

THE 10TH NATIONAL
**TENANT
PANELS** CONFERENCE

Welcome and Introduction from the Chair

Liz Haworth, Chief Executive, Halton Housing Group

Consumer Regulation Update

Jonathan Walters, Deputy Chief Executive, Regulator of Social Housing



Regulator of
Social Housing

The Social Housing White Paper

NHC Tenants Meeting

Jonathan Walters

Deputy Chief Executive

January 2021



Today's session

- Overview of the White Paper
- What is the current position for Consumer Regulation?
- What might change?

Overview of the government's social housing white paper

Government's new charter sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect. It sets out commitments to:

1. Safety in the home
2. Transparency on landlord performance
3. Prompt and fair handling of resident complaints
4. Tenants treated with respect
5. Strengthened resident engagement
6. Good quality homes and neighbourhoods
7. Better access to ownership opportunities for social housing tenants

► Backed by proactive consumer regulation

A new Charter for social housing residents

1. **To be safe in your home.** We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The Government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

What is the current position for consumer regulation?

The current system

- Since 2010, the RSH has set high level, outcome focussed standards that social landlords need to meet.
- These fall into two categories:
 - Economic standards – that only apply to non-Local Authority landlords only (apart from rent levels)
 - Consumer standards – that apply to Local Authority, Housing Associations and for-profit social landlords
- However, the legislation and ministerial directions mean we have to regulate them differently:
 - Economic standards we are required to regulate proactively
 - Consumer standards we are required to be reactive in our approach
- In all cases we need to be assurance based, co-regulatory, proportionate, reasonable and minimise interference!

Our consumer standards

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

- Customer service, choice and complaints
- Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding the diverse needs of tenants

Home Standard

- Quality of accommodation (DHS)
- Repairs and maintenance

Tenancy Standard

- Allocations and mutual exchange
- Tenure

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

- Neighbourhood management
- Local area co-operation
- ASB

Consumer regulation approach

- Our role does not currently include systematically assessing all providers' compliance on consumer standards
- We **do not have a role** in resolving individual disputes between landlords and tenants

BUT this does not mean we don't do consumer regulation!!

- All referrals are looked at and considered
- Sifted and where not within remit eg not social housing they are signposted
- Referrals from tenants, MPs, third parties as well as internal referrals from colleagues engaging with providers and from media / high profile cases
- Consumer Regulation Panel (CRP) meets weekly and considers case notes
- Focus on whether there is evidence of a systemic failure by a provider
- Take action where we judge that there has been a breach of a consumer standard which has caused or could cause serious detriment.
- Regulatory engagement, feedback and links to governance

What might change and why?

The overall system for social housing tenants

- The White Paper and Building Safety legislation are introducing changes that will have a big impact on social housing for both tenants and landlords. These include:
 - An enhanced role for the Housing Ombudsman
 - The creation of the Building Safety Regulator (for all properties not just social housing)
 - A proactive consumer regulation role for the RSH
 - Increased expectations on the RSH with regards to Safety and Transparency from landlords
 - A refreshed Decent Homes Standards
 - Increased expectations on social landlords
 - Right to information for social housing tenants not covered by Freedom of Information
- The reforms are also truly cross domain, for all Registered Providers, Local Authorities, Housing Associations and For Profit Social Landlords.
- They are designed to ensure that Social Housing Tenants are listened to and treated with respect by their landlords, that the quality of service is increased and that tenants can feel safe in their homes.

So, what is the role of the Regulator of Social Housing in the new system?

We will introduce proactive consumer regulation

- We will retain co-regulatory principle
- We will continue to be proportionate, risk-based, assurance-based and outcome focused

The White Paper sets out some elements of a proactive consumer regime

- Remove serious detriment test – requires primary legislation
- Annual desktop reviews to identify landlords at risk of systemic non-compliance
- Routine assurance-based inspections on consumer standards compliance for all large providers (including LAs) at least every 4 years
- Reactive inspections/investigations where appropriate
- RSH to publish findings of inspections where we find non-compliance



