

## Terms of Reference



### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The aim of the Tenants' Voice is a co-production forum whereby tenants and Board Members work together to challenge, scrutinise, and review services from a customer focused perspective in line with consumer standards and legislation. It will provide a direct link into the TRH Group Board as part of TRH's governance structure.
- 1.2 It will:
  - Hold Two Rivers Housing (TRH) Group to account, ensuring that customers' experiences are influencing service design and delivery through recommendations made.
  - Create a line of accountability between customers and the TRH Group Board and complement existing engagement activities by strengthening the links between customer involvement and governance and helping to ensure that TRH's strategic direction in service delivery reflects the needs and aspirations of its customers.
  - Provide the TRH Group Board with a valuable and significant part of its assurance framework considering that consumer standards are being met and that value for money is being achieved in service delivery to all TRH customers.
  - Demonstrate that customer influence is a high priority and contribute to effective co-regulation.
- 1.3 It will oversee the service review functions and performance in relation to satisfaction and scrutiny; reporting findings and recommendations into the TRH Group Board for informing decisions, assurance, and accountability.
- 1.4 The key function of the Tenants' Voice is to establish a clear connection between the lived experiences of tenants and the insight into customer experience obtained by the organisation through other means including, but not limited to, transactional surveys, customer feedback, feedback via social media, feedback at events, feedback during staff conversations, via the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's), complaints and compliments and performance data.
- 1.5 It will act on insight it might receive through formal channels, and to proactively gather insight from the wider tenant base to help it to provide an evidence-based challenge in line with TRH's engagement framework. For e.g. Tenant Inspectors, local priorities, focus groups, closed Facebook group and/or recommendations from the scrutiny function.

- 1.6 The Tenants' Voice is not a consultative or a passive body and should provide the TRH Group Board with assurance that tenants are able to influence decisions and service improvement.
- 1.7 It will help set priorities for customer engagement related budgets.
- 1.8 It will monitor compliance with consumer standards/regulatory requirements and develop a relationship with both TRH's named responsible person and the Board Member Responsible for Complaints.
- 1.9 It will monitor housing compliance with relevant legislation and health & safety standards.
- 1.10 It will set its annual review schedule, oversee in-depth reviews of activities and operations affecting tenants and make recommendations from the accompanying findings to help develop service improvement action plans. It will also receive update reports and monitor progress where appropriate.

## **2. Membership**

- 2.1 The group will have a maximum of eleven members. This will consist of eight tenant members (tenants, shared owners or leaseholders), plus up to three Board members which may include the designated Board Member Responsible for Complaints and two further nominated Board Member representatives (from TRH Group Board or Centigen).
- 2.2 At all times, tenant members must hold the majority membership. In addition, up to two co-optees may be appointed as required for their specialist skills and experience, and to support effective succession planning. Co-optees shall not have voting rights nor shall their number or their presence at a meeting be included in the calculation of a quorum.
- 2.3 Any TRH tenant (or a household member living at the property full-time for over 12 months above the age of 16), shared owner or leaseholder is eligible to join the Tenants Voice provided that they are not:
  - A current employee of the Two Rivers Housing Group.
  - In breach of their tenancy/lease conditions. Examples of types of breaches include those who:
    - Have a notice seeking possession in place for breach of tenancy.
    - Are subject to any anti-social behaviour order.
  - Subject to a possession order or a suspended possession order or living with a tenant who is subject to a possession or suspended possession order.

If a member breaches any of the conditions listed above, they may be suspended from the Tenants' Voice until the situation is resolved.

- 2.4 Members of staff and/or appropriate visitors will be invited to attend meetings as required to gain clarity of the service and its delivery.

- 2.5 Prospective new members may be invited as observers to a Tenants' Voice meeting and will be supported by the community engagement team.
- 2.6 Members will be offered training to enable them to fully participate in the groups' tasks, training will be provided by skilled TRH staff or from outside agencies.
- 2.7 Approved expenses incurred carrying out Tenants' Voice duties will be paid by TRH. The relevant forms will be required to process expense claims.
- 2.8 Tenant members will be entitled to vouchers for each eligible meeting attended.

### **3. Recruitment**

- 3.1 Tenant Voice members will be recruited from those tenants eligible to apply and will be subject to an application and interview process.
- 3.2 The Group Board will nominate the relevant Board representatives from either the Group Board or Centigen board.

