The HQN guide to resident-led scrutiny 2025

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1 Introduction

This is a guide to help those starting resident-led scrutiny and those looking to refresh their existing scrutiny. It is aimed at residents, housing staff and governors, lead councillors and housing association board members. Resident-led scrutiny is part of co-regulation, where the Regulator of Social Housing, governors, executive teams and residents all play a part in holding housing providers to account. Since its inception in the late 2000s, resident-led scrutiny has evolved and is now very much part of the regulatory framework. This guide provides information and examples of how this may work in principle and in practice and how to ensure that it works in producing improved services.

2 What is resident-led scrutiny?

Resident-led scrutiny is a process where residents review and evaluate services provided by a housing provider and make recommendations for improvements. It can be used to improve housing services or other related services from the housing provider.

As its name implies, resident scrutiny is more successful when it is resident-led whilst working collaboratively with the whole organisation. Therefore, engaged residents should have the final say on what to scrutinise even if wider residents, governors and managers make suggestions. The recommendations should be set and agreed by residents, as the main purpose of scrutiny is to have an independent view. Residents should work with providers to set timescales for receipt of requested information and submission of recommendations.

Amongst different models of scrutiny, there should be a structured formal process to report to senior management and to governors and to receive feedback. Resident-led scrutiny should be as important as other forms of regulation and audit and taken seriously throughout the organisation.

3 How does it work?

Resident-led scrutiny is where residents undertake a review of a particular service. It does not have to be restricted to service review and could include reviewing a decision, a regulatory standard or way of working. Current practice does seem to concentrate on services. It is similar to an internal audit review but is undertaken by trained residents.

The most common model is through a long-standing resident panel. But this guide also showcases some alternative models under section seven. Resident scrutiny activities can also include:

- Residents completing assessments against the RSH consumer standards
- Residents auditing repair orders or fire risk assessments (FRAs) periodically
- Resident-led inspections of neighbourhood issues and services
- Mystery shopping.

Whilst the activities are resident-led, staff and residents can work together to improve services.

In a typical review, a service is selected by residents using a mixture of performance information, organisational suggestions and resident feedback. Residents should also take into account the timing of organisational service reviews to avoid duplication or clashes.

From there, an aspect of a service is narrowed down to make a scrutiny review more manageable. This planning and scoping of the review is essential. For example, rather than review the whole repairs service which would involve unmanageable amounts of evidence collecting, it is more practical to look at an aspect of the service in more depth. The review could be of the conduct of operatives or repairs timescales or appointments. Residents could also independently verify the housing organisation's self-assessment against regulatory and legislative requirements as part of a review.

In a typical review residents consider a number of key questions and collect evidence to:

- Understand why the service is delivered the way it is or whether it is needed at all
- Consider complaints, diversity and access and resident engagement to that particular service
- Highlight the positive aspects of the service
- Highlight any shortcomings
- Make recommendations to improve it
- Produce a report and then monitor the implementation of those recommendations that are accepted by the housing organisation.

Collecting evidence is undertaken by some of the following:

- Reading key documents such as the regulatory standards, Housing Ombudsman reports, policies and procedures, communications and performance indicators
- Inspecting and observing practices
- Interviewing or focus groups for key officers and residents
- Resident surveys
- Case study tracking or customer journey mapping
- Benchmarking with or visiting similar housing providers
- Researching good practice.

Methodology example

The London Borough of Lewisham's residents' review group reviewed complaints in 2024. They narrowed down the review to the quality of complaints response letters in repairs. In undertaking the review, the panel:

- Reviewed the complaints policy and procedure, website and records of staff training, performance indicators and redacted complaints
- Examined 100 redacted complaints response letters
- Conducted a resident survey of everyone who received a complaints response in the last 12 months
- Interviewed the Complaints Manager, Complaints Team Leader, Director of Property, three complaints handlers and residents
- Produced a report with 27 recommendations.

4 Why have resident-led scrutiny?

Resident-led scrutiny can help improve resident engagement, service delivery and tenant satisfaction. It can also help ensure that the housing provider is held accountable. Housing providers have started to measure the impact of engagement activities including scrutiny.