Regulator of
Social Housing

Regulating the Standards

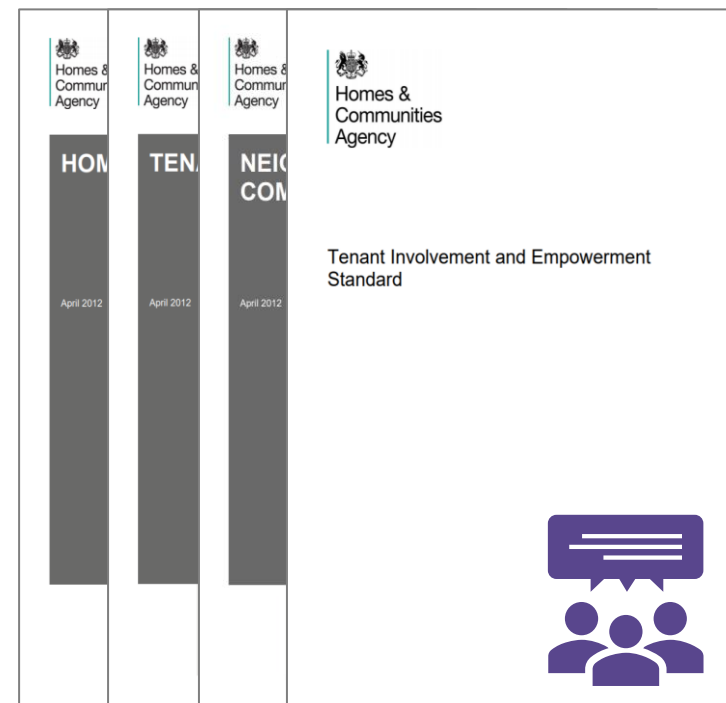


OFFICIAL

We will review our consumer standards

The White paper sets out areas to include as we review our consumer standards

- Tenant satisfaction measures
- RPs to show how they have considered ways to improve tenant engagement
- Access to information regime
- RPs to have responsible person for:
 - Health and safety (to be legislated for)
 - Compliance with consumer standards
- LAs required to self-refer non-compliance to RSH
- New decent homes standard – Government to review
- RP role in tackling domestic abuse
- ▶ **We will work closely with stakeholders on our review**



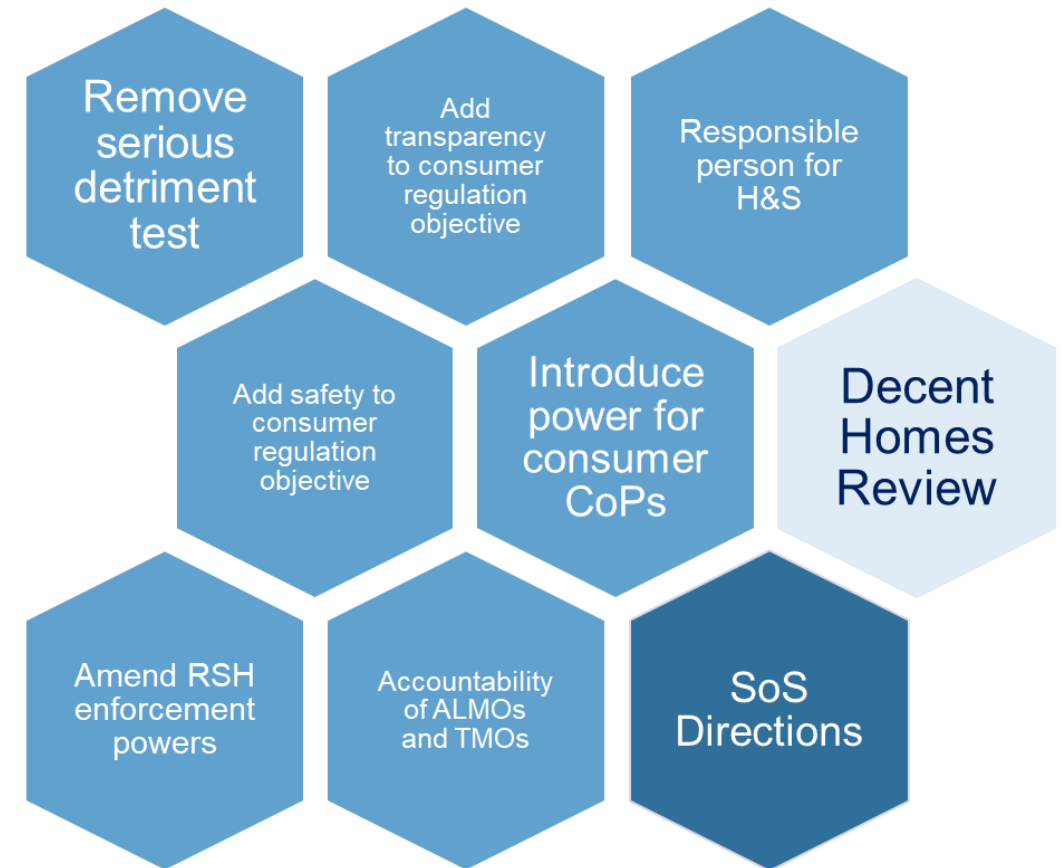
The White Paper sets out other changes to strengthen regulation

