# Scrutiny TEAM – TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Background and purpose

The Scrutiny Team has been created to show Longhurst Group’s commitment to meet the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard within the regulatory framework for social housing in England and the new Social Housing White Paper. Longhurst Group are committed to ensuring customers have their voices heard and know how the Group are performing.

Our Scrutiny Team will act as an independent, Customer led group that holds Longhurst Group to account to ensure continuous service improvement.

The Scrutiny Team will:

* Monitor performance
* Complete in-depth reviews of our services
* Make recommendations for service improvements
* Challenge why services may not be performing well

### Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Scrutiny Team are:

* The team will focus on service quality and performance
* To determine the focus of a review
* To drive continuous service improvement
* To ensure that residents views and priorities are at the heart of service improvement.

### Recruitment and training

All Longhurst Group tenants, leaseholders and shared owners are welcome to apply to take part in scrutiny. This applies to the family members of a Longhurst Group tenant, leaseholder or shared owner who lives at the property. You will not be eligible if:

* Longhurst Group has commenced legal action against you or a member of your household. This means you are not eligible if you have breached your tenancy and have a current Notice of Seeking Possession served against you, or a court order for breach of tenancy. This includes a possession order (or in breach of a suspended possession order) or court order (ASB order or injunction, demoted tenancy or closure order) or any other judicial order which has an equivalent effect.
* Longhurst Group has court order for recovery of money against you
* You are in a legal dispute with Longhurst Group
* For permanent team members there will be an interview process with the Customer Engagement Team and a representative from the Longhurst Group Customer Forum
* For temporary members there will be an interview process with the Customer Engagement Team and a permanent member of the Scrutiny Team
* Priority will be given to achieve a range of panel members that is as diverse as possible
* Only one person from each household can be a member
* Members will be recruited based on their skills in line with the job description and person specification
* Members will need to agree to our code of conduct and confidentiality agreement
* There will be a three month probation period for our permanent members
* Permanent members will have an appraisal with the Customer Engagement Team every six months
* Members will have support from the Customer Engagement Team
* Members will receive training from the Customer Engagement Team prior to their first review

### Membership

* There will be four permanent members of the Scrutiny Team
* We will recruit four additional members to join each review. These will be subject specialists
* There will be no chair of the meeting, but members will have job titles fitting with their skill set e.g., Coordinator, Presenter, Researcher etc.

### Functions

#### Choosing areas to review

The four permanent members will be advised of areas for review from the Longhurst Group Customer Forum. The Scrutiny Team will then determine which specific area within that they wish to focus on.

Longhurst Group can also suggest areas to review but the Customer Forum and Scrutiny Team can decide if they wish to accept the suggestion.

The Customer Forum and Scrutiny Team will determine which areas they would like to review based on performance information, complaints and customer feedback.

#### Access to information

The Scrutiny Team will be able to:

* Access information on performance, benchmarking, complaints, customer feedback and other resident involved groups
* Use resident involvement groups to gather information e.g. surveys and mystery shopping
* Request useful documents such as policies, leaflets, letters etc.
* Request to speak to relevant staff

### Financial matters

Scrutiny Team members will be reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred.

### Values

The Scrutiny Team will work in line with the following values:

* Members of the Scrutiny Team must act with openness, honesty and integrity
* They must add value to the business
* All Scrutiny Team members must keep in mind it’s focus and responsibilities
* The Scrutiny Team must take into account value for money and resources in their recommendations
* The Scrutiny Team’s reports, recommendations or presentations must be balanced, evidence-based and take into account regulatory standards and good practice
* The Team must have respect for final decisions made by Longhurst Group, Longhurst Group Customer Forum and the Board.

### Reporting

The Scrutiny Team will be required to

* Report on their findings and recommendations explaining the reasons for the service review, methods used, evidence how they came to their recommendations and the outcome of their recommendations.
* Report on their activities so that this can be used in customer communications, annual reports etc.
* They may be asked to present to colleagues or other groups such as the Board or Longhurst Group Customer Forum

### Monitoring and reviewing

As a part of the service review, a process will be created to routinely monitor progress of the recommendations put forward.

Members should allow a fair timescale for recommendations to be reviewed and any changes to be put into practice.

The Scrutiny Team will be given feedback on all recommendations detailing how they will be put into practice or advising why if they cannot be accepted.

### Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings will depend on the review taking place and how much time is required. The Scrutiny Team will determine how much time they need and agree how often they would like to meet.

Member’s work, family and other commitments must be taken into consideration and meetings need to be agreed with the majority of the Team.

### Quorum

The meeting quorum (number of people needed to make decisions) will be half of the current membership.

### Safeguarding

* Skills based recruitment process
* An enforceable code of conduct and confidentiality agreement
* Support from the Customer Engagement Team
* Three month probation period and appraisals every six months
* The ability for an independent review of the Scrutiny Team

### Equality and diversity

Longhurst Group encourage fair and equal treatment for all, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, physical or mental disability, appearance, political affiliation, sexuality, age or class.

Longhurst Group will identify obstacles that may prevent customers from contributing and will endeavour to find solutions to enable customers to contribute to its work.