- **Improved service quality:** by directly experiencing and reporting issues, residents can pinpoint areas where services need improvement, leading to targeted changes and better overall service delivery
- **Increased transparency:** housing providers are more likely to be transparent about their operations when residents are actively scrutinising them, promoting open communication and trust
- **Enhanced accountability:** residents holding housing providers accountable for their actions through scrutiny can encourage better decision making and responsiveness to resident concerns
- **Empowerment of residents:** participating in scrutiny panels can build residents' confidence and sense of ownership over their housing environment, fostering a more engaged community. It can lead to personal development, enhancing residents' CV with skills such as interviewing, report writing, analytical skills etc
- **Early identification of problems:** residents can often identify issues before they become major problems, allowing for timely intervention and preventative measures
- **Policy influence:** by presenting their findings through scrutiny reports, residents can influence policy changes at the landlord level to address systemic issues.

5 The business case for resident-led scrutiny

Resident-led scrutiny, if done well, can bring many benefits to the housing provider and its residents as listed above. Anecdotally, most housing providers can point to benefits although very few do a cost/benefit analysis of the impact. These examples show housing providers who have demonstrated the business case for resident-led scrutiny.

Outcomes example

Clarion Housing Group north region resident scrutiny committee (2023-2024): Resident-led review of antisocial behaviour and noise nuisance. What changed:

- Implemented a good neighbour policy and procedures, including resources for neighbourhood response officers, such as a good neighbour code and a list of noise management solutions
- Provided additional training on the noise app for tenancy specialists
- Introduced a standard checklist for the tenancy specialist team to use with every ASB report, now part of both the good neighbour and ASB procedures
- Created a clear referral process for cases of poor soundproofing, also added to the good neighbour and ASB procedures. Several staff members have volunteered to be trained as 'noise champions'
- Made mandatory training on managing mental health conversations available for frontline staff to address challenging topics
- Established national mediation contracts to help resolve ongoing noise nuisance cases. Residents can now self-refer to the 'me in mind' programme, offering free mental wellbeing support through 'together all', an online community providing courses, forums and tools for managing low mood, stress and anxiety.

Outcomes example

Tower Hamlets Homes (2020) – residents' scrutiny panel review of repairs service.

- Identified inefficiencies in appointment scheduling and contractor management
- Led to implementation of new booking system and contractor performance metrics.

An example business case report can be found at appendix one.

6 How does resident-led scrutiny interact with the regulatory bodies?

Resident-led scrutiny is a key part of social housing governance. It operates alongside, but distinct from, the Regulator for Social Housing's (RSH) regulatory framework and the work of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). Here's how they interact:

- Resident-led scrutiny, the RSH and HOS focus on ensuring landlords meet fundamental standards and play essential roles in ensuring that housing providers maintain high standards of service and address complaints effectively
- Resident scrutiny panels typically examine service delivery, performance and value for money at a more detailed, local level
- While resident-led scrutiny is a preventative and improvement-focused approach, the HOS is more of a reactive mechanism
- Resident-led scrutiny can identify systemic problems early, allowing housing providers to address them before they escalate into complaints that reach the HOS or are escalated to the RSH. For example, if residents identify a recurring issue with repairs or communication, this can be flagged and resolved, preventing future complaints
- Resident scrutiny findings can help inform the RSH's assessment of compliance with consumer standards
- Serious concerns identified through resident scrutiny can be escalated to the RSH if they potentially constitute a breach of standards and require a self-referral
- Effective scrutiny groups can help housing providers exceed minimum regulatory standards and improve tenant satisfaction
- Resident scrutiny panels can review the TSMs data as part of their role. They can analyse tenant satisfaction levels across various service areas, identify patterns or issues and propose actions for improvement. For example, if the TSMs indicate low satisfaction with housing management, the scrutiny panel can focus on this area to recommend changes or improvements
- TSMs can act as a way of measuring improvement after a scrutiny report has been undertaken.

7 What needs to be in place for resident-led scrutiny to be effective?

Formality

Scrutiny needs to be formalised in some way so that it fits into the housing provider's structures. There needs to be a formal commitment from the provider for recommendations to be heard by senior management and for a response to be given to residents. It is good practice and useful to have a link with governance structures so that board members or councillors have access to the report and the accepted recommendations.

Other formal protocols such as a written terms of reference and a provision of information are also good practice. This is so officers and residents know exactly what to expect when requests for information or recommendations are made and housing organisations can plan appropriately.

Governance examples – councils

Leeds City Council scrutiny board – this undertakes a review of services and has effective links with the housing advisory board and scrutiny board (environment and housing) and is part of the Council's governance structure.

London Borough of Lewisham – the resident review panel presents its report to senior management followed by a presentation of the report and the action plan to the housing service and performance committee.