- New enforcement powers for RSH
 - Performance improvement plans
 - Reduced notice period (from 28 to 2 days) for surveys
 - Following survey new emergency repairs power
 - Enable RSH staff to carry out inspections
 - Removing the cap on the level of fines we can issue
 - Introduce a 'look through' power
- Legislative measures to improve accountability of ALMOs and TMOs
- Legislative requirements on RSH relationship with Building Safety Regulator and Housing Ombudsman
- Economic regulation measures in legislation
 - Tighten definition of 'not for profit'
 - Require landlords to notify the RSH when there is a change in control

The Social Housing White Paper will take time to implement

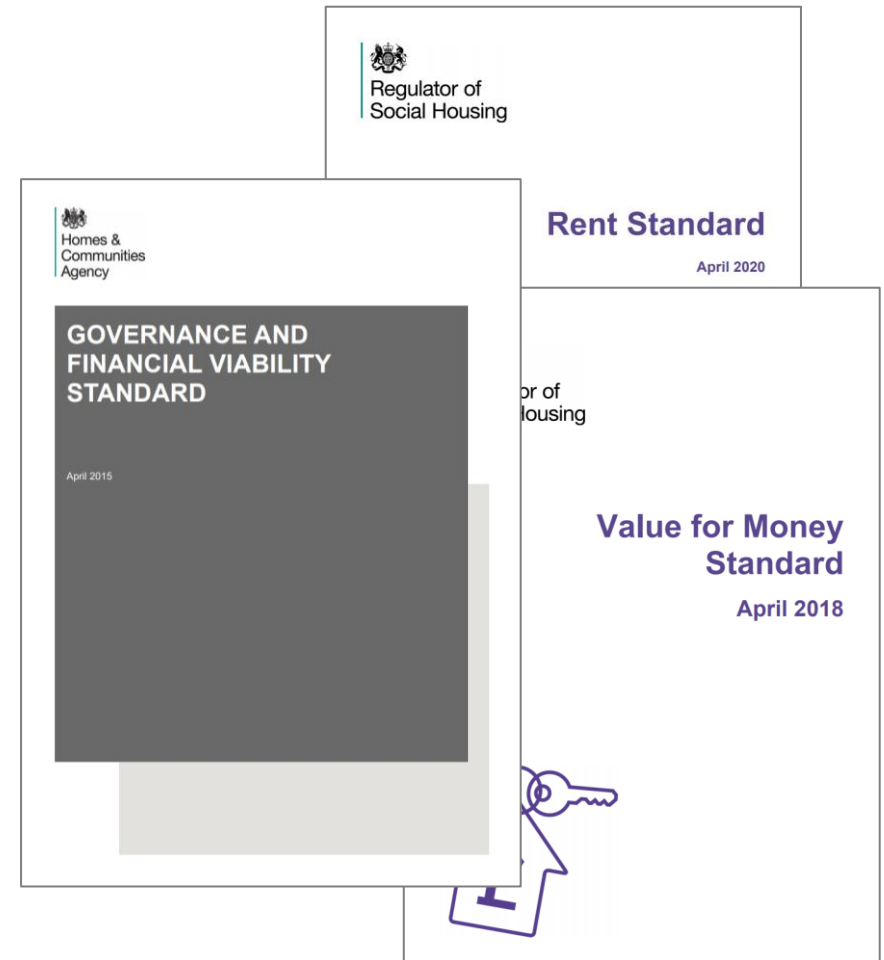
- There are a number of building blocks that will need to be in place before we can implement changes set out in the White Paper, including:
 - Primary legislation
 - SoS Directions to RSH
 - Consultation
- As a result, there won't be change overnight
- We will work closely with stakeholders throughout this period

Government will need to introduce legislation
(among other things)



And finally...economic regulation will remain a core focus

- Economic regulation is crucial to our role and will remain so even when our consumer regulation role expands
- Good governance and financial viability are key to providers' success
- This includes ensuring that tenants' homes and services are of a good standard



Questions?

