



Terms of reference for Resident Panels

These terms of reference are the same for all Homes for Haringey's Panels. Specific objectives, powers and membership criteria for the Leasehold Panel is given in Appendix One.

General

The Panel will operate within Homes for Haringey's Equal Opportunity Policy and within an appropriate code of conduct agreed by the Residents' Consultative Forum.

Changes to the terms of reference for Panels and/or sub-groups are subject to agreement and amendment by the Residents' Consultative Forum and ratification by the Board of Homes for Haringey.

The Panel will be serviced by Homes for Haringey officers and officers will attend as required.

The Panel will meet a minimum of 4 times a year, at a frequency it shall determine.

The quorum will be set by each panel and reviewed periodically.

The Panel will be chaired as decided by the Panel.

Panels will normally run as the Panel wishes. Between meetings, the Chair will determine the agendas for meetings in line with any recommendations or requests made by the Panel and with the needs of the Panel Lead Officer to put items forward for consideration. The Chair will also be asked to check minutes before they are sent, but accuracy will be decided by the Panel. Homes for Haringey reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to use a reasonable veto. In the case of dispute the matter will be referred to the Residents Assembly, an appeals panel of residents, which will seek a resolution, mindful of the views and duties of all parties.

Homes for Haringey will have the final say over what it includes in its mailings to panels and other residents with the exception of the minutes, and other residents.

Membership and observers

Unless otherwise stated in Appendix One, panel meetings are open to:

- Council tenants
- Council leaseholders
- Freeholders on Council estates
- Members of the households of such tenants, leaseholders and freeholders
- Other people living legally in properties on Council estates. This includes sub-lessees, tenants of leaseholders (including housing associations), and residents placed in properties by the Council's Private Sector Leasing Team, but does not include squatters and other unauthorised occupants.

Providing they meet the criteria for eligibility set out in 3 below residents may join a panel by notifying the Resident Involvement Team of their wish to join, or by attending a meeting and signing the attendance sheet.

Panel members wishing to resign from a Panel can do so by notifying the Resident Involvement Team or by writing to the chair of the panel. Each panel member shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at all meetings of the Panel.

Other bodies that appoint members to Panels under these terms of reference shall make their appointments in a democratic way in line with their constitutions. The method used to make the appointment, along with the outcome, must be minuted, and the minutes shall be open for inspection by anyone who wishes to see them.

Members may only represent the panel outside of meetings if delegated to do so.

People who do not meet the criteria for membership may attend meetings as observers at the discretion of the Panel decided by a majority of those present and voting. They may not speak without the Panel's agreement.

Eligibility for all Panels

To be eligible for membership of any Panel, members must:

- a) meet the criteria for membership in 0 above.
- b) continue to meet the conditions of membership for the place they are filling
- c) To be eligible for membership of the Panel, members must not:
- d) hold a paid office in Homes for Haringey
- e) Residents who behave badly in meetings can be excluded from panels. In very exceptional circumstances, HfH could use exclusion in advance when it had knowledge in advance that a resident was likely to become violent. This could then be challenged by appeal.

Sub-groups

The process for setting up new sub-groups is set out in Appendix 2. In these terms of reference, 'sub-group' means a group reporting to one particular Panel which has been set up either:

- a) to carry out a specific and substantial task (such as the procurement of services, or the detailed review of a service or aspect of a service), **or**
- b) as a standing group to which part of a Panel's work will be delegated (such as the Training sub-group of the Tenant Participation Panel)
- c) 'Sub-group' does not mean small, short-term working parties, groups set up to deal with issues that cut across the remit of more than one Panel, or groups set up to consult or do work on issues that are not clearly within the remit of any Panel.

In general, new sub-groups should not be set up unless there is a compelling reason as they may lead to lack of clarity about participation structures. New groups are also likely to increase the time commitment needed from both residents and officers.

Voting

Each panel member shall have one vote. The chair shall only vote when voting is tied, and shall usually vote in favour of the status quo.

The Chairing of meetings

The Chairperson ensures that the Panel functions properly, that there is full participation at meetings, all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

The following section (0 below) applies when a Panel has decided to have a standing, elected resident chair:

Election of Resident Chairs and Vice Chairs

- All Panels will elect a resident chair and a vice-chair from their existing members at an agreed time of year.
- The term of office for resident chairs is for a one year and then they may stand for re-election.
- Elections will be by secret ballot.
- All chairs should undergo training in chairing meetings within three months of elections or be able to show that they have had this training, or other suitable training, or experience, within the last three years
- Any changes to the timing of elections must be agreed by the Residents' Consultative Forum.
- No resident may be chair of more than one panel at the same time. It is acceptable to be chair of one panel and vice chair of another. Any office held would need to be declared at the time of election.
- If the chair is absent from a meeting, or if the office of chair is vacant, the vice-chair will act as chair for all purposes. In the absence of both chair and vice chair, the meeting shall decide who will act as chair. If the prolonged absence of the chair is expected then elections should be held for a new chair as soon as possible.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which an individual's personal interests, or interests which they owe to another body, and those of the panel arise simultaneously or appear to clash. Conflicts of interest may come in a number of different forms:

- a) direct financial gain or benefit such as:
- payment for services provided to the organisation;
 - the award of a contract to another organisation in which the member has an interest and from which they will receive a financial benefit; or
 - the employment the member within the organisation.

- b) indirect financial gain, such as employment by the organisation of a spouse or partner of a member, where their finances are interdependent;
- c) Conflict of loyalties, such as where a chair is appointed by another body to serve on the Panel.

