Red Kite Community Housing

# Tenant Scrutiny Review Guidelines

This is a tenant-to-tenant document, supporting future tenant scrutineers to make a smoother transition for new tenant volunteers and help drive these important reviews.

## Step 1 - How is a topic chosen?

To help them make this decision, scrutineers will see a wide range of relevant information including: performance data, audit findings, satisfaction and complaints data. Typically, reviews will focus on areas that are needing improvement, but there may be times when tenants feel a well-performing area might be beneficial to examine.

Staff members should provide clear information on other activity that might make a subject area unsuitable for review e.g. recent audit, existing action plan/task and finish group. There should always be full transparency around why an area is not deemed to be suitable for review and the tracker document should be used by engagement staff to ensure topics that are not suitable now are offered again for consideration when setting the next review topic.

Reviews should be committed to taking a detailed look at an area or a service to better understand the current position and identify where improvements could be made.

## Step 2 - Format and external support

The number of reviews undertaken each year will vary, depending on the size of the reviews and the capacity of the involved tenants, however, the target is 1-2 reviews annually.

Reviews might be a ‘boot camp’ where the scrutineers and wider tenants are invited to an event that draws out lots of views on a topic and builds a recommendation list that same day. Another approach is a ‘desktop review’ where the scrutiny review team look at documentation and evidence from Red Kite or other organisations with a view to improving a service.

Some reviews have utilised consultants to support tenants with aspects of the review, including facilitating wider engagement and report writing. There should always be some budget available for this kind of support, should tenants feel it is needed to ensure the best outcome from a review. Staff members will bring vital information and support to each review, but it should never feel as though the tenant voice, or the true findings of a review are being unduly influenced by staff. Tenants should report any concerns to either: the chair of RRT, the Head of Resident and Community Engagement or the Deputy Chief Executive.

When choosing a format, reviews should begin with the end in mind – what is the intended outcome or output of the review? What would success look like?

## Step 3 - Keep the scope in mind!

The scope of the review should be set by one clear overarching question, and possibly even a couple of sub-questions, that ensure the size of the area being reviewed is manageable.

Throughout a review it is very easy for staff and tenants to come across something thought-provoking which sits just outside the agreed scope for the review. When this happens, all involved in a review should feel comfortable to declare ‘Rabbit!’ This is where something, if followed, might lead the review into the rabbit warren and away from the true area of focus. These areas of interest can be captured to be considered for a revisit outside of the current review.

Reviews may challenge accepted ways of thinking and acting, but the staff and tenants should work together as a team to find the best way forward. Balancing the insight from tenants who bring lived experience of services with the subject matter expertise from staff.

## Step 4 – How are wider tenants involved?

The goal should always be to hear the voice of a broad spectrum of tenants during a review. This might take the form of workshops, surveys and other direct engagement, or it may involve analysing feedback tenants have already provided through existing channels.

## Step 5 – Making recommendations

Generally, a review will produce a maximum of 10 recommendations from tenants for the organisation to consider. Recommendations should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based.

Recommendations should be focused on adjustments that would reasonably be expected to improve the overall experience of tenants.

Any recommendations which are not agreed by the organisation should be clearly fed back to the scrutineers. This may be due to significant cost implications or a restriction due to legislation or regulation, for example. The agreed recommendations will be presented to Board and progress will be monitored by RRT.

## Step 6 - Action plan

Most reviews will result in an action plan, which will ensure accepted recommendations are recorded and monitored. RRT and Tpas identified best practice for these action plans in a process called verification:

a. Action plans should clearly explain each agreed recommendation and be clear on what the completed action would look like. Bearing in mind staff and tenants in key roles may change over time
b. Colour coding actions with Red, Amber, and Green to show progress at a glance
c. Action plans should hyperlink to the evidence of completion
d. Clear and realistic deadlines need to be in place
e. The action plan should have page numbers for ease of reference
f. Staff members need to be accountable for both ensuring RRT receive regular updates and for completing the actions

## Step 7 - Monitoring

Deadlines will be monitored at an agreed frequency deemed appropriate for the review. Tpas recommends six-monthly overall progress updates and RRT have suggested a top-level quarterly progress overview, circulating an updated action plan with clarity around ‘open’ and ‘open and on target’ actions. This ensures that tenants are aware if something seems likely to miss an agreed deadline before the deadline has already passed.

## Step 8 - Verification and review closure

Reviews will typically have a verification process, where a small number of tenants review whether the review achieved what it said it would. Previously, support from external organisations has been used to help tenants to achieve this. Verification means looking at the original recommendations, examining the progress and reporting on the overall impact of the review.

Reviews will be closed at the RRT formal meetings, typically once the actions are resolved. Tpas recommend that verification take place no later than 13 months after the review.
Whilst the actions should be completed within the year, consideration should be given to the impact of the changes implemented.

## Step 9 – Celebrate success!

Sharing the story of what you have achieved is an important final step. The engagement team will be responsible for delivering this part of the review, under tenant guidance. Often this looks like publicising the review outcomes at two key points:

a) **Soon after the review:**

The tenant voice influences decisions across all levels of our engagement structure, but scrutiny reviews are one of the clearest routes for highlighting the power of the tenant voice. The accepted recommendations should be publicised internally and externally, as well as sharing with all participants who engaged directly in the review.

b) **Once the actions have all been completed**:

When the review actions are all closed and changes have been implemented, this is a good opportunity to look at the overall impact of the review. You may want to explore complaint levels, TSM scores and tenant satisfaction before and after the review.