Together with Tenants Charter

Fleur Priest-Stephens, Policy Leader, National Housing Federation

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Together with Tenants: Roll out

Winter 2020/21

#togetherwithtenants
www.housing.org.uk/tenants

Developing Together with Tenants

- Development started in 2018 in the context of questions arising at the time around accountability and trust between residents and landlords
- Consultation with 500 people, including residents and members
- Online consultation attracted 2500 responses, 80% from residents
- Established the Together with Tenants plan
- Guided by member steering group and Tenant Advisory Panel

[#togetherwithtenants](https://www.housing.org.uk/tenants)
www.housing.org.uk/tenants



Our four-point plan

1. A new requirement in the National Housing Federation Code of Governance for boards to be accountable to their tenants and residents
2. A new Together with Tenants Charter
3. Tenant and resident oversight and reporting of progress against the Charter
4. Giving tenants and residents a stronger collective voice with the regulator

[#togetherwithtenants](https://www.housing.org.uk/tenants)
www.housing.org.uk/tenants



1. NHF Code of Governance

- Sets out clear requirements of housing associations for high standards of governance.
- 2015 code widely adopted across the sector by organisations of all sizes.
- Those adopting the code must report annually on their compliance.
- Carries legal weight for registered providers of social housing

How we re-wrote the Code

- We've undertaken an inclusive, open, and wide-reaching process:
- The consultation took place over three phases:
- An open consultation on the core principles framing the code
- A collaborative drafting process.
- A final consultation on the draft code.
- An advisory group of experts, residents and board members tested our thinking throughout.
- Authored by Stephen Bull, Ceri-Victory Rowe and James Tickell, all of Campbell Tickell.

The Code

New content with new requirements and more emphasis on:

- Accountability to residents and other customers
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Health and safety
- Environmental and wider sustainability
- Organisational culture
- Reputation and trust

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www.housing.org.uk/tenants

together 
with **tenants**

The Code

- Seeks to provide ‘stretch’ for organisations
- One code for whole sector – but flexible to adapt to diversity of organisations
- Not a governance handbook – a framework to achieve a baseline for excellent governance.
- Uses ‘comply or explain’ approach
- The Code is accompanied by guidance on how to comply that includes a compliance checklist and a ‘what’s new’ section

2. Together with Tenants Charter

1. Relationships
2. Communication
3. Voice and Influence
4. Accountability
5. Quality
6. When things go wrong

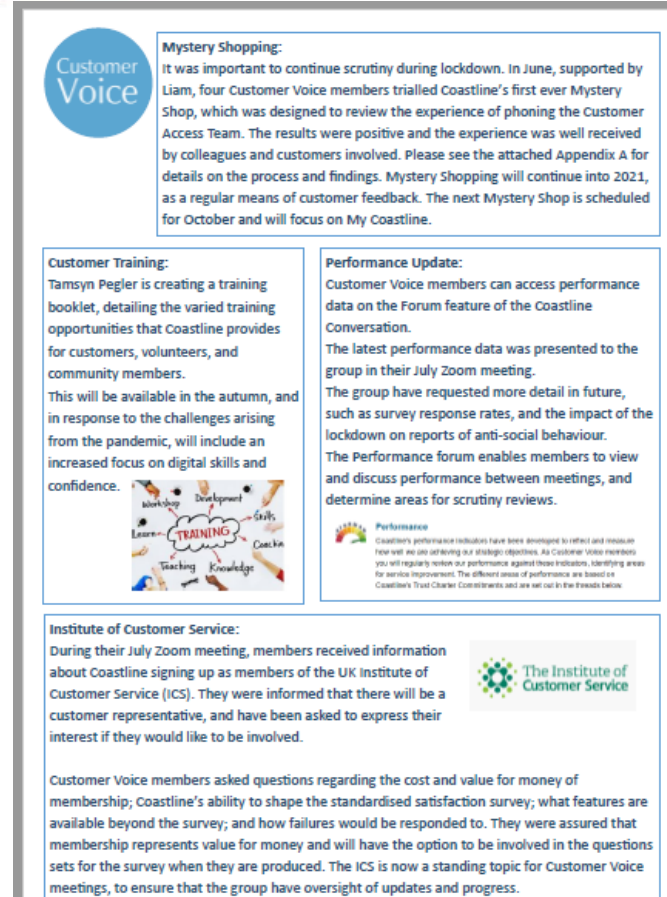
Tested over 12 months with 130 NHF members and their residents

3. Testing the plan and charter

- Mapped the journey of 130 early adopters as they implemented the charter (report on our website)
- Used their feedback to develop resources to support roll-out to the wider sector
- Tested the charter for flexibility and to ensure it was applicable across all of our members
- Collected a range of practice examples

Early adopter: Coastline

- Developed a Trust Charter with residents
- Replaced Customer Scrutiny Committee of 12 with Customer Experience panel of 60 – reflective of customer demographics and all online
- More accessible board meetings and papers



Customer Voice

Mystery Shopping:
It was important to continue scrutiny during lockdown. In June, supported by Liam, four Customer Voice members trialled Coastline's first ever Mystery Shop, which was designed to review the experience of phoning the Customer Access Team. The results were positive and the experience was well received by colleagues and customers involved. Please see the attached Appendix A for details on the process and findings. Mystery Shopping will continue into 2021, as a regular means of customer feedback. The next Mystery Shop is scheduled for October and will focus on My Coastline.

