

**RESIDENT SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING
MINUTES
Wednesday 6 March 2024 6–7:30pm on Teams**

Present: Members

Paul Evans (PE)
Steve Hill (StH)
Teresa Godden-O'Callaghan (TGO'C)
Adam Field (AF)
Alex Tuckwell (AT)
Abdul Kader (AK)
Kirsty East (KE)
Natalieann Leadbetter (NL)

In attendance

Sarah Holden (SH), Resident Scrutiny Manager (Chair)
Robin Marshall (RM), Lead Systems Developer
Amanda Mankelow, (AM) Resident Scrutiny Administrative Assistant (Minutes)

1. Welcome & apologies for absence	Actions
1.1 SH welcomed the panel to the meeting.	
1.2 TGO'C was expected to join a little later.	
1.3 Apologies had been received from Valerie George (VG) and SH explained that although she would be sent the minutes and would be conducting research, VG would be taking a three month break from meetings due to her current caring responsibilities.	
2. Declarations of interest	
2.1 None.	
3. Minutes of last meeting (Tuesday 30 January) & matters arising	
3.1 No further questions for Andrew Greenwell, the Feedback and Information Manager (FIM) had been received from the panel members following his presentation at the last meeting, however there had been some questions/requests during the meeting which would be covered later.	
3.2 SH reminded the panel that as the review progresses, the option to ask further questions of him would remain open.	
3.3 AT advised that she had scheduled a meeting in a couple of weeks' time to speak to the TCH customer service advisor that she knew, about her experience of complaints.	
3.4 SH confirmed that the panel would get an opportunity to talk later about how they wish to continue with the review, including possibly interviewing other staff.	

- 3.5 SH had followed up with colleagues about the recommendation in the damp and mould review which KE felt had not been fully answered. SH advised that TCH was trying to improve in this area but that this hadn't been captured very well. She went on to say that she would update this in the management response
- 3.6 The panel had asked to understand more about themes of complaints and what happens with feedback. AM had received some information to help answer this which would be uploaded to the SharePoint site.
- 3.7 The panel had requested to hear what happens in the complaints process from the first call onwards. AM advised that documents had been shared with her and suggested the panel may wish to think about the fact that different people log and assign complaints, depending on whether it's a written or verbal complaint.
- 3.8 SH advised that a meeting with the Epsom scrutiny panel had been scheduled for the following Tuesday. She went on to say that KE and AK had been selected to attend, with other panel members not required. This would be discussed in more detail later as a separate item on the agenda.
- 3.9 AM explained that sector wide and beyond, there was a clear explanation of what's defined as a service request and a complaint, as outlined in TCH's complaints policy. She countered however that often, the word 'complain' was used when requesting a service. For example, a resident wishing to 'complain about a noisy neighbour' or 'complain that their boiler has broken down'. This could lead to confusion.
- 3.10 AM asked if the panel would find it useful to be sent exact wording of the definition of a complaint. AK understood that a request would therefore become a complaint if the work had not been carried out.
- 3.11 The date of this meeting had been moved from the end of February.
- 3.12 The panel agreed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting held on 30 January.

4. Sharepoint demonstration/training from Robin Marshall, Lead Systems Developer

- 4.1 RM joined the meeting and SH welcomed him.
- 4.2 NL joined.
- 4.3 SH invited the panel members to introduce themselves and state roughly where they live.
- 4.4 RM introduced himself and his role. He acknowledged that he understood that most of the panel members now had access to the resident scrutiny SharePoint site and stated that he would pitch the explanation at a level which he hoped would be right but that he could tailor it based on the panel's understanding.

4.5	AM clarified if members had used the direct link to the site sent earlier in the week or if they had to use the in-private browser to access. PE was still not able to gain access and RM advised that the btopenworld domain had been restricted and asked him to try again after this call.	PE
4.6	RM then went on to explain that SharePoint allows multiple people to work on documents without creating multiple copies of that file, and simply updates the version number.	
4.7	RM added that it's possible to copy the link of a specific file to share it (with those who have access to the site), and that changes autosave when closing a document.	
4.8	SH said she was using SharePoint more and more and suggested she might need a private tutorial.	
4.9	RM stated SharePoint uses a browser version of Microsoft Word etc, but with all the same functions.	
4.10	RM showed the panel around the site, explaining that it was possible to create folders and that the document library showed much the same information as the home page but with more space and the option to sort files by date etc. He also pointed out the banner of activity which showed recent additions or amendments in chronological order.	
4.11	KE had noticed the upload button and asked if each of them could use this. RM confirmed that anyone who has access can upload documents. SH explained that the panel carry out research usually as part of each review and currently send this to AM for collation.	
4.12	SH also stated that minutes are created, checked and emailed round but in future it could be done all on the SharePoint site. RM confirmed and added that documents can be created from within SharePoint, rather than separately in Word to be uploaded.	
4.13	He stated that the panel members may not have delete function but can be given access if need be. He showed the panel the recycle bin where items could be restored if deleted by mistake.	
4.14	TGO'C had joined and stated that she would be interested in attending the office to get specific assistance with access. RM confirmed this would be possible, usually on a Tue/Wed or in an individual Teams call. RM stated he would share his email address with AM to forward on, to book a slot in his calendar to meet if needed.	TGO'C RM and AM
4.15	TGO'C confirmed that she could access the site on her phone from the latest link sent but had downloaded the app on her iPad and encountered a problem. It was requesting that she log in to Microsoft but RM stated that the in-private browser may provide a resolution.	
4.16	AK asked how to see tracked changes. RM confirmed the version history would let members see who had updated which sections.	
4.17	SH thanked RM for attending saying that AM had been battling to try to iron out these issues for a long time but that it sounded if the majority	

