



Scrutiny Panel

Recruitment and information pack

Background

Chorus Homes

Chorus Homes delivers housing and support services to 7,600 homes across Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Essex. We aim to provide high quality homes and services which are responsive to the needs of our residents.

2018 brought an exciting new era for Chorus Homes as an organisation for a number of reasons. In March 2018 we merged with Places for People, one of the UK's largest property management organisations, with a management portfolio of 195,000 homes. The new partnership enables Chorus Homes to increase its new homes and strengthen its financial position to deliver investment in its existing homes and services.

As part of the Places for People Group, Chorus Homes will enhance the services on offer to its customers through access to additional expertise and resources.

Within the Places for People group there are other regulated social landlords such as Derwent Living, Cotman and Castle Rock Edinvar who we will work in partnership with, sharing best practice in all areas of the business, including resident involvement.

Resident Involvement

In May 2018 Chorus Homes created a new Resident Involvement team comprising of a Resident Involvement Manager and a Resident Involvement Officer. The team has analysed Resident Involvement at Chorus Homes and developed a new Resident Involvement Strategy. The strategy sets out all the ways in which we will seek to engage with our customers and involve them in shaping our services, placing customers at the heart of everything we do.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel (RSP) has been set up in order to assist us to improve the customer experience by giving residents an opportunity to have their say. The panel members will analyse business performance and identify areas they would like to review.

A typical review would involve analysis of performance data, interviews with service managers, and focus groups. The service area to be scrutinised and the scope of the review will be set by residents.

We envisage there to be around 12 panel meetings per year, and 3 robust service reviews, each culminating in a RSP report with recommendations to our Senior Leadership team and Board.

Member benefits

As a valued panel member, we will support you with any training needs you may have and reimburse reasonable expenses, for example travel to and from meetings. We want you to feel part of our resident involvement team and Chorus Homes.

Scrutiny Panel Member application form

Thank you for registering an interest in becoming a member of the resident scrutiny panel of Chorus Homes Group.

This application form asks for details of relevant experience and knowledge that you may have. Please read the Panel Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and role description before completing this application.

If you require any additional information or advice on completing the form, contact either Jane Temple or Joel Atkins on [0345 2669760](tel:03452669760) or email getinvolved@chorushomesgroup.org.uk

Your details

Title: First name: Surname:

Address:

Phone: Email:

Are you currently involved with Chorus Homes group in any resident involvement activities?	Yes/No
	If yes, please give details
What are your current and future plans? We may be able to help through targeted training	

<p>Do you have any formal qualifications?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
	<p>If yes, what is your highest level qualification?</p>
<p>Why do you want to become a member of the resident scrutiny team?</p>	
<p>How would your involvement benefit you and Chorus Homes Group?</p>	
<p>From reading the role description what skills and experience would you bring to the team?</p>	
<p>Would you be willing to take part in training to increase your skills and knowledge?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Do you have any particular support needs we need to cater for?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
	<p>If yes, please give details</p>
<p>Any additional comments to support your application:</p>	

Role Description

Chorus Homes Group aims to encourage residents to be involved in the Resident Scrutiny Team, so has produced this role description as an aid for members.

Members are required to:

- Act in the best interests of Chorus Homes Group and the wider resident group Respect and preserve the confidentiality of any information received whilst involved in the RSP
- Participate in one to one meetings on a six monthly basis with RI manager or RI Officer to discuss relevant topics and aid personal development
- Keep informed of wider developments in social housing
- Attend ad-hoc meetings as required in addition to the usual work plan, depending on members availability
- Complete tasks as required and identified within the review, to contribute to carrying out reviews and completing reports
- Complete tasks within timescales to ensure reviews are completed to deadlines Personally uphold the SPIRIT values of the organisation and to observe all codes of conduct relevant to the role
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Promote equality and diversity within Chorus Homes Group
- Have experience of or willing to learn basic IT skills

Members may be required to:

- Attend appropriate training courses as required, as well as identify any training that may help members in their role

Skills and Abilities

- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Team working and networking skills
- An appreciation of current issues in social housing or a public sector environment
- Ability to focus on the current task
- Ability to consider issues and problems
- Ability to form objective views based on evidence
- Ability to analyse information and opinions and, when necessary, challenge constructively
- Ability to actively listen at meetings
- Ability to ask open questions
- Willingness to learn and develop any of above

Personal Qualities

- Supports and upholds the SPIRIT values, aims and objectives of Chorus Homes Group
- Confidence, enthusiasm and drive to implement change
- Respects others attitudes, beliefs and traditions
- Integrity, honesty and objectivity
- Well organised and reliable

- Commitment to resident involvement
- Commitment to personal learning and development

Fees and Expenses

All customers are entitled to claim any reasonable out of pocket travel expenses related to their involvement activities. There is a fuel allowance for journeys made in customers' personal vehicles of 45p per mile. Any expenses claimed through the use of public transport, taxis or parking fees etc, must be supported with evidence of receipts/proof of purchase.