Customer Training:
Tamsyn Pegler is creating a training booklet, detailing the varied training opportunities that Coastline provides for customers, volunteers, and community members. This will be available in the autumn, and in response to the challenges arising from the pandemic, will include an increased focus on digital skills and confidence.

Performance Update:
Customer Voice members can access performance data on the Forum feature of the Coastline Conversation. The latest performance data was presented to the group in their July Zoom meeting. The group have requested more detail in future, such as survey response rates, and the impact of the lockdown on reports of anti-social behaviour. The Performance forum enables members to view and discuss performance between meetings, and determine areas for scrutiny reviews.

Institute of Customer Service:
During their July Zoom meeting, members received information about Coastline signing up as members of the UK Institute of Customer Service (ICS). They were informed that there will be a customer representative, and have been asked to express their interest if they would like to be involved.

Customer Voice members asked questions regarding the cost and value for money of membership; Coastline's ability to shape the standardised satisfaction survey; what features are available beyond the survey; and how failures would be responded to. They were assured that membership represents value for money and will have the option to be involved in the questions sets for the survey when they are produced. The ICS is now a standing topic for Customer Voice meetings, to ensure that the group have oversight of updates and progress.

Early Adopter: One Manchester

- Together with Tenants was presented to and discussed at every departmental meeting in the organization – focused on creating the right culture with staff and customers
- Developed new Customer Voice strategy to reflect the Together with Tenants charter
- Strategy has 7 key approaches, including co creation and involvement with procurement to give customers a say on how money is spent on the services that matter to them
- Part of a network of Greater Manchester providers who held joint resident voice events, and share learning with each other

[#togetherwithtenants](https://www.housing.org.uk/tenants)
www.housing.org.uk/tenants



Early Adopter: Sanctuary

- Board and Exec commissioned gap analysis to establish 'where we are now' compared to Charter and aspirations
- Used as a basis to plan the largest consultation exercise in org's history 'a Conversation with Sanctuary'
- Seeking genuine feedback, not just quantitative measures
- Careful thought into how to be inclusive with their research
- Involving teams across the organization
- Has been hindered by lock-down but piloting ways around that

Roll out

Roll out launched on 20th October 2020 as an open invitation to the sector to sign up. Resources to support sign up include:

- Summary report of the experiences of early adopters
- Guidance on key issues relating to adopting the charter
- Webinars and learning opportunities throughout the year
- Networks to collaborate and discuss with peers

What does 'sign up' mean

Together with Tenants is not a tick-box exercise. It is not business as usual. Being a Together with Tenants adopter is a commitment to:

- Reinvigorate resident engagement.
- Work collaboratively with residents to design mechanisms for oversight.
- Support residents to hold your organisation to account.
- Be open to the challenges that all of this brings.

What does 'sign up' mean

Practically, by signing up as an adopter, you're committing to:

- Taking the charter to your board.
- Holding some form of consultation with your residents about the charter.
- Holding some form of consultation with your colleagues about the charter.
- Publishing plans for how the charter will be implemented and how residents will have oversight

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[#togetherwithtenants](https://twitter.com/togetherwithtenants)
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Panel Question and Answer Session



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See you at 2pm,
Please use the same link as this morning