were now sorted.

4.18 RM thanked the panel for having him.

4.19 RM left.

4.20 SH asked if the panel found RM's demonstration helpful. They agreed that they had.

4.21 AM asked if NL could now access the SharePoint site. NL advised that she had only recently discovered her device was trying to log in through her other account. AM suggested this was where an in-private browser might be the solution, stating that it was something she wasn't familiar with previously but that it made more sense now.

5. Review planning

5.1 SH advised TGO'C that the previous meeting minutes had been dealt with before she joined but stated she could catch up by listening to the recording. AM confirmed this meeting was being recorded.

5.2 SH recapped what the panel had agreed about the scope of the complaint review at the previous meeting; to look at the complaint process, how TCH was implementing the lessons learnt from complaints and what difference was being made to services from lessons learnt.

5.3 She went on to say that a lot of information had been made available already and asked what the panel would wish to examine next, for example interview, shadow or survey staff doing complaints and hear from other housing associations about their equivalent processes. She also asked if the panel felt it would be useful to bring along the complaints manager at Peabody (parent group of TCH) to a meeting to find out how they deal with complaints as it's different to TCH.

5.4 TGO'C felt that it would be good to shadow staff; to find out how the process worked and also to understand the different types of complaints; the ratio and what the main complaints are. She added that she assumed most are about repairs and that it would be so easy for the panel to get drawn to this. SH confirmed most complaints are about repairs.

5.5 SH asked AM if the FIM had shared anything about the step by step process the panel had requested. AM confirmed that a flowchart of what happens, timescales etc. had been provided. She advised that she hadn't put the documents on SharePoint due to the access problems the panel had been experiencing. SH asked her to share them and advise the panel on WhatsApp once done.

5.6 SH went on to explain that stage 1 complaints are dealt with by a member of staff in that service area and if they are escalated to stage 2, they are then dealt with by someone not connected with the service area, i.e. an independent member of staff. SH asked if the panel may wish to interview stage 1 or stage 2 handlers.

5.7 TGO'C stated that it sounded like the panel would need to interview a lot

AM

of staff, she asked if everyone in the organisation dealt with complaints. SH advised that it was not everyone. It was agreed that a random selection of staff members dealing with stage 2 complaints should be interviewed through a confidential survey.

- 5.8 KE asked to see some stage 2 responses from stage 1 through to the end. SH advised that it appeared from the figures shared with the panel already, that lots of complaints are not upheld at stage 1 or the resident remains unhappy with the outcome, which results in it being escalated to stage 2 and subsequently upheld. Something the panel may wish to explore with staff.
- 5.9 AT commented that it would be good to look at Peabody's process and complaint figures. SH thought they dealt with complaints differently at stage 2 with a dedicated team, adding that this discussion could be arranged.
- 5.10 AK stated that he would like to understand how TCH matches up to the dispute resolution principles on the Housing Ombudsman's website; whether the complaints are fair and the process robust, whether TCH was fixing or shifting the blame, putting things right and lessons learnt. He went on to say that the panel has heard already some of the problems with the complaints process but asked if it was encouraging people to come forward.
- 5.11 SH asked if AK was suggesting carrying out a self-audit to find out if TCH was doing what the policy and procedure says, as well as what the complaint handling code requires. SH continued, clarifying that AK was asking what TCH are doing with the lessons learnt, adding that this might be an area where TCH could do better. SH asked the panel to think about how to tackle this, for instance whether to bring the FIM to another meeting.
- 5.12 StH suggested that the Housing Ombudsman would have picked up if TCH was or wasn't meeting these principles, therefore it could be worth looking at a sample of cases that have been upheld.
- 5.13 SH added she thought that quite a few cases go to the Housing Ombudsman but stated that there was a long wait time for responses, due to the volume it receives. She continued that there are various judgements the Housing Ombudsman can give, and that TCH had received a handful of maladministration judgements, while Peabody had received some severe maladministration judgements.
- 5.14 AM asked if looking at the self-assessment on our website would be a starting point. SH explained to the panel that all social housing providers have to self-assess against the complaint handling code and upload this onto their website. SH agreed that it may be helpful to look at but that a deeper understanding may be needed about how TCH meets the code.
- 5.15 KE asked if there was an alert system, similar to the traffic light one the panel had been shown about damp and mould. SH clarified about whether she meant about communicating with residents during an active case. KE confirmed this, adding that she meant an alert so staff could understand what action they needed to take in each complaint case.