Disclosure of interest

A Panel member, including the chair, with a vested interest in the matter to be discussed at a panel will declare it at the beginning of the topic, or when that interest becomes apparent. The Panel will decide how to proceed which will usually be that the individual takes no part in the discussion or decision on that matter. The Panel may instead:

- a) Ask the person to leave the meeting during the item
- b) Allow the person to stay and take part in the discussion but not to vote
- c) To allow the person to fully participate in the item, but only if the Panel can see no prospect of gain for the person
- d) Any other suitable decision as agreed by the Panel.

Disclosure of interests by a chair

The chair must step down from the chair during a relevant item if there is a conflict of interest. If the chair wishes to take an active part in a prolonged debate on a subject, they should step out of the chair during that item and ask someone else to take the chair.

Removal of the chair or vice-chair from office

A proposal to remove the chair or vice-chair must be an agenda item for a panel meeting and the agenda must be circulated to panel members at least ten days in advance of the meeting.

The person proposing the removal must state their reasons either verbally, in writing or by for doing so at the meeting. The chair or vice-chair must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before he or she withdraws from the meeting and the meeting debates and votes on the proposal to remove the chair or vice-chair from office.

General

The Panel will operate within Homes for Haringey's Equal Opportunity Policy and within an appropriate code of conduct agreed by the Residents' Consultative Forum.

The terms of reference for Panels and/or sub-groups are subject to agreement and amendment by the Board of Homes for Haringey.

The Panel will be serviced by Homes for Haringey officers and officers will attend as required.

The Panel will meet a minimum of 4 times a year, at a frequency it shall determine.

No quorum shall apply to meetings of the Panel unless the Panel itself sets one.

The Panel will be chaired as decided by the Panel.

Membership and observers

Membership for each Panel shall be as described in Appendix One. Tenants and leaseholders may join a panel by notifying the Resident Involvement Team of their wish to join, providing they meet the criteria for eligibility set out in 0 above.

Panel members wishing to resign from a Panel can do so by notifying the Resident Involvement Team.

Each panel member shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at all meetings of the Panel.

Other bodies that appoint members to Panels under these terms of reference shall make their appointments in a democratic way in line with their constitutions. The method used to make the appointment, along with the outcome, must be minuted, and the minutes shall be open for inspection by anyone who wishes to see them.

Eligibility for all Panels

To be eligible for membership of any Panel, members must:

- a) be 18 years of age or over
- b) be a council tenant or leaseholder of a property managed by Homes for Haringey
- c) continue to meet the conditions of membership for the place they are filling

To be eligible for membership of the Panel, members must not:

- a) hold a paid office in Homes for Haringey
- b) be in Rent, Service Charge or Council Tax arrears (however maintaining an arrangement to clear debt sustains eligibility)
- c) be subject to legal action in connection with their tenancy or lease. Legal action in connection with a tenancy or leasehold is defined as the application for a Court hearing. The application might be made by Haringey Council, Homes for Haringey or another body (such as by the Police for harassment). Legal

action not connected with the tenancy or lease will not be counted.

Sub-groups

The process for setting up new sub-groups is set out in Appendix 2. In these terms of reference, 'sub-group' means a group reporting to one particular Panel which has been set up either:

- a) to carry out a specific and substantial task (such as the procurement of services, or the detailed review of a service or aspect of a service), **or**
- b) as a standing group to which part of a Panel's work will be delegated (such as the Training sub-group of the Tenant Participation Panel)

'Sub-group' does not mean small, short-term working parties, groups set up to deal with issues that cut across the remit of more than one Panel, or groups set up to consult or do work on issues that are not clearly within the remit of any Panel.

In general, new sub-groups should not be set up unless there is a compelling reason as they may lead to lack of clarity about participation structures. New groups are also likely to increase the time commitment needed from both residents and officers.

Leasehold Panel

Appendix 1

Objectives

1. To ensure that wider consultation on all leasehold matters is carried out properly.
2. To work with Homes for Haringey and the Council to improve and scrutinise services provided to tenants and leaseholders.
3. To set up targets and recommend good practice to improve services to leaseholders.
4. To monitor and receive regular reports on the Home Ownership Team's key performance against the business improvement plan.
5. To make recommendations on service standards and all publications pertaining to leasehold management and the service provided by the Home Ownership Team.
6. To provide comments on reports presented to the Panel in respect of leasehold policy matters.
7. To consider value for money, equalities and diversity, the involvement of residents and access to services as they relate to the work of the Panel.

Powers

1. To carry out any tasks or function delegated to the Panel by the Board of Homes for Haringey.
2. To request information and reports from Homes for Haringey and others in relation to this panel's objectives
3. To receive and comment on the results of satisfaction surveys and other research and/or tests of satisfaction carried out by Homes for Haringey in relation to this Panel's objectives
4. To advise on approaches to wider consultation on matters relating to the objectives of this Panel
5. To review and comment on the nature and the effectiveness of leaseholder involvement in Homes for Haringey.
6. To reach a consensus and make such comments and recommendations to the Homes for Haringey Board, to Residents' Consultative Forum, to any other Panel and the Leaseholders' Forum as the Panel sees fit

Membership

The membership of the Leasehold Panel shall be as follows:

Number and tenure	Body electing/appointing	Method	Criteria	Reason
Unlimited	None	Self-appointed	Leaseholder or sub-lessee in property managed by Homes for Haringey. Secure tenants may attend and speak, but may not vote. Tenants must declare their interest in discussions relating to matters where leaseholders might be required to pay a proportion of costs incurred.	Wide and open membership

Process for setting up new subgroups

Please also refer to Sub-groups on page 3.

