



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

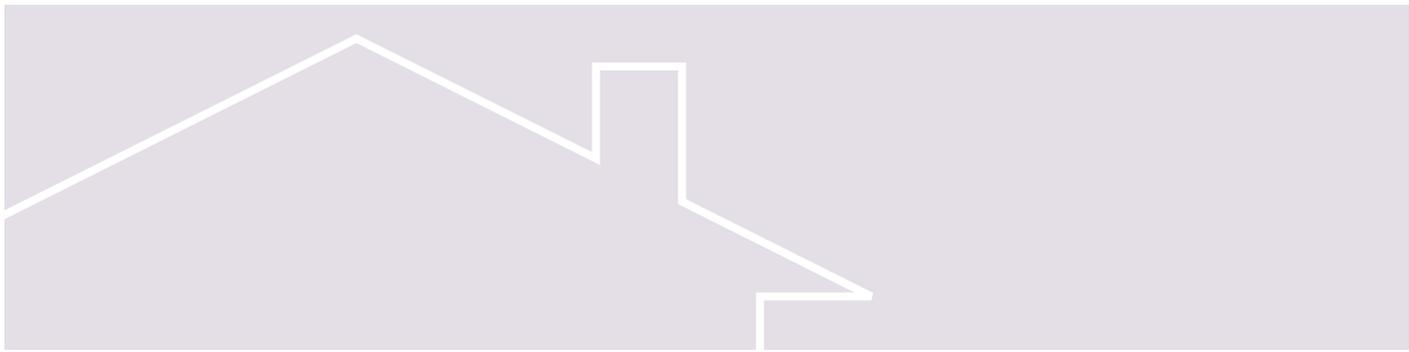


**What would
make you come
through the Door?**

Aberdeen City Council Guide To Reviewing Our Services

September 2016





Working together for better services

Foreword by Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group

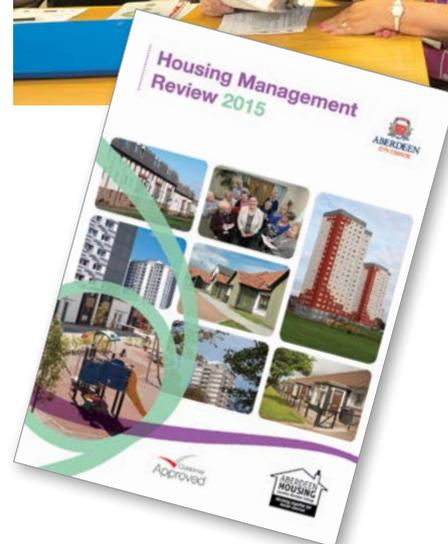
As a group we have produced this document with the Tenant & Resident Development Officer to highlight how we conduct reviews and to reassure Council Officers that we review services and **not staff**. We have reviewed and revisited a number of services now and we have been delighted with the support and feedback we have received from elected members, senior management and our Chief Executive. We feel that they want to work with us to improve and achieve better services.

We also hope to encourage new members to join us – either as a member of this group, to attend an event or complete a survey - the choices are endless.

Becoming a Housing volunteer could provide an opportunity for job seekers to gain experience to add to their Curriculum Vita (CV) or obtain a qualification in housing. Perhaps you are newly retired or have a young family; joining us would enable you to put your skills to use and work with Aberdeen City Council to improve the services you receive.

We hope that you enjoy reading this booklet as much as we have had putting it together. We all look forward to doing future reviews and hopefully encouraging new members to join our group and/or to attend an event.

Our new Tenant & Resident Framework Appendix 1 and the way the Scrutiny Framework Appendix 2 links into this and shows that the Council want to give tenants and residents as many opportunities to get involved. The group has worked with the Council to develop the five houses with the Housing Service Review Group which is the umbrella group of this framework. We think this is a fun and innovative way to engage with tenants and residents.



“I can think of no better example of putting the aspiration for this way of working into practice than a review such as this. The Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group representing tenants, owners and others are clearly passionate about the services they receive from the Council and are keen to work with us in an open and positive way to ensure that improvements are made and continue to be made”

Angela Scott, Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council

What would make you come through the door?

Introduction

Welcome to Aberdeen City Council's guide to reviewing our services. This booklet explains how the Council has decided to scrutinise our services and we are delighted that this has been done in partnership with our Housing Service Review Group.

The introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the independent Scottish Housing Regulator has given us the opportunity to work with our tenants and residents to create better services.