Governance examples – housing associations

Clarion Housing Group has a national resident scrutiny panel that reports directly to the group board. The panel reviews services, policies and performance with findings presented to the board quarterly.

Orbit Housing Association – their resident scrutiny panel produces formal reports that are presented to both the customer services committee and the main board, with formal responses required on all recommendations.

Southern – their resident scrutiny panel reports to the formal resident strategy group, which includes board members and residents, resident services committee and board creating a direct reporting line between resident scrutiny and governance.

Worthing Homes – the results of the scrutiny are presented to the full resident voice meeting before the Chair takes them to the audit committee of the board.

Support

Residents also need to be supported. They need to be trained in how resident scrutiny works and in the skills and understanding needed, including interviewing, developing survey questions, facilitating a focus group, housing finance, chairing, report writing, performance information and any others that are needed for the role. They can be inducted in how their housing organisation works. They will need an officer to arrange meetings, take minutes and liaise with housing teams to provide requested information. This support is costly but an absolute necessity if it is to make real improvements.

Resident scrutineers may require help with report writing and collating the information, particularly at the start. They may also need some advice about expectations when setting recommendations. To avoid the potential conflict of interest, many housing organisations appoint an **independent paid scrutiny mentor** to guide residents through the process. An experienced mentor can also guide the officers through the process and bring experience of other housing organisations to residents, helping to arrange visits to similar housing providers and bringing experience of the sector.