Confidentiality

All information acquired during your participation in the RSP should be treated as confidential unless stated otherwise, including after your membership has ceased.

Continuous Improvement

This role description indicates the current role. However, as the organisation develops gradual changes may occur. The above list is not exhaustive, and members are not expected to meet all criteria within skills and abilities, and personal qualities. A willingness to learn and enthusiasm to make positive changes are welcomed within the Resident Scrutiny Panel.

Spirit Values

SPIRIT is a set of values and behaviours that describe how we enhance our experience of working together with our colleagues, customers and stakeholders. Initially created by our work force, the values within this mnemonic influence and govern the decisions we make every day.

- **Support** - always there to help customers and colleagues
- **Positive** - a 'can do' attitude; encourages others to achieve
- **Integrity** - always delivers on promises; is open and honest
- **Respect** - treats people fairly and with understanding
- **Innovative** - open to new ideas; not afraid of failure
- **Together** - achieve more by working well with others

Terms of Reference of the Resident Scrutiny Panel

Purpose & Role of the Resident Scrutiny Panel

The involvement of residents in scrutinising services ensures that services meet the needs of customers, ensures best value for money, and strives for continuous improvement.

The role of the RSP is to assess Chorus Homes Group performance and delivery of key services. Identifying areas for improvement and highlighting aspects of good practice.

The RSP will do this by:

- Identifying service areas to review by looking at key performance indicators, customer satisfaction and meeting with staff from Chorus Homes Group
- Devising an annual work plan for the service areas to be reviewed
- Looking at benchmarking information on performance, costs and delivery with other similar providers
- Consulting with and surveying the wider customer group where appropriate and taking into account responses and findings
- Producing comprehensive reports, detailing how reviews have been carried out, including evidence for recommendations for improvements
- Meeting with members of the Senior Leadership Team and making recommendations for improvements or highlighting good practice, as detailed within their report.

Chorus Homes Group will:

- Facilitate meetings of the RSP, collating appropriate resources or arranging interviews with staff, as well as assisting with consulting with other residents
- Identify training, development and support for the RSP
- Provide access to necessary IT or other equipment to assist the RSP in carrying out their role
- Monitor the progress of recommendations made within RSP reviews, and provide regular updates to the RSP

Membership of the RSP

All residents and customers of Chorus Homes Group are eligible for membership, providing that they meet the following criteria:

- They are a tenant, joint tenant, leaseholder or shared owner of Chorus Homes Group
- They are not currently in rent arrears or must be adhering to an arrears repayment plan
- They do not have a valid Anti-social Behaviour Notice in place

Non-residents may be eligible to join the RSP providing that they have been recruited to the RSP by agreement from current members and their membership is in the interest of the RST rather than for personal gains.

Meetings of the RSP

Frequency

At the start of each calendar year, with support from the Resident Involvement team, provisional dates will be set for key meetings within each 3-4 month review period. These meetings will be with the agreement of the RSP, and are not exhaustive. Additional meetings will be arranged as needed and with agreement of the RSP.

An annual review plan, including details of the areas for review, and meeting dates and deadlines will be produced by the Resident Involvement team for reference.

Unless a particular review calls for it, it is not expected that the RSP will need to meet any more

frequently than on a monthly basis.

Voting

Should a decision require the need for a vote to take place:

- Voting shall be by simple majority by show of hands, unless otherwise requested that it is carried out privately.
- Voting members may request that their votes be recorded.

Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and conflicts of interest

The RSP shall adhere to the Code of Conduct, which applies to involvement in any forums, meetings, panels, activities etc.

All information acquired by RSP is confidential to Chorus Homes Group and should not be shared outside of the RSP.

RSP members should avoid situations where their duty to the RSP and their personal interests conflict or might conflict. These interests should be declared as soon as possible and RSP members may need to withdraw from reviews as appropriate.

Annual Work Programme

The RSP will agree an annual work plan for scrutiny reviews following consultation with staff and residents, and consideration of Key Performance and satisfaction information.

The RSP may wish to review an area not originally included in the annual work plan; the reasons for this should be discussed with the Resident Involvement Team before any additional review can take place.

The RSP may be asked by Chorus Homes Group to consider a specific review in their work programme. Reasons for this will be given, and the RSP will be asked to make a decision on this request.

Method of Scrutiny

The RSP will conduct scrutiny reviews using a specific process in order to gather the most appropriate evidence to support their reviews, and be able to produce comprehensive reports with sound recommendations.