To help us achieve our goals we have a group of tenant and resident housing volunteers who review our services, this group is known as the Housing Service Review Group. They tell us what we are doing well and what we could do better. After all, they use our services and are in the best position to do this.

Aberdeen City Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure wants to be a customer focussed directorate. Therefore, we need management, tenants/residents and staff to work together to achieve this.

This guide has been developed by the Housing Service Review Group in consultation with the Council and supported by the Tenant & Resident Development Officer. It has been devised to bring consistency to our Housing Service Reviews and to inform the service undergoing a review of what is involved and expected - it also looks at how customer scrutiny is being developed in the Council and how you can get involved.

What is the Housing Service Review Group (HSR)

The tenant service review group was established in 2004 to review Council services. It was renamed in 2012 as the Housing Service Review Group. This was to include residents and other customers in order to comply with the new legislation. This group is a constituted group and is an RTO – Registered Tenant Organisation.

Members of the HSR have all undertaken training in report writing, interview skills, confidence building, freedom of information, equality legislation, and confident communication; they are also involved in various other tenant and resident participation groups. They are all committed to working with the Council for better services. They will continue to undertake further training as required.

New members to the group partake in training sessions overseen by the members of the group and the Tenant & Resident Development Officer.



- Repairs Reviews 38 recommendations
- Community Safety 28 recommendations
- Housing Management 45 recommendations



Who chooses what to review?

This is very much a two way process; the group can decide which service they would like to review or a service manager can request a review by contacting the Tenant & Resident Development Officer.

There are a number of reasons why a service may wish to be reviewed, for example a new system or way of working may have been introduced or there might have been a restructure of the service.

The group might approach a service to suggest a review after they have heard complaints from tenants/residents or they have seen a change in the performance figures of a particular service and decide a review would be beneficial.

The group were delighted when the Chief Executive asked them to review the Reception & Customer Service Areas in Marischal College as part of the Housing Management Review.

The length and type of the review will differ but the Tenant & Resident Development Officer is there to liaise with the management team and the Housing Service Review Group.

Step One - Contact

The Tenant & Resident Development Officer will contact the senior officer responsible for the service to be reviewed and a meeting will be arranged for the whole group to meet with the management team.

At the first meeting the group will listen to a presentation about the service being reviewed. The officer(s) will give an indication of what they would like reviewed; highlighting any issues they think the group would be able to assist with.

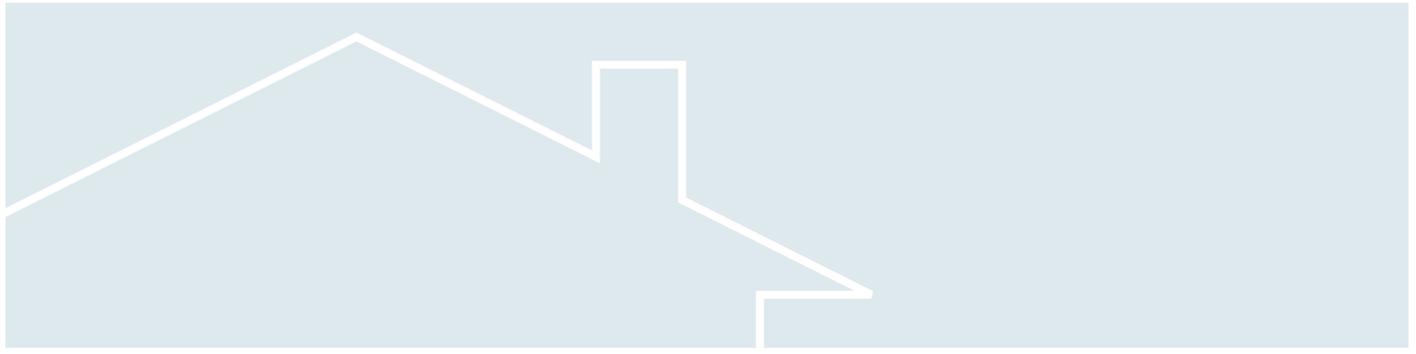
The officers will share with the group all the policies and procedures relating to their service. At this point they can give the group any other information they think would assist the review.

The group is not there to tell you what they think is wrong but to help the Council improve their service(s); highlighting the positive aspects of the service is equally important as the negative.