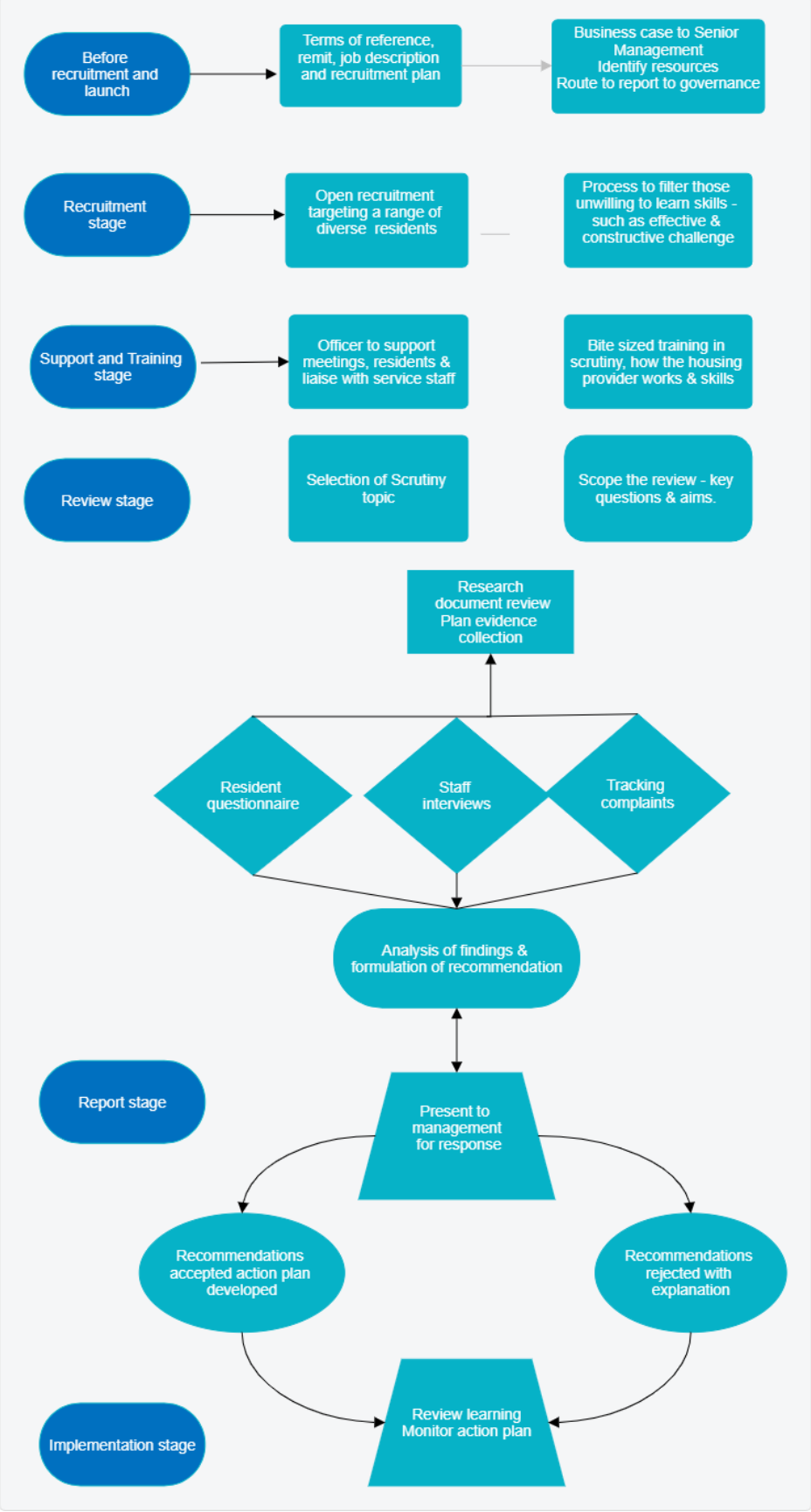
Rewards for volunteers

Resident-led scrutiny involves a time commitment for residents. Some housing organisations pay their resident scrutineers and this reflects the time and skill commitment needed. This can exclude people claiming certain benefits though. SNG made a decision to pay their main scrutiny panel in 2024. Others provide shopping vouchers. For example, Hackney Council gave their panel members £50 shopping vouchers for completing a review and took them out to a restaurant for dinner. Participants could be sent a gift. Even with little budget for financial rewards, it is easy to send participants a thank you card or celebrate with a small event publicising the findings and outcomes.

Culture

The whole organisation needs to understand the concept of resident-led scrutiny and how it works. This is very different from the traditional landlord/tenant relationship. Resident-led scrutiny is very collaborative and staff have nothing to fear. Scrutiny is not about finding fault with the service or with individual members of staff – it is an evidence-based review that celebrates good practice and success while identifying areas of improvement. Service managers should understand the importance of assisting residents with requests for information and time to interview and speak to staff, which is similar to the internal audit process. Residents often select property-related services to review and managers need to be aware of the demands this will put on resources. It really helps when senior executives, board members or lead councillors are supportive.

8 Setting a scrutiny panel up



9 Different models of resident-led scrutiny

Traditional scrutiny panel model

This is the most established model of resident scrutiny, typically involving a formal panel of eight to 12 residents who meet regularly to conduct in-depth reviews of services. Key characteristics include:

- The panel operates independently from the organisation's governance structure but has clear reporting lines to the board or council
- Members receive comprehensive training in scrutiny techniques and service areas
- They conduct one to three major service reviews annually, following a structured methodology.

Model example

LB Hackney (2024) - residents' scrutiny panel review of emergency repairs service.

- Members of a fixed panel totalling 12 reviewed a range of documents including performance information, head of service presentation, communication to residents, staff training materials, redacted complaints, policies and procedures, out of hours, operatives work sheets etc
- Conducted structured interviews with call centre managers and handlers, schedulers, trades operatives and supervisors and residents who had received an emergency repair in the last six months
- Interviewed residents
- Designed and sent out a resident questionnaire
- Observed a morning in the call centre
- Compiled a report with findings and recommendations
- Presented to senior management.

Hybrid scrutiny model

This model combines elements of traditional scrutiny with more flexible approaches to engage a wider range of residents. Features include a core scrutiny group supplemented by task and finish groups or inspectors that form around specific issues. This allows residents to participate based on their interests and availability. The approach incorporates both formal reviews and quick-response investigations into emerging issues.

Model example

SNG (2025) - after the merger between Network Homes and Sovereign HA they disbanded the two existing scrutiny panels. Instead, they formed a scrutiny panel of five residents and a wider customer influencer panel. The latter monitors performance and selects the area to scrutinise for the scrutiny panel. They then aim to recruit a team of customers on the ground who carry out inspections.

Digital scrutiny network

An emerging model that leverages technology to enable broader participation. Characteristics include online forums – digital platforms that allow residents to contribute to scrutiny activities remotely. Virtual meetings and digital evidence gathering make participation more accessible. This model can reach traditionally under-represented groups but requires digital support for some residents.

Service-specific scrutiny groups

These focused groups examine particular service areas in detail. Features include specialist knowledge development in areas like repairs, antisocial behaviour or estate services. They have direct relationships with relevant service managers and staff. Often works alongside a broader scrutiny framework.

Model example

PA Housing (2025) set up task and finish scrutiny groups named service improvement panels (SIP) to undertake reviews of specific services. A recruitment campaign was undertaken to each group to ensure they heard from a diverse group of residents and gained a more representative perspective. These appeal to a wider range of residents as it allows residents to choose what they are interested in getting involved in and choose to get involved when they have the time to commit.