In order to carry out their reviews, the RSP is given access to;

- Information from any member of Chorus Homes staff related to the review service area. This may be in the form of interviews or submitted questions, or documentation and examples of work.
- Site visits to appropriate schemes or areas that would further enhance the
- review.

- Consultation with the wider resident group, through conducting surveys or focus groups, as facilitated by the Resident Involvement team. Any additional resources or information that the RSP feel will be beneficial to their review, so long as it can be realistically provided by the Resident Involvement team.

Scrutiny Process

The process for carrying out a scrutiny review is flexible depending on the area for review, the approach of the RSP and the timescale for completing the review. However, successful scrutiny reviews follow a consistent process that ensures reviews are comprehensively carried out and realistic, evidence-based recommendations are made.

Typically, a review follows this process:



Scoping meeting – initial meeting to discuss the next review. Using a scoping document to identify what should be included in the review, the main objectives and any appropriate resources required. This meeting may involve discussion with the appropriate manager.

Initial findings meeting with responsible manager – present initial findings to appropriate manager for service area, discuss recommendations and make any necessary amendments before the final report is submitted.

Report to responsible manager – report submitted to manager of service area under review via the Resident Involvement team.

Report submitted to Senior Leadership Team – report sent to Senior Leadership Team for review before presented to next meeting.

Present to SLT – RSP member with RI Team attends meeting of Senior Leadership Team to discuss review and recommendations, answer any relevant questions and discuss how recommendations have been made.

Once the review is complete and has been presented to the Senior leadership Team, an action plan is produced by the Resident Involvement team

The action plan allows the RSP the opportunity to monitor the progress of recommendations against set timescales. The RSP will be provided with regular, appropriate updates of action plan progress.

On completion of the current review, the work plan is then referred back to for the next review area and planned dates. The subsequent review begins in due course.

Simple Code of Conduct for meetings

Customers taking part in approved Chorus Homes Group events and activities are expected to observe this simple code of conduct. We want to ensure that everyone feels comfortable taking part in the meeting and that we are able to conduct business in a courteous and effective way.

- All members shall listen to the views of others and respect their views and opinions
- No discriminatory remarks will be accepted and should not be made
- No abusive or offensive language will be used
- No personal remarks will be made
- At meetings members will speak one at a time when indicated by the Chair or Facilitator
- All members shall accept the authority of the Chair or Facilitator A member contravening the code of conduct or demonstrating serious
- misconduct may be temporarily or permanently excluded from future meetings and activities

Panel Code of Conduct

1. What is a code of conduct?

The code of conduct describes the way that volunteers are expected to carry out their duties as part of the resident involvement structure, by supporting positive and inclusive behaviours.

2. Why have a code of conduct?

The code sets out how volunteers are expected to conduct themselves, not only in meetings but also in other situations where they may be representing the scrutiny panel or their community.

The code of conduct should be adhered to in full by all members of the Resident Scrutiny Panel when carrying out activities on behalf of the panel.

The code enables Chorus Homes employees, or volunteers, to ask volunteers that do not keep to the code to leave the meeting, or if the breach is persistent, to exclude the individual from attending further resident involvement activities.

3. Confidentiality

Volunteers should respect residents/Chorus Homes employees confidentiality, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific individual cases which may be considered slanderous, or cause embarrassment to another individual. Any information or items shared with Chorus Homes that are of a confidential nature must not be disclosed to anyone else, apart from members of the panel in order to allow the business of the meeting to take place.

4. Conflict of interests

Volunteers will not use their position in any resident involvement structure to bypass Chorus Homes procedures for personal gain. Volunteers must declare if they have personal and/or prejudicial interests and must accept that they may not be able to speak or may be asked to leave the meeting while such discussions take place, in order to maintain objectivity in decision making.

Individual volunteers:

- a. Must not expect to receive more or less favourable treatment by staff because of their status as a volunteer in any of the resident involvement structures
- b. Must use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, complaints etc.

5. Equal opportunities

Volunteers should accept that they work for the benefit of all individual residents, irrespective of race, age, sexual orientation, class, disability, gender, religious beliefs, trans status, nationality or ethnic origin.

Volunteers shall not discriminate on any of the above grounds against any other volunteer, Chorus Homes Employee or resident. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions.

Volunteers must eliminate all types of negative discrimination in the way they work, and actively promote equality of opportunity.

6. Respect for others

Volunteers should recognise and respect that some individuals may have more time to participate than others. Volunteers should treat everyone with consideration, and respect their contributions to the resident involvement process. Any difficulties experienced in performing allocated tasks should be discussed and resolved.

Volunteers should respect the resident involvement structure and support all decisions taken by it.

