

Customer Scrutiny Panel (CuSP) Terms of Reference



Expectations

The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CuSP) is a panel of Alliance Homes customers who meet on a regular basis to scrutinise the work Alliance Homes does. We use the word scrutiny to mean exploring, examining and challenging (when needed) issues brought to the panel. Our panel is here to make sure Alliance Homes is transparent and accountable to its customers, and to ensure customers have opportunities to influence how things work.

We want our panel to work well, therefore we've created some commitments that all panel members sign up to. We also ask Alliance Homes colleagues who are invited to panel to sign up to this agreement.

Our purpose

We know it is important to have clear purpose, to get the best for all customers. We are here to:

- Represent the customers of Alliance Homes. We are always mindful of equality, diversity and inclusion and we will find ways of reaching more customers whenever we can. You can find more detail about Alliance Homes' approach [here](#).
- Get assurance that Alliance Homes is actively getting feedback from customers and are acting upon that feedback.
- Have an independent, open and genuine view on what Alliance Homes is offering to customers. We will look for both successes and areas of improvement.
- Scrutinise areas that are important to customers and Alliance, contributing to continuous improvement in existing and future policies and services to ensure that they are clear, fair and meet customer needs. We will use the agreed scrutiny structures to monitor this.
- Positively challenge Alliance Homes' actions and decisions.
- Spread the word about the work of the panel so other customers know how we're helping to improve lives and communities, and how they can get involved.

How we will behave

We want our panel to be welcoming and friendly, but still able to discuss difficult issues. To make sure everyone feels comfortable and able to contribute, we agree to:

- Follow the NHF code of conduct, which you can find [here](#).
- Be respectful of different backgrounds, learning styles and reasonable adjustments.
- Listen to what is happening and actively contribute. We value the opinions of others, even if we disagree.
- Be committed to the panel. Members of the panel are expected to attend at least five meetings per year. We will also make sure we are prepared for meetings.
- Keep business sensitive and personal information confidential.
- Be professional, positive and independent
- Ask for help if we are struggling or we don't understand. We are a supportive panel, and we will work through things together. We will ask each other, or we will approach the Engagement Team for more support.

Customer Scrutiny Panel (CuSP) Terms of Reference



- Use plain English whenever we can. If we must use jargon or acronyms, we will explain what they mean.
- Be open to development and growth through learning and training.

If things go wrong

From time to time, things can get difficult. While we hope this won't happen, we want to have things in place, so people feel supported and equipped to tackle issues. All members are signed up to the NHF code of conduct. If the conduct outlined is not followed, here are some options.

- Where possible, the chair of the panel will manage the issue. The chair will receive training to support this.
- If the chair feels that they need additional support, they should refer to the Engagement Team.
- If the issue is with a colleague from Alliance Homes, the issue should be raised as soon as possible with a member of the Engagement Team, or if more appropriate, the Service Director.
- Where the issue is related to behaviour, the first step will be to find out if there are unknown causes of stress or upset. We will always seek to understand without judgement.
- We know that everyone makes mistakes, so in most cases, we will give people an opportunity to improve their behaviour.
- To ensure fairness, the Service Director of Customer Operations will be informed of any issues and will validate any decisions.
- If the behaviour does not improve, or if the behaviour is extreme, the Community Investment Manager will ask the member to leave the panel. This is to safeguard the wellbeing of all members, including those asked to leave.

How meetings work

We want to have a consistent approach to get the best results for all customers. Our meetings will work in the following way. We will:

- Meet every six weeks.
- Have a maximum of 12 members. Meetings will only be able to go ahead if we are 'quorate'. This means that at least four members are present.
- Recruit a chair, vice chair and secretary using the CuSP role descriptions.
- Alternate between venues to increase accessibility for different people.
- Plan the agenda alongside the chair. Initial ideas will be discussed at meetings, and we will finalise them via email.
- Let the Engagement Team know if we want to invite any Alliance Homes colleagues, and we will give them at least four weeks-notice.
- Have 'feedback on recommendations' as a standing agenda item to make sure we know the outcomes of our work.

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- Alliance Homes will provide support to arrange dates and venues. They will also cover reasonable expenses and provide food and refreshments.

Changes in the panel

To make sure our panel represents the customers of Alliance Homes, we aim to have a good mix of people with a range of experiences. We want to keep our panel fresh and relevant so we will:

- Allow members to be on the panel for up to five years. This will be staggered for the first set of panel members to make sure they don't all leave at the same time. If members want to continue after five years, they will have to reapply.
- Buddy new members with experienced members so that knowledge can be passed on.
- Set up an Alumni Group for people leaving the panel so that they still have opportunities to be involved.
- Welcome diverse backgrounds, needs and abilities when we are recruiting for new members.

All CuSP members are required to sign up to these expectations and the NHF code of conduct. Both agreements will be reviewed a minimum of once every year