During 2024, they ran three SIPs, on complaints, service charges and antisocial behaviour with different residents in each group. Topics are approved by the residents assembly and based on recommendations from previous SIPs and resident feedback received through various channels such as the TSMs, customer satisfaction surveys and complaints. Each SIP met around ten times with an induction and training provided at the start of each one. They reported their findings and recommendations to the residents assembly and the customer services committee of the board. Agreed actions are tracked and monitored by staff using MS Planner. Outcomes are monitored by the residents assembly monthly and communicated more widely to residents via the website.

Value for money panel

A specialised model focusing specifically on cost and efficiency issues. Key aspects include:

- Detailed examination of budgets, contracts and service costs
- Comparison with other providers and market testing. Strong focus on achieving better value for residents.

Task and finish models

This is scrutiny as a project which is time limited. So, residents meet and complete a review through meetings over six to eight weeks. Individual members can complete tasks at home or service leads can present to the meeting and take questions. The advantage of this is that different people can volunteer for different projects without becoming too commitment heavy, allowing residents to ration their time. This way, a more diverse range of residents can take part and concentrate on their area of interest.

Model example

Worthing Homes - members of the main residents' group, the residents' voice, take it in turns to undertake scrutiny activities. Two or three members undertake each review, report back to the main group and then on to the customer services committee.

Bootcamp models (scrutiny event or day)

This is scrutiny at a one or two day event. All relevant documents can be read in advance or presented by staff. Residents can identify what good looks like and then compare to the existing service. This works best for shorter areas such as resident's magazines or policies. The review is less intense but can enable a wider section of residents to contribute as the time commitment is less.

Model example

Homes in Somerset has been successfully completing scrutiny reviews through this model since 2018. They felt that the model really supported customers to understand the service being scrutinised and to make recommendations that could happen quickly. Recruiting customers who have recently used the service has led to high attendance, with a greater number of customers getting involved than previously and getting the customer involvement bug.

In 2025, residents completed a review of ASB and in 2024 they looked at building safety and customer engagement. Both sessions went well and provided a number of recommendations that Homes in Somerset is taking forward.

Success factors across all models

Regardless of the chosen model, successful resident scrutiny typically requires:

- Clear terms of reference and organisational commitment
- Adequate resources and administrative support to keep the scrutiny going
- Access to information and key staff
- Training and capacity building for residents
- Strong feedback loops to ensure recommendations are implemented
- Regular review and adaptation of the scrutiny approach.

Implementation considerations

When selecting or developing a scrutiny model, providers and their residents should consider:

- Organisational culture and readiness for resident scrutiny
- Available resources and support – this cannot be underestimated
- Resident capacity and interests
- Existing governance structures
- Regulatory requirements
- Local context and demographics.

The most effective approach often involves combining elements from different models to create a tailored solution that meets local needs and circumstances.

10 Recruiting for resident-led scrutiny

Direct communication channels

- Send personalised letters or emails to all residents explaining the importance of scrutiny and how they can make a difference
- Create eye-catching flyers and posters for communal areas highlighting success stories from previous scrutiny work
- Use the provider's newsletter or resident magazine to promote opportunities
- Target schools and nurseries, BAME organisations, places of worship and community groups with posters and flyers.

Personal outreach

- Have current scrutiny members speak at resident meetings about their experiences
- Ask housing officers to identify and personally invite engaged residents
- Set up information stands at community events
- Door to door campaigns in targeted areas.

Make it accessible and think diversity

- Offer multiple meeting times including evenings and weekends
- Provide online/virtual participation options
- Ensure venues are accessible and transport costs can be covered
- Offer childcare support where possible.

Highlight the benefits

- Training and skills development opportunities
- Chance to influence service improvement
- Meeting new people and building community connections
- Recognition for their contribution
- Any incentives or rewards offered.

Break down barriers

- Be clear about the time commitment required
- Offer taster sessions so residents can try before committing
- Provide mentoring from experienced scrutiny members
- Make materials available in different languages and formats.

An entry requirement

Many providers get interest from more residents than are needed and introduce a competitive process. This has the advantage of screening residents who may not have the time needed or who may be disruptive rather than challenging, who cannot work as a team or who want to use scrutiny to channel their own issues. It is best practice to agree a job description and terms of reference with already engaged residents not interested in applying.