“I would like to thank the group for their work. It has made our repair service think about what our tenants would want when we want to introduce anything new now. We have become a much more customer focussed service”

Scott Bremner, Assistant Operations Manager



Step Two – Before the review

The main group of housing volunteers will appoint a subgroup that will undertake the review. The number of volunteers in each subgroup will depend on the size of the review. These members will sign a code of conduct for every review undertaken (see Appendix 3).

As well as the code of conduct each review member will sign a Data Protection document (see Appendix 4) which will be returned to the Council's Legal Team.

The review group will meet with the appointed Council Officer and a draft plan will be devised (see Appendix 3).

It is important for the Council and the review group to work together on this plan.

The action plan will set out the timescale for the review as well as what will be reviewed and when. All staff involved are briefed about what the group will be doing. All staff should be encouraged and given the opportunity to speak freely to the review group. No names will be mentioned in the final report.

From this action plan a more detailed time table will be developed (see Appendix 4) giving more details including the names of reviewers, however nothing is set in stone and changes can be made depending on the circumstances.

The review group will schedule their meeting dates for the review and ensure that all members participate fully in compiling the report, which is not based on the opinion of one person but that of all members of the group.

If possible the review group should check what the law says about aspects of the service being reviewed. For example, all social landlords have to submit their Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The group should try to obtain as much information as possible such as performance figures, Number of complaints (if any) and the nature of the comments.



“We recognise that our service must continue to improve and adapt to meet the demands of our service users. Our customers are best placed to inform us what we need to be doing to help us meet their wants and needs. We were therefore delighted to be given the opportunity to have community safety services reviewed by the Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group”.

Neil Carnegie, Acting Head of Communities and Housing



Step Three - The review

During the review, the group will visit the building(s) where the service operates and speak to the officers concerned. If necessary the group will go out with the officer(s) as their job entails to observe exactly what the job involves.

The group may have a list of pre-determined questions to ask staff (see Appendix 5). However these questions should only be used as a guide and the group members are encouraged to ask any questions they feel are appropriate for that officer.

The review group will all have a Housing Service Review Booklet (see Appendix 6) and will complete this during the review.

Photographs will be taken by a member of the group and the Council photographer.

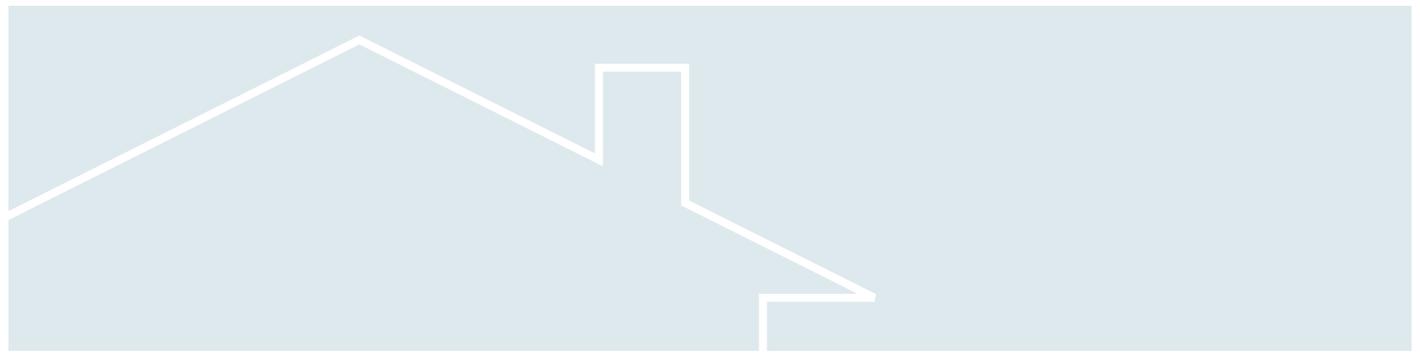
Depending on the review, senior management, partners and/or other organisations will be invited to have lunch with the group during the review. Lunch will be supplied by the group from the Tenant Participation budget.

The group will adhere to all health and safety requirements of the service and copies of the signed codes of conduct will be provided if requested.

During the review, the group will highlight all the positive aspects of the service; they are not there to pick out faults but to look at how things could be improved for everyone; the customer and the Council.



The Housing Service Review Group would like to thank the late Ian Burrows, Operations Manager, who sadly passed away during the review, for his enthusiastic approach and for all the encouragement he gave the group during the first repairs review



Step Four - The Report

During the review the group will meet and all the information will be collated by one member of the review team; the group will decide who will do this. The collated information will be put into a draft report and agreed by all members of the review group before being distributed to members of the main group.