Joint Chair's welcome and opening remarks

Julie Roberts, Tenant Consultative Panel Member, Cobalt Housing

Yvonne Davies, Managing Director of Scrutiny and Empowerment Partners

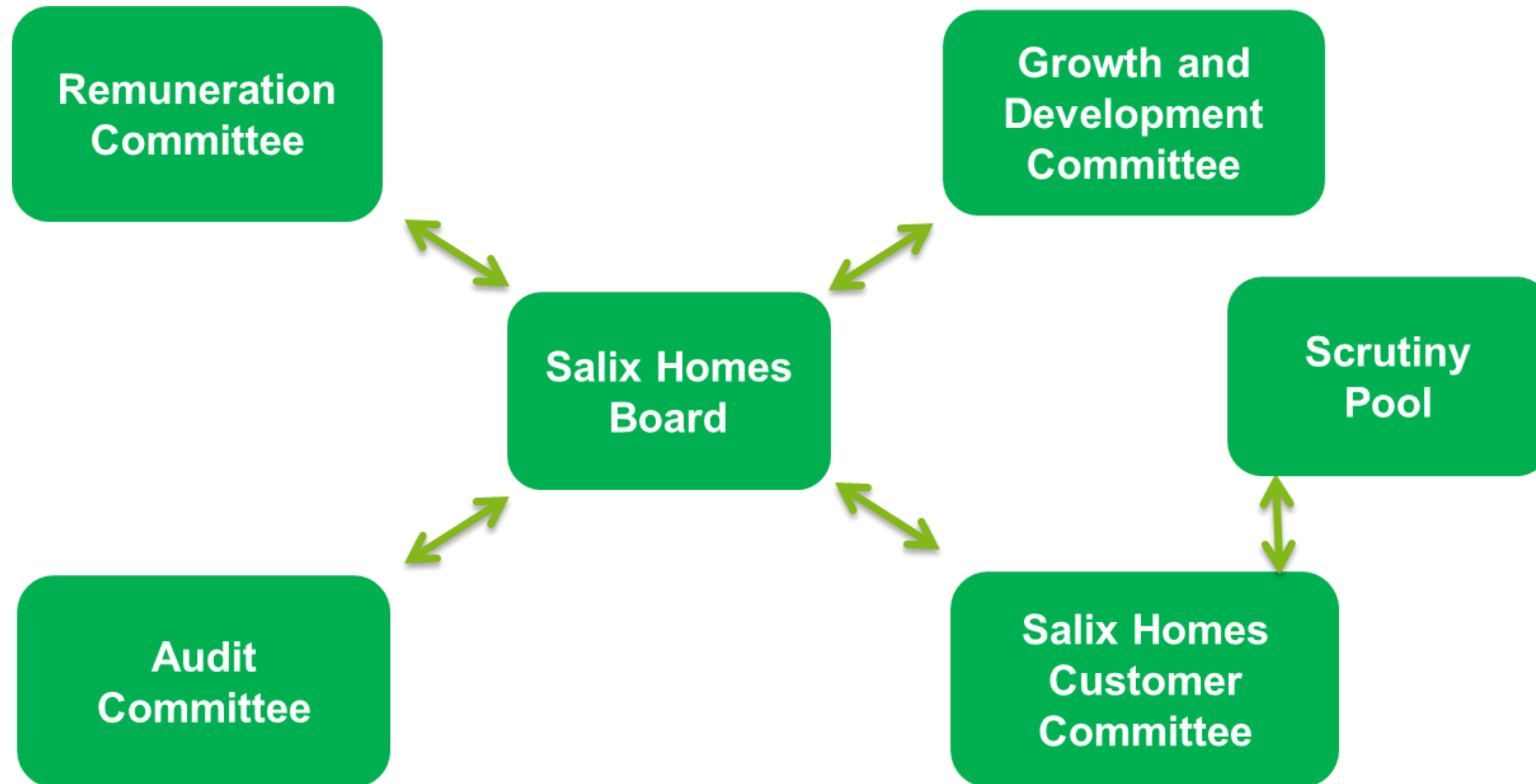
How our Customer Committee influences the Board

Anne-Marie Bancroft Customer Engagement Manager, Salix Homes
Jason Marland & Charlotte Haines, Committee Members, Salix Homes

How our Customer Committee influence our Board

Charlotte Haines & Jason Marland;
Customer Committee Members
&
Anne-Marie Bancroft;
Customer Engagement Manager

Our Governance Structure



The role of the Salix Homes Customer Committee



Overall role includes:

- Ensure that Salix Homes deliver on the consumer standards.
- Ensuring Salix Homes meets the expectations and outcomes arising from 'Building a Safer Future'.
- Ensuring Salix Homes listens to and acts on the Customer Voice.

By:

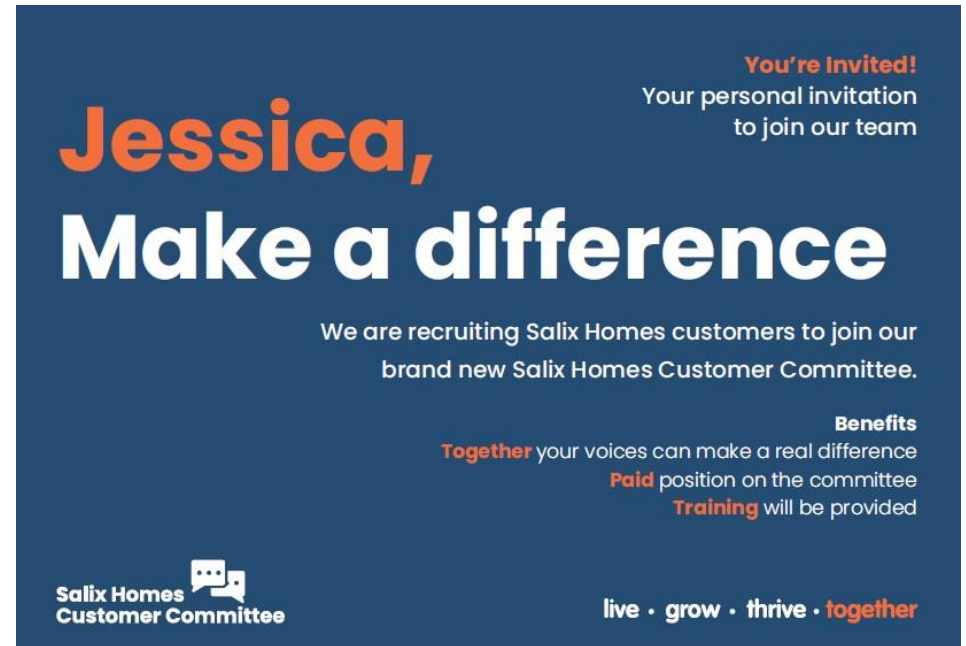
- Monitoring our performance, customer feedback and customer survey data.
- Calling areas to scrutiny and monitoring the outcomes and delivery of recommendations.

And:

- Having a strong and effective 2-way relationship with our Board

Recruitment

- Customer wide - recruitment campaign – all customers invited to join committee via direct mailer.
- Applications received from 117 eligible applicant reflective of customer base.
- Open Day held – to clarify responsibilities and for applicants to self select (only one applicant chose not to progress)
- 20 applicants were selected for interview by the steering group– those who showed a passion for their community and specific skills were selected.
- 10 applicants were appointed; interviews were attended by a critical friend, Vice Chair of the Board, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Customer Engagement Manager.



You're Invited!
Your personal invitation
to join our team

Jessica, Make a difference

We are recruiting Salix Homes customers to join our brand new Salix Homes Customer Committee.

Benefits
Together your voices can make a real difference
Paid position on the committee
Training will be provided

Salix Homes
Customer Committee

live • grow • thrive • together



Salix Homes 
Customer Voice





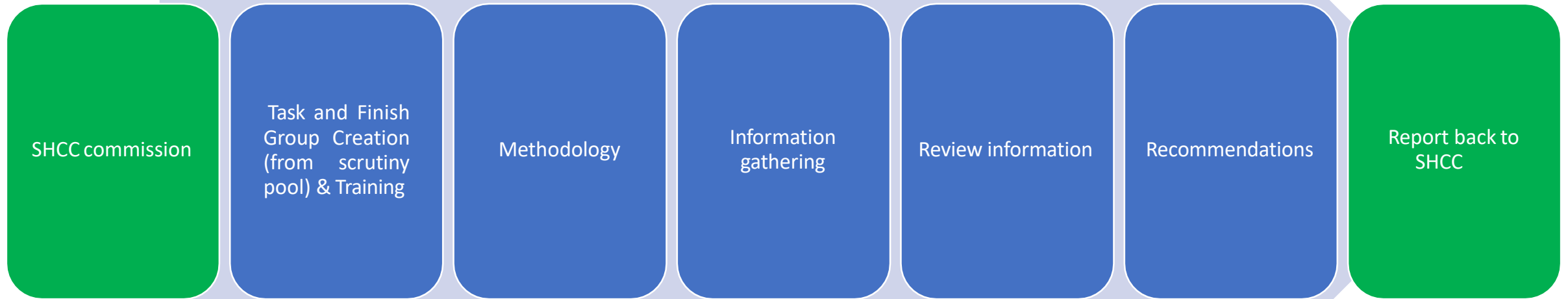
Salix Homes Customer Voice

Training & Support

- Training programme developed after the appointment of the customer committee.
- Varied 8 module programme covering:
 - Meeting Skills
 - Effective committees
 - Regulatory Standards
 - Building a Safer Future
 - Customer Engagement
 - Performance Standards
 - Value for Money
 - Scrutiny
- Delivered 50% by in-house subject matter experts and 50% by Yvonne with HDN.
- Optional qualification: Level 3 Certificate (27 additional hours work and 8 assignments)

Scrutiny Process

Salix Homes
Customer Voice



- 8 weeks
- Task and Finish Basis
- Paid

Key scrutiny outcomes

The scrutiny project reinforced the work that the committee & board had done in relation to the Build Back Better plans and provided detail for actions:

- To create a specific pandemic plan.
- To build on the increased sense of community in partnership with other organisations in line with Salix Homes ambitions to become a gateway organisation.
- To recognise that customers prefer different types of communication in different circumstances and to better understand and act on customer communication preference in context of the message being communicated.
- To consider the approach to communications about the classification of repairs and the organisations approach to handling anti-social behaviour.
- Customers should be encouraged to update their personal data with Salix Homes, utilising all customer contact to do so and ensuring that communications about the use of data at Salix Homes outlines the benefits of updating data to the customer.