Application packs – these can include a form, the terms of reference and a job description. They show that the applicant has some time commitment and often include an opportunity to make a personal statement on how they may meet the job description. These can be in several formats to ensure accessibility.

Interview – these are undertaken by some providers to check that applicants can meet the criteria in the job description. They also show that applicants have the time commitment, but they can be off-putting to residents as they can be daunting. A chat with applicants beforehand can dispel fears and the interview can be rebranded as a 'chat'. Already involved residents should be included on any interview panel.

Roundtable discussion or assessment – applicants can come to an information session to find out what scrutiny is and whether it is the right involvement method for them. Afterwards, a facilitated short session can be observed to check applicants show the skills or experience on the job description, including willingness to learn.

11 Common issues with resident-led scrutiny and how to resolve them

Resident drop out

Scrutiny panels can be quite time consuming and intensive for volunteers and this activity has a higher dropout rate than other resident engagement activities. To overcome this problem:

- Be very clear about what is involved at recruitment
- Over recruit at the beginning as people will always drop out at the start
- Recruitment should be a year-round process. If the panel is full, keep a reserve list and include reserves
- Try a different model of scrutiny
- Always telephone the resigning member to find out if anything would have helped
- Consider what incentives you can offer residents who complete a review.

A stale panel

This is where the panel has not had a new member for some time and has covered most topics. Sometimes they tend to be a clique and to not have new ideas.

- Provide some refresher training to re-enthuse members
- Provide diversity training and set targets for diverse members
- Arrange a networking visit to a nearby resident scrutiny panel

- Keep recruiting – ask existing members to recruit an additional two members
- Try a different model.

The panel have disagreements or personality clashes

This is where two or more people or factions fall out and it impinges on the work of the scrutiny panel.

- Provide mediation from an independent mediator
- Provide refresher training to re-enthuse people
- Recruit new members
- Try a different model
- Enforce time limits on panel membership.

Information requested takes a long time and staff keep cancelling interviews etc

- Residents do a staff session or a "lunch and learn" explaining their purpose and how resident scrutiny works
- Organise training for staff on scrutiny and their role
- Ensure the particular service team are briefed and trained before they are reviewed
- Involve the whole team or at least the head of service in the scoping exercise
- Appoint an independent scrutiny mentor
- Appeal to the senior management or executive team
- Submit an official complaint.

The review loses its focus and drifts over a long period of time

- Ensure the scoping, planning and timetabling of the review are done well at the start of the review
- Find out why and address any issues and re-timetable
- Appoint a scrutiny mentor for additional support

12 Monitoring and measuring outcomes, evaluating/reviewing the performance

To effectively monitor and evaluate the performance of resident scrutiny, there needs to be a comprehensive framework that measures both process outcomes and impact:

1. Measure process **inputs** such as volunteer and staff time, the cost of training, transport, IT costs etc.
2. Measure process **outputs** such as numbers and diversity of residents involved, percentage of recommendations accepted by the board, number of training sessions.
3. Measure impact such as the improvement in service performance indicators in scrutinised areas, cost savings from implemented recommendations, reduction in complaints in scrutinised service areas, improvement in resident satisfaction scores for reviewed services, staff and resident feedback on value and quality of scrutiny input.

Report annually with a comprehensive impact assessment that measures costs and improvements. Include case studies and resident-led interviews to publicise the benefits of scrutiny.

