

Scrutiny panel fact sheet



What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny can be defined as a close and searching look or an investigation.

What is the Scrutiny Panel?

Catalyst Housing's Resident scrutiny panel acts as the independent, resident-led group that holds Catalyst Housing to account through scrutiny and challenge to ensure continuous improvement.

The Scrutiny Panel does this by:

- Monitoring performance
- Carrying out in-depth service reviews
- Suggesting improvements
- Challenging the organisation when parts of it are not performing well

Who will be on the scrutiny panel?

The scrutiny panel is made up of up to 12 Catalyst Housing residents (only one per household). They are volunteers and were appointed following a competency-based recruitment process. The scrutiny panel is supported by an independent mentor.

What does the scrutiny panel aim to do?

- Make sure residents' views are taken into account when monitoring and improving services
- Make sure residents are able to influence decisions which affect them
- Strengthen the links between resident involvement and the board
- Push Catalyst Housing to continually make sure services for residents are the best they can be

How does it do this?

The scrutiny panel carries out scrutiny reviews of particular areas. A scrutiny review is when the panel identifies an area that may be underperforming or a bit out of date and carries out an investigation.

The scrutiny panel make their own decisions about what to look at based on performance information, complaints and collective feedback from residents, as well as requests from the organisation. The panel carry out reviews by:

- Looking at documentation and performance information
- Interviewing staff and residents
- Carrying out surveys and focus groups

- Carrying out reality checks such as mystery shopping, job shadowing and observation
- Benchmarking against other organisations

Reporting

The scrutiny panel produces a report of its findings and recommendations and presents this to the board. The recommendations agreed by the board are then monitored by the scrutiny panel to make sure they are implemented.

Values and code of conduct

In carrying out all of their activities, the scrutiny panel must work within their terms of reference and abide by their code of conduct and core values which include:

- Acting with openness, honesty and integrity
- Accountability to residents
- Value for money

All members sign a confidentiality agreement.

How much time does it take?

A scrutiny review typically takes 3-6 months to carry out. Members have regular meetings plus homework!

Are members of the scrutiny panel paid?

No. The role is voluntary but all reasonable out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

What kind of training/support do members get?

Scrutiny Panel members are given support from an independent mentor who provides mentoring and training.

What kind of skills do people need for scrutiny?

- Reading, writing and numeracy skills
- Good communication and listening skills
- Ability to be objective
- Ability to analyse, interpret and question
- Ability to weigh up issues and make balance judgements
- Ability to make decisions based on evidence
- Ability to use a computer
- Ability to understand graphs and data