7. Differences of opinion and conflict

Freedom of speech and expression should be encouraged and welcomed. However, differences of opinion are bound to occur from time to time. Volunteers should recognise this and respect differing views. They should be prepared to talk the differences through and accept majority decisions made after discussion. Differences should not be allowed to become personal (with the exception of disciplinary matters).

Volunteers should be of a like mind and share the same overall values and objectives. Volunteers must not deviate from the general direction of the group and must share the corporate SPIRIT values.

8. Team work

Volunteers participating in a specific resident involvement meeting group structure should take responsibility for the progress of their working group. Contributions should be welcomed from all members, old and new, or where circumstances make them less active in the group.

Partnership working with Chorus Homes employees or other invited guests is essential along with mutual respect being maintained at all times. Volunteers must not damage the reputation of other individuals (volunteers or Chorus Homes employees) by giving personal opinions as to capabilities.

9. Reliability

Volunteers should always try to deliver on their promises, and not let fellow members and the group down. If this proves impossible they should let their working group know as soon as possible.

10. Public relations

Articles may only be submitted to the press on behalf of a particular resident involvement group structure if discussed, agreed and recorded at an official group meeting. Volunteers submitting personal/private articles to the press must state clearly that the article is 'their own opinion'. The article must not intend to damage or bring into disrepute the reputation of any resident involvement group structure.

11. Political affiliation

Individual members may be affiliated to or be members of a political party but they cannot represent a political party in their voluntary role.

12. Conduct at meetings

All volunteers will have equal status at meetings. Volunteers should at all times observe accepted codes of practice and procedures whilst taking part in meetings and operate within the rules laid down in the terms of reference.

- The Chair should facilitate the meeting and not act as dominant spokesperson
- The Chair should ensure that no one individual dominates the meeting and that issues relevant to the current agenda item only are discussed.
- Only one member should speak at a time and there should be no cross talking
- When a member raises a topic that creates a personal and/or prejudicial conflict of interest, the Chair must bring that person to order
- Meetings must start at the stated time and abide by the agenda
- Mobile phones must be silenced before meetings start (exceptions can be arranged through the Chair)
- Jargon must be avoided wherever possible. If it is used then a full explanation should be given
- It is the responsibility of each member to ensure they are prepared for the meeting by reading all the relevant papers and bringing them to the meeting

13. Terms of reference/constitution

All volunteers should familiarise themselves with the Terms of Reference to ensure they continue to meet its aims and objectives.

14. Breaches of the code of conduct

At Meetings

At meetings, the Resident Involvement manager, together with the Chair of the group will be responsible for taking decisions on any breach of the code of conduct (with the support of the majority of members in attendance).

If a member of the group does not abide by the code of conduct, the Resident Involvement manager, Chair (vice chair or nominated person where relevant) will warn that if the individual breaks the code again they may be asked to leave the meeting.

The Resident Involvement manager, Chair (vice chair or nominated person where relevant) may give the panel member two further warnings, a maximum of three warnings in any one meeting, and or three consecutive meetings.

If the member continues to ignore the code then the Resident Involvement manager, Chair (vice chair or nominated person where relevant) will ask the individual to leave the meeting.

The RI Manager shall investigate all breaches of the code that are subject to the complaint. The RI team will:

- a. Write to the individual detailing the nature of the concerns and any complaint received
- b. Arrange a meeting with the individual to discuss the issues raised in the letter and to advise on the expected future conduct of the individual and any actions required to support the individual (e.g. to undertake training)
- c. Outline the consequences for the individual should unacceptable behaviour or actions continue

Outcomes

The emphasis shall be on training to ensure that breach does not re-occur, however other actions include:

- a. A warning letter from the Housing Services manager stating that a repeat could result in the individual being excluded from participating in resident involvement activities
- b. Suspension from attending meetings for a period of three months
- c. In extreme or repeat cases, volunteer status could be revoked permanently.
- d. If the volunteer breaches the code during the six month probationary period, then he/she will be subject to immediate suspension pending investigation, which may result in a further suspension or a permanent exclusion from Chorus Homes resident involvement activities. If Chorus Homes Group has commenced legal action against a panel member, Chorus Homes Group may advise the volunteer that they will be suspended from all resident involvement activities until the outcome of the legal action is known.

Right of Appeal

Panel Members have a right of appeal and should do so verbally or in writing to the Neighbourhood Services Manager immediately or within 14 days of notification of action to be

taken. An investigating officer will then be appointed by Neighbourhood Services to re-investigate the case. Following the investigation, Chorus Homes Group Operations Director will decide if the appeal is upheld.

15. Continuous improvements to the code of practice

It is expected that this code of practice will continue to develop to reflect best practice. The code will be reviewed periodically by the Resident involvement team. Changes to the code shall be notified in writing to all relevant volunteers who shall be required to accept such changes.