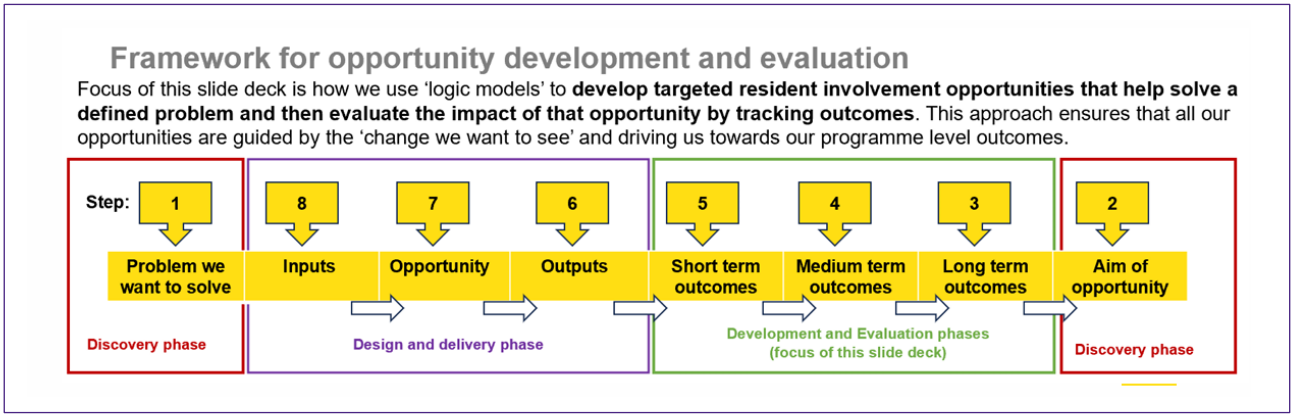
Measuring example

L&Q Housing (2024-25) has taken an approach to scrutiny activities which is *"prioritising involvement activity according to impact and communicating the difference involvement made".*

This involves outcome mapping prior to undertaking engagement activities and measuring inputs such as volunteer and staff time, training costs, recording outputs and short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes. L&Q reports impacts quarterly and annually.

L&Q does an annual evaluation of how far opportunities achieved their intended outcomes and how the outcomes have edged closer to their resident involvement programme's long-term change goals (improved relationship, happier more motivated staff, operational excellence and improved resident experience).

They evidence the outcomes through peer review, involved resident survey, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, support services survey and organisational performance measures.



Reviewing continual performance can include an assessment of how each review went by a facilitated session of staff and resident scrutineers, looking at what went well and what went less well and how it could be improved. A periodic external validation of resident-led scrutiny can also help.

If you need any further information about the contents of this guide, please contact HQN at networks@hqnetwork.co.uk.

Please see the following templates which may assist you with your approach to resident-led scrutiny as:

- Appendix 1: An example business case for resident-led scrutiny
- Appendix 2: An action plan for a scrutiny review
- Appendix 3: An action plan for bootcamp scrutiny.

Appendix 1: An example business case for resident-led scrutiny

Executive summary

This business case proposes the implementation of a structured resident scrutiny framework within our organisation. By enabling residents to systematically review, evaluate and influence our services, we can enhance service quality, improve resident satisfaction and achieve better value for money. The initial investment in establishing this program will be offset by operational efficiencies, reduced complaints and better-targeted resource allocation, while also helping us meet regulatory requirements and demonstrate our commitment to resident engagement.

Strategic context

Housing providers are facing increasing pressure to:

- Demonstrate regulatory compliance with consumer standards
- Improve service delivery while controlling costs
- Rebuild trust with residents following sector-wide challenges
- Show meaningful engagement with residents that influences decision making

Implementing a robust resident scrutiny framework directly addresses these challenges by creating a partnership approach to service improvement.

Business benefits

Financial benefits

- Reduced complaints handling costs: proactive identification and resolution of issues before they escalate to formal complaints
- Improved service efficiency: resident insights highlighting wasteful processes or unnecessary expenditure
- Better-targeted investments: ensuring resources are directed to areas that matter most to residents
- Lower void costs: improved satisfaction leading to greater tenancy sustainability and reduced turnover.

Operational benefits

- Enhanced service design: services shaped around actual resident needs rather than perceived requirements
- Improved policy effectiveness: policies that are workable and address real-world concerns
- More effective communications: materials and approaches tested with target audience
- Stronger performance management: additional layer of accountability for service delivery teams.

Strategic benefits

- Regulatory compliance: clear evidence of resident influence on governance and decision making
- Reputational enhancement: demonstrable commitment to resident empowerment
- Cultural transformation: development of more customer-focused organisational mindset
- Risk mitigation: early identification of emerging issues through direct resident feedback.

Implementation approach

The proposed resident scrutiny model would include:

a) Scrutiny panel: a core group of trained residents examining service areas in depth.
b) Service review teams: topic-specific groups formed for particular reviews.
c) Digital engagement platform: online methods to gather wider input beyond the core panel.
d) Support structure: dedicated staff resource to facilitate the scrutiny process.

Resource requirements

Initial setup (year one)

- Dedicated officer time (0.5 FTE): £20,000
- Independent scrutiny mentor £9,000
- Training program for residents: £5,000
- Administrative support/materials: £3,000
- Digital engagement platform: £7,000
- Total year one investment: £44,000.