The council officers of the service will be shown the draft report and given the opportunity to comment on the report and the groups' recommendations. Once agreed the service will draft an action plan (see Appendix 7). The plan will include all the recommendations with the timescales of when these will be completed; and if not the reason why. This will be included as an appendix of the main report. Please note that the review group do not expect all recommendations to be implemented and there may well be good reasons why certain recommendations cannot be done. However, it is important that these details are on the action plan as well as proposed implementation dates.

Once agreed the report will be given to a marketing organisation; internal or external as decided by the group. To date, the Council's Communications Business Adviser and Design Team have worked with the group to edit and design the reports – "working together for better services".

Photographs taken by the group and by Aberdeen City Council will be used in the report. It is important that the report is visual and easy to read.

Once the report has been printed, the report will be presented to the Council at an official launch. Elected members, senior management and officers involved with the review as well as partners (if appropriate) will be invited. The launch will be organised and led by the Housing Service Review Group.



All Members of the Housing Service Review Group would like to thank Leonora Montgomery for collating the feedback and producing the reports – her patience was immense!



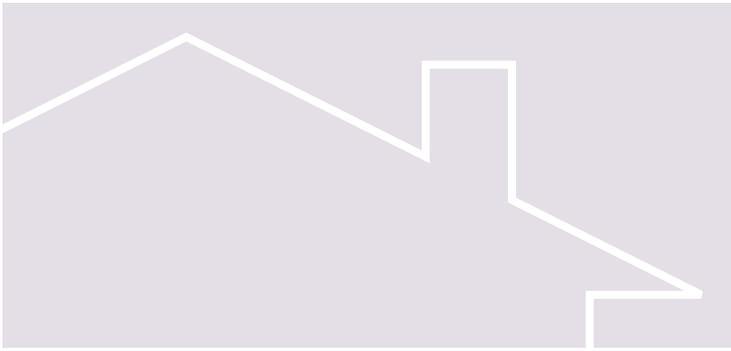
Step Five - The Re-review

This is perhaps the most important part of the review – this is where we find out if services have taken our recommendations on board (See Appendix 8).

The review group will revisit the service at an agreed time, usually within one year of the first review. This is to ensure that the action plan has been implemented but also to see if anything new is happening with the service. The completed action plan will be added to the final report.



At the re review of the Repairs Service 36 of the 38 recommendations had been implemented – the two not done were due to the current system not being able to upgrade.



Aberdeen City Council Scrutiny Framework

Aberdeen City Council's Housing Service Review Group is the umbrella group for scrutiny at the Council (see Appendix 8) but it is important that we have a framework in place to meet the Charter outcomes and the new regulatory process. The Council also want to provide our tenants/residents with as many opportunities to work together for better services; as well as to comply with our current Tenant Participation Strategy – 'Having Your Say – Playing Your Part'.

There is an ongoing recruitment process in place to get new tenants and residents involved in this framework as well as the joint working with other social landlords and their customers in the North East (see Appendix 9).

The new scrutiny framework will sit under the Citywide Groups on the Tenant Participation Framework directly under the Housing Service Review Group – the umbrella group.

This new scrutiny framework has four houses owned by Aberdeen City Council and one independent house called North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT). These houses are built on the outcomes and standards from the Scottish Social Housing Charter and reflect how we will involve our customers in the scrutiny of their housing service.



Aberdeen City Council would like to thank all the tenants who came along for a chat and a cuppa at our rent conversation cafes – they came through the door of our Value for Money House!



The Five Scrutiny Houses

This is a fun and innovative way to try to get our tenants/residents involved in their housing service. These small visual houses were built by our apprentices and our design/marketing team added to this so we now have a great visual way of engaging as well as having our small cardboard houses to hand out at various events – all with a message on them.

No.1 Communication & Participation – This house will be for our customers who want to review the way we communicate with them. Is the information provided easy to understand, jargon free and in plain English.

It will also cover the options and opportunities to participate with us and ensure that the equalities legislation is met.

It will include gypsy travellers.

This house will assist the Council in the preparation of the Annual Charter Report (ARC) - the report with the facts and figures about our Housing Service for our tenants/residents.