### **4. Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair**

- 4.1 A Chair and a Vice Chair will be elected by members at the first meeting. This will then take place annually at the first meeting of the new financial year (so after the 1<sup>st</sup> April, annually). The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair will be 12 months. This may be extended (to a maximum of three further years) if this is in the interest of the group.
- 4.2 Only tenant members can be appointed to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair.

### **5. Terms of Office**

- 5.1 All members of the Tenants' Voice are appointed for a period of two years. No member will be permitted to serve more than three terms of two years. Re-appointment at the end of the term is not automatic but follows the protocol for re-appointment conducted by the TRH Group. When considering such re-appointments, the Chair will evaluate the balance of the group, use feedback from the annual appraisal process including individual members' attendance, contributions and commitment to the Tenants' Voice.

### **6. Quorum**

- 6.1 The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be five members, with the total composition of tenants exceeding that of Board Members. At least one Board Member should be in attendance at every meeting.

### **7. Meetings**

- 7.1 The minimum requirement for meetings is four times a year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair for task and finish groups or scrutiny planning, as

deemed appropriate. Meetings shall be convened by written notice (or electronic means) and the agenda sent to every member not less than seven days before the date of the meeting. Additional special meetings and away days will also be arranged as required.

- 7.2 Apologies for absence should be notified to the Community Engagement Team at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. If a member cannot attend a meeting, where possible, they should provide feedback regarding information circulated prior to the meeting. A member who misses three meetings without notice, will be assumed to have resigned, unless there are special circumstances of which the Chair will have been made aware.
- 7.3 The business of the meeting shall be limited to items on the agenda and any items accepted by the Chair under any other business.
- 7.4 Members will adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct throughout their membership and after termination as specified within the Code of Conduct.
- 7.5 Members will declare any conflict of interest in any subject, either prior to or at the meeting, as specified within the Code of Conduct.
- 7.6 The group will aim to reach a decision by consensus. If this is not possible, each member shall have one vote on a motion (excluding co-opted members). A straight majority shall decide all decisions and in the case of a tied decision, the Chair should cast the deciding vote.

## 8. **Task and Finish Groups**

- 8.1 At various times it may be necessary for the Tenants' Voice to convene working groups for a particular purpose. The majority of these will be short term of a task and finish nature. The method used for holding these meetings will be agreed on a case by-case basis, e.g., face to face or virtual.
- 8.2 The Tenants' Voice group will work with the Two Rivers Housing Community Engagement team to agree the makeup of the Task and Finish Groups and the expected scope of the piece of work. To ensure a fair balance of representation, the level of interest from the customer engagement structures or from the wider customer base will be considered.
- 8.3 The scope of any Task and Finish group will be agreed on and recorded at a Tenants' Voice meeting.
- 8.4 A representative from each Task and Finish group will give present back to the Tenants' Voice on the groups findings periodically. The Tenants' Voice Group will use the findings to inform their decisions and recommendations to the Group Board.

## 9. **Confidentiality**

- 9.1 All information should be treated as confidential unless there's a clear reason to share it more widely. Members should not share information about employees' or customers' personal identities or circumstances. If in doubt about whether something is confidential or not, members should clarify with the Chair.
- Information will be managed in line with our IT Policy and shouldn't be discussed outside of the Tenants Voice or involved employees.
  - If members come across something that they find worrying, for example fraud or seriously undesirable behaviour, they must tell the Chair who will refer it to the TRH Chief Executive or Head of HR & Governance.

## **10. Accountability**

- 10.1 Members are always expected to act in the best interests of tenants and TRH.
- 10.2 Members are expected to ensure when considering TRH's affairs that these are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance and probity.

## **11. Budget**

- 11.1 The Tenants' Voice Group will also have a dedicated budget to procure any specialist, independent advice which may assist it with its aims and objectives.

## **12. Other issues**

- 12.1 Disputes between members will be dealt with as a Code of Conduct matter.
- 12.2 The Chair of the Tenants Voice will report to the Group Board on key issues at the next Board meeting following each Tenants' Voice meeting.
- 12.3 The TRH Group Board has the right to accept or reject suggestions made by the Tenants Voice. In the event of there being dissatisfaction with a TRH Group Board decision, the Tenants' Voice may present its concerns formally to the TRH Group Board for a formal response.

## **13. Terms of Reference Review**

- 13.1 The terms of reference will be reviewed every two years. The Tenants' Voice shall not be precluded by the above provision from recommending changes to its Terms of Reference to the Senior Business Partner, Engagement & Coregulation, at any time that it considers a change to be necessary or appropriate.