Ongoing annual costs

- Staff support (0.3 FTE): £12,000
- Independent scrutiny mentor £9,000
- Resident training/development: £3,000
- Meeting expenses/compensation: £5,000
- System maintenance: £2,000
- Total annual operating cost: £31,000

Return on investment

Quantifiable returns

- 10% reduction in formal complaints handling (estimated savings: £15,000 pa)
- Efficiency improvements in reviewed service areas (conservative estimate: £20,000 pa)
- Improved satisfaction leading to reduced tenancy turnover (estimated savings: £10,000 pa).

Qualitative returns

- Improved reputation with stakeholders including regulators
- Enhanced resident relationships and trust
- Better service outcomes for residents
- More effective policies and procedures.

Risk analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Insufficient resident interest	Medium	High	Phased recruitment approach; multiple engagement channels
Scrutiny viewed as tokenistic	Medium	High	Clear links to decision-making; transparent response to recommendations
Resource constraints	Medium	Medium	Start with focused scope; demonstrate early wins
Resistance from staff	Medium	Medium	Engagement program; clear communication about benefits

Implementation timeline

- Months one to three: planning and setup; recruitment strategy development
- Months four to six: resident recruitment and initial training
- Months seven to nine: first scrutiny project and recommendations
- Months 10-12: evaluation of pilot and program refinement
- Year two: full implementation with expanded scope.

Recommendation

Based on the financial, operational and strategic benefits outlined, we recommend proceeding with the implementation of a resident scrutiny framework. The initial investment will be offset by tangible cost savings and efficiency improvements within 18 to 24 months, while delivering significant qualitative benefits including enhanced regulatory compliance, improved resident satisfaction and better service outcomes.

This programme aligns with our organisational values of transparency, partnership and continuous improvement, while addressing the increasing regulatory focus on resident voice and influence.

Appendix 2: Action plan for resident scrutiny reviews

1
- Ongoing panel, task and finish group, scrutiny in a day etc
- What training will be needed? What are the reporting arrangements?

2
- Scope topic - what are your key aims and the questions underlying that?
- Do you want to improve resident experience/the process? Will you look at value for money? Will you look at access to services?

3
- Who will be on the review team?
- How long will the review last? (and set a timetable)
- Decide which staff will support the review and their role

4
- What information/documents will you need? Is it easy to read and accessible?
- How will you gain information from those policies and procedures, performance, complaints, benchmarking and satisfaction data etc?

5
- Agree a methodology that gets information from staff, residents and governors
- Are staff following procedures to deliver a quality service? What is the current resident experience?

6
- Choose methods of gathering evidence; residents' meetings, door knocking, e-surveys, resident or staff focus groups, customer journey mapping, interviews, mystery shopping, inspections and observation

7
- Value for money - investigate budgets, what is the cost of running the service? Benchmark against similar organisations

8
- Agree findings and discuss recommendations (an independent mentor is useful to advise that recommendations are practical and proportionate)
- Write a report (video/presentation) showing how you did it, methodology, findings and recommendations

9
- Present findings to senior management and then to governors incorporating senior management response
- Monitor findings through formal resident engagement with an action plan

10
- Publicise the successes on the website at networking events, in the residents magazine
- Make a video with those who took part

Appendix 3: Action plan for bootcamp - resident scrutiny in a day

1
- Agree topic with resident involvemement group - needs to be a lighter topic - complaints letters, magazine, website, cleaning work well
- Recruit participants at least four weeks ahead with reminders

2
- Preparation is key - book staff, book head of service to present overview of the service (an honest appraisal), book refreshments and venue
- Send policy/example communication in advance for participants to read
- Book facilitator
- Research best practice and bring examples on slides or copies

3
- Plan the day - particpants (perhaps two separate groups of residents and staff?) to listen to presentation and ask questions
- Group exercise on "what does good look like?"

4
- Present best practice examples - group exercise (staff and residents together) on merits of best practice/benchmarking examples

5
- If a practical subject such as common way cleaning, invite contractors, share specification and even visit common areas
- For a magazine, invite head of communications team, bring examples of similar magazines

6
- Group exercise discussing findings and recommendations - request resident volunteer to present to senior management/governors

7
- After the event, thank and confirm with participants what will happen next. Implement and monitor findings. Publicise as above

About the author

Jane Eyles is an HQN Associate and has been a social housing resident, board member and consultant specialising in resident engagement since 1990. This means she is able to bring multiple perspectives into housing.

She has held senior positions such as Head of Housing for Brighton Housing Trust, Head of Engagement for LB Camden, Genesis and Hexagon and Tpas SE Regional Manager as well as 20 years consultancy including the development of resident-led scrutiny.

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