Charter Outcome: The Customer/Landlord Relationship

This house will have an Open Door for members of our Events Planning and Communication Group which approves the customer approved logo on all our correspondence to our customers. It is also for our citywide groups and local area group and all tenants/residents who want to work with us to ensure effective communication and participation; going out into our communities to promote tenant and resident participation.



Aberdeen City Council would like to thank members of our new amalgamated group Events and Communication for their input into the annual tenant report, the updated Tenant Handbook and for their ongoing support of Newsbite.



No.2 Housing Repairs & Improvements – This house will be for our customers who want to review the quality of housing repairs, maintenance and improvements carried out to our properties. It will ensure that the inhabitants of this house understand the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, the standard that our property is let, as well as looking to the future in energy saving.

Housing Repairs are very important and this house will not only ensure that we meet our statutory duties but also our customer satisfaction with regards to repair priorities and timescales.

Charter Outcome: **Housing Quality and Maintenance**

This house will have an Open Door for our tenants and residents who were involved in the Housing Repairs Review as well as the taster sessions, but also those who are keen to join us.

No.3 Neighbourhood & Community – This house will be for our current and future tenants. It will also include the communities where residents live. This is probably the biggest house as it covers the management of housing estates, antisocial behaviour as well as tenancy sustainment and how our properties are allocated. It also covers our Support Service formerly homeless.

Charter Outcomes:

- a) Neighbourhood & Community and**
- b) Access to Housing & Support**

This house will have an Open Door to tenants and other customers who were involved in the Estate Management Review as well as the charter taster sessions.

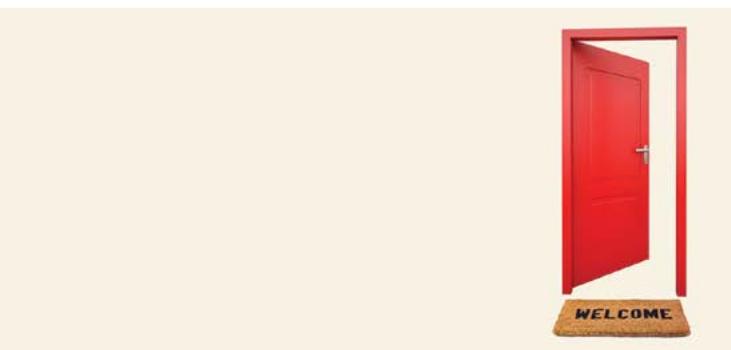
We want to hear from tenants who get support to sustain their tenancy as well as those tenants who have used the homeless service.

We want our area tenant & resident group's members to work with us.

Anti-Social Behaviour is a major problem and the Council has to work with our partners and **YOU** to address this. This house welcomes everyone living in their respective Communities.



Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group would like to say how much they have enjoyed sharing the work they have done at the study visits with North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, Angus Council. Hillcrest Housing Association, Castlehill Housing Association, Cairn Housing, Blackwood Homes and their visit to Fort William – it was great to meet you all



No.4 Getting Good Value – This house will be for our customers who want to ensure that they get value for money for their rent and service charges.

The participants in this house will look at rent management as well as the time it takes to re-let a property.

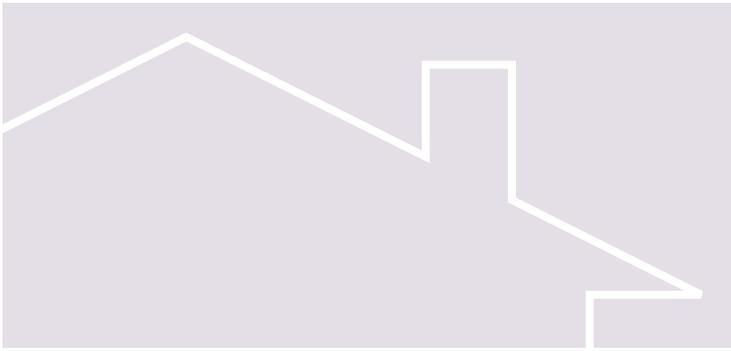
They will also look at how rents are being set; the annual rent consultation and the Housing Revenue Account – where the rent money goes. Owners in Multi Storeys who pay a service charge are welcome to join us.

This house will have an Open Door to include members of the Housing Performance and Budget Group and the Citywide Multi Storey Committee as well as any other interested tenants/residents.

