members will be appointed through a recruitment and selection process and shall serve a term of four years expiring at the end of the relevant annual meeting. The Members to retire shall be the one who has been a member longest. Members will serve for a maximum of two terms – four years each term = 8 years in total.

For a period of two years from April 2012 one third of founder members will retire by asking for volunteers. Where not enough volunteers come forward, names will be drawn from a hat to make up the required numbers to retire.

The Scrutiny Panel is responsible for succession planning and ongoing recruitment of new members with support from an officer of the Company. The Panel will also be responsible for any appeals from unsuccessful applicants regarding the recruitment process.

#### Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

In April of each year, the members of the Resident Scrutiny Panel will elect a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson from members of the panel.

#### Cessation of Membership

Any panel member who is absent from three consecutive properly notified meetings or training sessions, without sending apologies, will, unless otherwise agreed by the Panel, be deemed to have resigned.

Any Panel member who is in a formal or legal dispute with the Association in relation to service delivery or breach of tenancy conditions or agreements made between the Panel member and the Group shall be suspended from the Panel, at the discretion of the Executive Director and Chair of the Panel. [For the avoidance of doubt, this includes (but is not limited to) failure to comply with an agreement to pay rent or arrears, antisocial behavioural orders, complaints at Stage 2 or higher, breaches of the tenancy or lease conditions].

In the event of no confidence, a Scrutiny Panel member may be removed from the Scrutiny Panel by a vote passed by three quarters of the Scrutiny Panel present, provided that at least fourteen days notice of the vote has been given to all Scrutiny Panel members, and the notice sets out in writing reasons for the vote and the Scrutiny Panel is satisfied that the allegation(s) is or are true.

### Meetings

The Panel shall meet at least 6 times per year.

The Panel is responsible for setting agendas and dates of meetings taking into account availability of its members.

A Futures Homescape officer will assist the meetings by providing background information and guidance, assisting with arrangements including transport as appropriate and in line with Futures Homescape Limited's policies and procedures, minuting meetings and budget management. The officer will have a briefing with the Chair of the Panel before each meeting.

The Chairperson, or in their absence, the Vice Chairperson will be responsible for running the meeting.

All decisions will be made on the basis of the majority view through a show of hands. In the event of an equal number of votes for and against the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

Agendas for meetings and any supporting paperwork will be distributed by an Futures Homescape officer to members seven days in advance of the meeting.

All Tenant Scrutiny Panel Members are asked to disclose any relevant interests which may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.

The Chair will meet with the Executive Director at least twice per year.

One third of the total number of members shall constitute a quorum.

Member skills will be appraised once a year and appropriate levels of training and support will be made available to Panel members so that they can participate fully at meetings.

### Code of Conduct

All Tenant Scrutiny Panel Members are expected to follow the code of conduct in order to maintain high standards of conduct and protect the best interests of the Company.

All Scrutiny members must support and uphold the Company's values, aims and policies.

All meetings should be polite and business-like but at the same time relaxed with a friendly atmosphere. At all meetings the Chair will preside over the proceedings.

All mobile phones will be switched off or put on silent mode before each meeting commences.

If discussions are 'getting heated' a five minute time out can be called for at the discretion of the Chair.

Swear words, racist or sexist remarks or disruptive behaviour must not be used. Abuse of or by Panel members or continued disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the Panel.

Any actions or behaviour which could bring, or be construed as bringing, the Company into disrepute will not be tolerated and will result in the offender being removed from the Panel.

Tenants should not bring up personal issues at meetings unless it is to describe an event or circumstance which is under discussion. Tenants should use the normal procedures for reporting general issues such as repairs and complaints.

Each and every member of the Panel will:

- Commit to listening to and respecting others' opinions;
- Contribute to discussions and share in responsibility for the Scrutiny Panel's decisions;
- Commit to acting in an open, honest and positive manner at all times;
- Commit not to bring individual cases for discussion;
- Scrutiny members will be expected to read any papers circulated prior to meetings so that they can fully contribute at meetings;
- Attend training sessions and other events;
- Attend and participate in reviews linked to individual performance and that of the whole Scrutiny Panel;
- Promote the Company in a positive way when attending appropriate events on behalf of Futures Homescape;
- Not misrepresent Futures Homescape, or claim to represent Futures Homescape without express permission of the Futures Homescape Executive Director;
- Uphold the reputation of Futures Homescape and its values, objectives and principles including the seven principles of public life adopted by the Nolan Committee (The Committee on Standards in Public Life is an advisory non-departmental public body of the United Kingdom Government) (Appendix A);

- Respect confidentiality of information by not passing on any information gained through their involvement with the Company to a third party without the approval of the Chair or Executive Director;
- Disputes between members of the Scrutiny Panel should be avoided wherever possible. Members in dispute with one or more Scrutiny Panel members should seek to resolve the issues without involving other Scrutiny Panel members;
- Conclude on matters based on factual information rather than opinion
- Accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the panel
- Have regard for Value for Money when proposing recommendations
- If the dispute cannot be solved then the disputing parties should arrange a meeting to include all disputing parties and the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Scrutiny Panel and the Executive Director (or their nominated representative);
- The decision of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall be final and binding on the disputing parties and may include sanctions such as suspending the members of the Panel.
- Not bring the company in to disrepute or act against the best interest of company.

### Grievances

If a scrutiny panel member wishes to raise a grievance, they should write in the first instance to the Chair of the Scrutiny panel.

### Review

The Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Resident Scrutiny Panel at the beginning of each financial year.