Salix Homes Customer Voice

How we've had a say...

Changes made by the Customer Committee in our first 12 months:

- Customer Service Strategy
- Communities Strategy – Task and Finish Group
- Build Back Better Plans:
 - Gateway Model
 - Customer Connections
 - Operating Model
- Shaping our Customer Charter
- Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Code
- How we survey our customers including consideration of the HouseMark approach
- Recruitment of our new CEO & Executive Director of Operations
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy & Procedure
- Lettings Policy & Procedure

Crucially – monitoring the implementation and delivery of these and other customer voice actions

live • grow • thrive • **together**

Lessons learnt & tips

- The communication between board and our customer committee is crucial.
- Training members is the key to ensuring that they feel confident and equipped in the committee room (albeit digitally)
- Promotion of the role of the customer committee within the business is as important as promoting them to customers.
- Training should be applied to the remainder of the engagement structure.
- Planning in conversation time to the agenda is crucial – especially for larger committees.
- We always keep in mind that the committee represents 12 customer voices and there should be assurance to the committee that the wider customer base has been consulted/listened to before items are passed to the committee.

Questions

Driving Diversity on the Board and Committees at Together Housing Group and Progress Housing Group

Adrian Gordon, Governance Manager and Tahir Idris, Equality & Diversity Manager, Together Housing Group

Ahmed Makda, Tenant and Trainee Committee Member at Together Housing Group

Luke-Jno Baptiste, Trainee at Progress Housing Group

Tenant Panels Conference 2021

Driving Diversity on the Board and Committees at Together Housing Group and Progress Housing Group

Adrian Gordon
Gillian Hayhurst
Ahmed Makda
Luke Jno-Baptiste



Contents

1. **Introductions**
2. **Why** we acted
3. **Who** was involved
4. **What** the programme consisted of
5. **How** it operated in reality and lessons learned
6. **Participants' perspective**



Why: Board diversity

- Vision, values and strategies
- The communities we serve
- Recent recruitment outcomes
- Moving from discussion to action



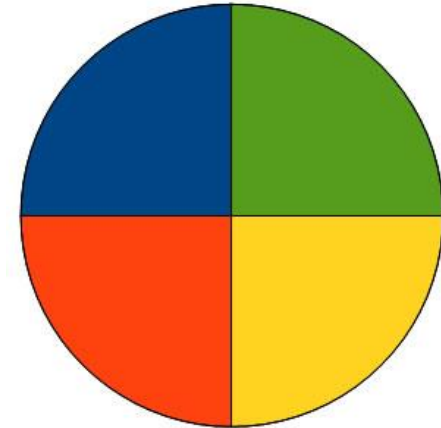
Who: Partners

- Together Housing Group (THG)
 - Progress Housing Group (PHG)
 - Housing Diversity Network (HDN)
-
- Shared aims
 - Different needs
 - Tailored approaches



What: The Programme

- New four-part programme for aspiring board members
 1. Preparation
 2. Recruitment & selection
 3. Training & development
 4. Retention



What: Preparation

- Analysis of barriers
- Board & leadership training
- Partnership development



What: Recruitment & selection

- Advert
- Information pack
- Application process
- Engagement
- Assessment
- Appointments to the programme
- Support for unsuccessful applicants



What: Training & development

- HDN training - Board Excellence sessions
- THG/PHG training
 - Induction
 - Observation
 - Mock boards
- Mentoring
- Peer support



What: Retention

- Inclusivity
- Remuneration
- Buddies
- Appraisals



How: Outcomes

- Appointments
- Shared learning
- Partnership working
- Awards



How: Lessons learned

- Commitment: from Board, Leadership Team & participants
- Dedicated, empowered resource (THG)
- Specialist (HDN) advice and guidance
- Focus on emotional intelligence & commitment rather than experience



Tips:

- *For organisations:* action rather than discussion; shake up your recruitment processes; prioritise diversity of thought
- *For aspiring board members:* engage; challenge; embrace

How: Participants' perspective

- Ahmed
- Luke



Thank you for listening

Any questions?



Panel Question and Answer Session

Chair's roundup and closing remarks

Liz Haworth, Chief Executive, Halton Housing Group