No.5 North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) – This House will be for the Councils, housing associations and their tenants and residents to work together to develop an independent approach to Scrutiny in the North East. To share the costs, encourage joint training as well as scrutinising each other's services when asked to. This can also be developed to compare different landlords and bring an understanding of the issues we all face; whether a social landlord or a customer. This house has an Open Door to Scrutiny and working together.



North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together NETRALT is an award winning group. Please visit our web page NETRALT.ORG.UK and like us on Face Book.



Conclusion

We hope that after reading this guide we have persuaded you to get involved and if you are an employee of the Council you have a better understanding of what Scrutiny of services means.

This is your opportunity to work with Aberdeen City Council. It is important that we get **new** ideas, **new** opinions and **new** suggestions as well as giving **YOU**, our customer an opportunity to work together to improve our Housing Service. We will provide you with all the training and support and of course reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be paid.

Aberdeen City Council appreciates that many of our tenants and residents are already involved in tenant/resident participation. Our customers also have busy lives with family and work commitments. Therefore, we want to make it easy for them to come through the door.

Each house will open its door at least once a year – it may be more and our tenant/resident can choose to come through one, two, three, four or five doors.

The way we engage with you will vary. It will not just be turning up at a meeting, although this may be an option. However the following could be used to get you to turn the handle, come through the door and “get involved”.

- A specific event organised e.g. - A Housing Café organised by NETRALT
- A conversation café in a citywide location or area based where you can come along and chat with us
- Join in an area gala or open day
- An article in Multi Matters which you can read
- An article in Newsbite Tenant Magazine which you can read
- Utilise Information Days
- Speakers at our current citywide groups
- Focus Groups organised on a specific subject
- Use our Annual Social Event to highlight all the positive work with regards to Tenant and Resident participation
- Utilise social media to communicate
- Questionnaires or on line surveys
- We will develop an armchair group for each house – for those who want to communicate with the scrutiny houses without leaving their living room.

The list is endless and any suggestions you may have would be very welcome – what would make you come through the Scrutiny House Doors?

Remember to thank your housing volunteers for all the time they give up to work with their landlord but it is also important that they remember to have some fun and a laugh!



Handy Hints for Reviewing

Job Descriptions – It is essential to get copies of all staff you will be interviewing.

Charts or Structures – It is useful to get these for each service you review.

Identity Badges – All members of the review group have been issued with a purple lanyard with the wording of the group's logo 'working together for better services', and also an Aberdeen City Council Identity Badge with their Name and Housing Volunteer printed on them. This gives a clear identity to each group member and also makes them feel more valued. It also means that Officers are aware of who the group members are when they are in Council Buildings.

Training – These sessions have ranged from 20 minutes to all day events depending on the topic. We try to keep the sessions interactive; if joint training with other landlords is possible then this adds to the value; remember many tenants and residents have a wealth of knowledge and experience already which can be utilised.

Membership of the Group – All tenants/residents who want to participate should be encouraged to do so but it is important to recognise the strengths which members have. People may not be computer literate but they may have the ability to speak face to face. The dynamics of the review team is very important to the success of the review.

Group members are encouraged to buddy new or less confident members; no one should be turned away from joining the group.

Learn from every review you do and evolve the group to take on more responsibility. Next time we will ask the group to plan the budget and keep details of the costs involved with the review. It is important to continually evolve the group.

The Report – Remember to make the cover visual and colourful. Each report you do you get better at it – in Aberdeen our group write the report; the Council help lay out the report and design it but the sign off of the report is done by the group.

Scrutiny is a serious subject, however it is important that as a member of the review team, you enjoy the experience and you are able to have a laugh with your team members.

And of course ensure that there are plenty cups of tea/coffee and chocolate biscuits available.

So are you going to turn the Handle and Come through the Door?

Acknowledgement

All members of the Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group especially Rita Buchan, who despite poor health has contributed significantly to this document

- The Marketing and Design Teams and photographer Norman Adams for making this document come alive
- Carol Hannaford, Tenant & Resident Development Officer who supported the Group to produce this document.

If you would like further information or you would like to speak to a member of the group please contact Carol Hannaford Tenant & Resident Development Officer Tel: 01224 522839 or email channaford@aberdeencity.gov.uk who will be happy to organise this for you.