SH

- 5.16 SH stated that she didn't believe there was anything similar, adding that it seemed to be very much down to the complaint handlers to chase outstanding repairs.
- 5.17 KE asked who deals with complaints against third parties. SH said that this should be down to TCH to deal with as we deliver the service, even if was contracted out, but added that it often appears to come down to communication; such as in the examples given when scaffolding needed to go up or down.
- 5.18 TGO'C asked who checks if stage 1 has been done properly. SH advised that this was done by the stage 2 handler. TGO'C acknowledged that handlers must be inundated. She asked what the point of stage 1 complaints was if perhaps handlers expect stage 2 to deal with it. She added that stage 1 handlers should be dealing with and resolving complaints, and that there should be a consequence for not doing so. She noted lessons do not seem to be learnt regarding this. TGO'C suggested if this worked there wouldn't be stage 2 complaints.
- 5.19 SH added that often repair works are ordered to be done at stage 1 and for whatever reason may not get done, so the complaint then goes to stage 2. TGO'C asked at what point it becomes a complaint, SH explained that a case can become a complaint if the resident says they're not happy. TGO'C suggested that there was too much staff resources at stage 2.
- 5.20 AK clarified that a request for a service remains so until a resident says they are not happy even if the repair etc was taking longer than expected. SH advised that sometimes repairs or other works get rebooked at stage 1 but then don't get done which can become complicated. AK gave an example of his own experience of having to rebook/chase a repair since December which he had not escalated into a complaint. SH stated he could easily see how it could escalate, she stated that it would be useful to hear the outcome of this or any complaints from other panel members.
- 5.21 TGO'C stated that she was not a complainer but felt that perhaps she should be, reiterating that if lessons are not being learnt there should be a consequence for this. She added that if lessons are being learnt, what was happening as a result? SH agreed that TCH needs to be showing what has changed, adding that TCH was getting more and more complaints, partly due to increased press coverage of the social housing sector and issues like damp and mould. TGO'C agreed that tenants know more about their rights. SH explained that social housing residents feel more empowered to complain since the Grenfell fire and the death of Awaab Ishak. TGO'C finished by noting that registered providers are not going to get away with the same issues year in and year out.
- 5.22 KE gave an example of when she had raised an issue, changes were made and she received a couple of calls back from the homeownership officer to ask if there were any more problems. She asked if it would be worth speaking to Julia Barnard to see if this was normal service. SH agreed, acknowledging that this was a great example but that there were probably other cases where TCH could do better.

KE

5.23 SH summarised the actions the panel wanted to take next.

6. Meeting with Rosebery scrutiny panel members – Tuesday 12 March 6pm Teams

6.1 SH confirmed the previously mentioned meeting the following week with the Epsom panel to discuss their review of complaints. She added that they had done a huge amount of work on the review but it had not resulted in many recommendations, noting however that it was their first review.

6.2 SH continued that KE and AK had been chosen to meet with the Epsom panel to share information and ask questions, alongside SH and AM. She reminded the panel that Epsom are now reviewing damp and mould and stated they had much to say at the board meeting. SH added that the meeting the following week was only scheduled to be an hour and that information, including some suggested questions to ask, would be put on SharePoint beforehand for KE and AK to review.

SH/AM

6.3 SH asked if the panel may wish to skip the next normal panel meeting at the end of March as it was so close to this one, which had been pushed back. She stated the panel could do research in the meantime, if they hadn't already, and meet next on 30 April. All agreed. SH asked the panel to start to look at other housing associations and local authorities, remembering that they had a legal requirement to present their complaint process in an accessible way on their respective websites.

ALL

6.4 SH asked if the panel wished to do anything else that hadn't already been discussed between now and the April meeting. She stated that they might talk to residents later who had been through the complaints process.

7. AOB

7.1 TGO'C advised that she had seen Katherine (former independent chair of the panel) the previous week and that she had sent her regards and hoped everyone was well.

7.2 SH advised that TCH's CEO Bob Heapy who came to a recent panel meeting was leaving the organisation the following month after around 13 years. TGO'C asked if there was a replacement. SH stated that Colin Lissenden, current Development Director, would take on the role of Managing Director. She added that hopefully Colin would attend a panel meeting in future.

8. Date of next meeting via Teams (Tuesday 30 April 2024 6–7.30pm)

8.1 This had already been discussed earlier under item 6.

8.2 SH noted that it had been a really good meeting. She added that herself and AM would be in touch to organise all the things the panel wanted to do, and also with AK and KE before the following week's meeting with Rosebery scrutiny panel to agree what they wanted to say.

SH/AM