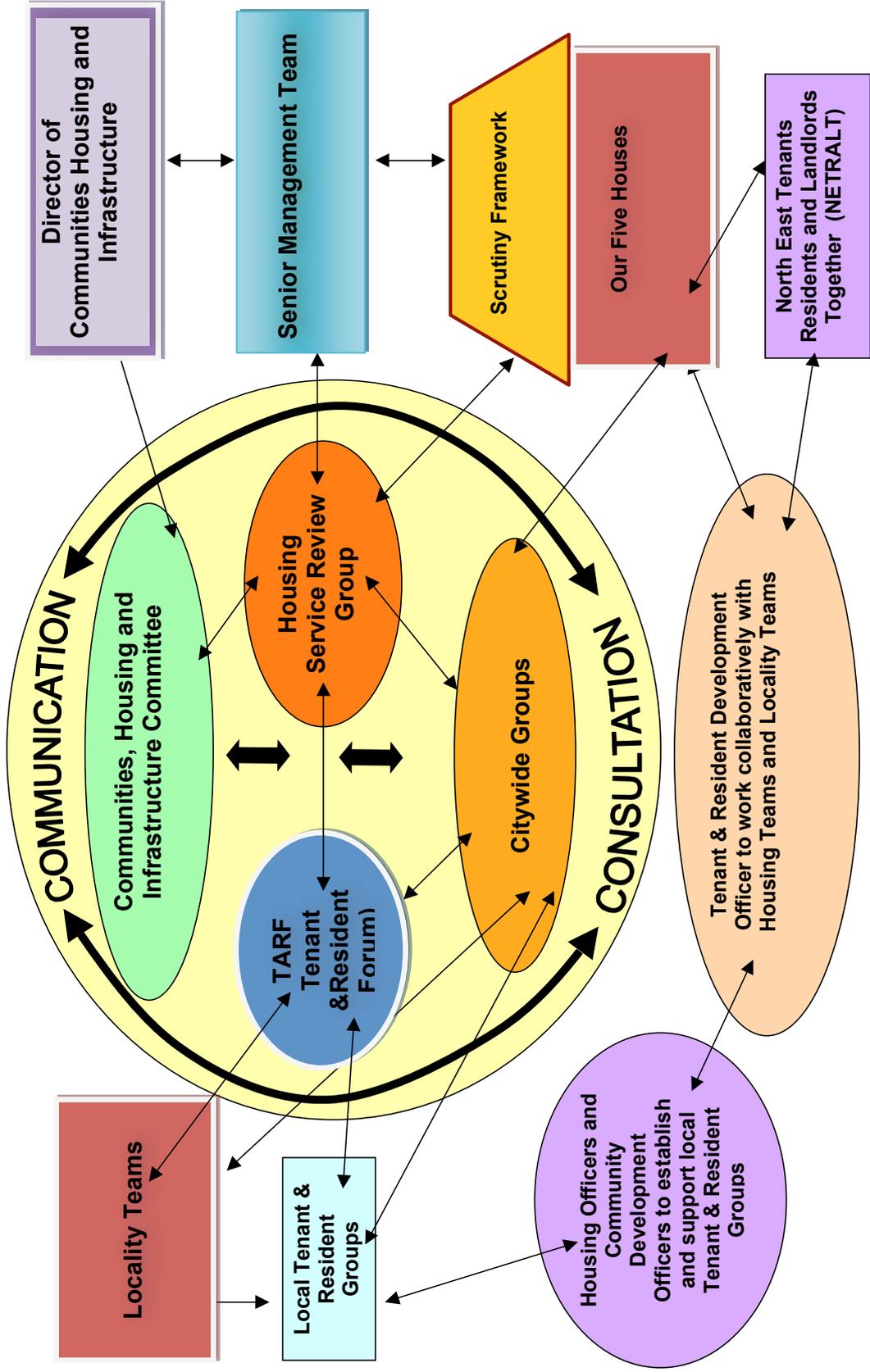
Always remember to recognise all the work your housing volunteers do – make the launch of each report special

Appendix One:

Aberdeen City Council Tenant & Resident Framework

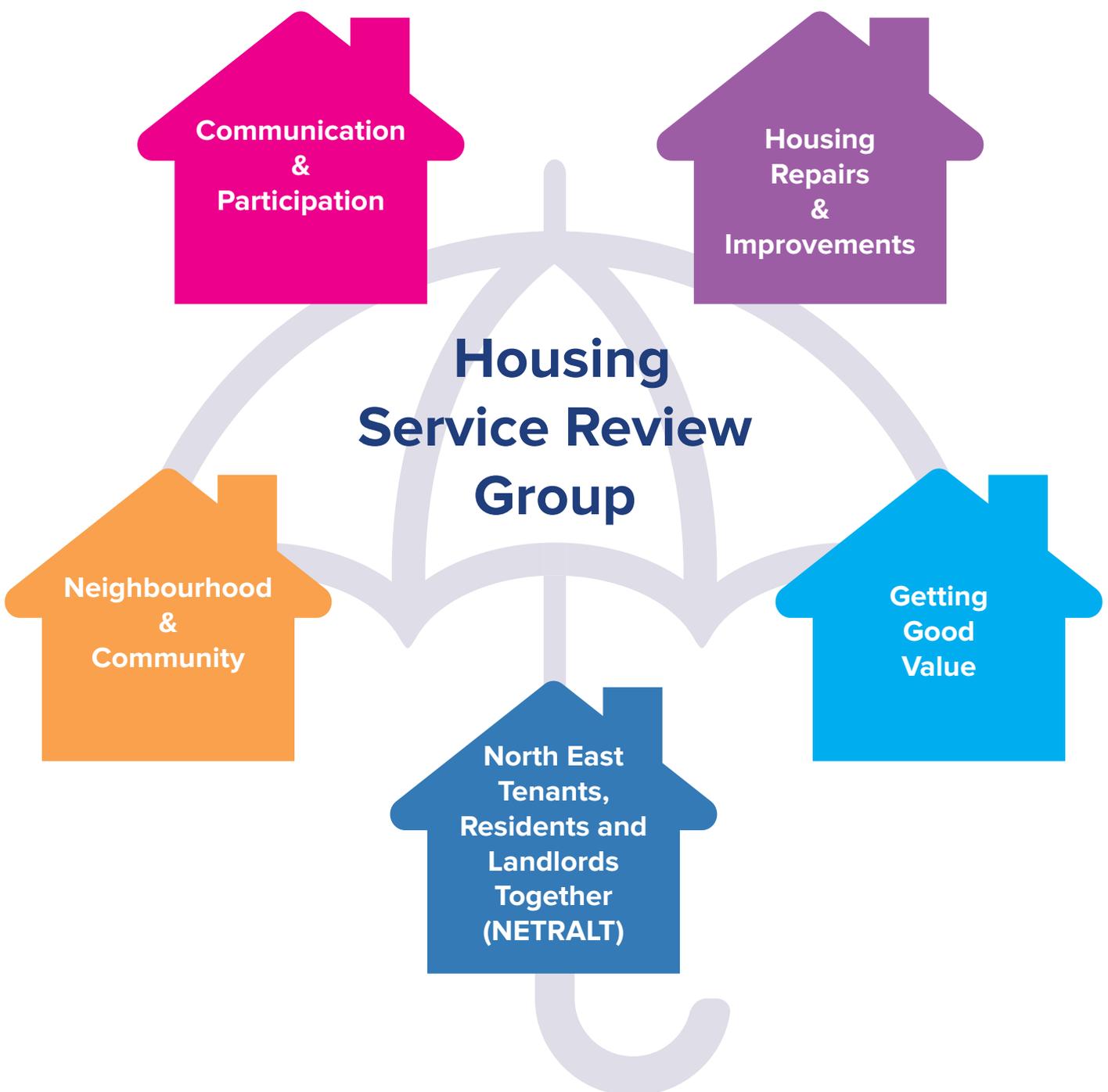
Appendix One

To create increased opportunities for tenants / residents to contribute to decisions affecting their Communities Housing and Infrastructure





Scrutiny Framework



Appendix Three:

Aberdeen Housing Service Reviewer

Your Role

As an Aberdeen Housing Service Reviewer, your job is to carry out detailed and robust assessments of the services provided by Aberdeen City Council and suggest how they can be improved. To do this, you must approach the task with the right attitudes:

- **Be honest and open** - without this, you won't be able to get the truth about services or be able to make a difference;
- **Be positive** - it's important to highlight any problems or failings, but make sure you also pick up on successes and good points. Always try to look for and suggest improvements to make the service better – for both customers and the department/organisation providing it;
- **Be friendly, polite and courteous** - you will get co-operation and support from people if you build and keep a good personal relationship with them. You must not insult, abuse or use any kind of offensive language or behaviour towards anyone whom you have contact with as part of the project. Be tough on *problems*, not people;
- **Listen and keep an open mind** about things until you have collected all the facts and evidence. Try to understand and appreciate the concerns and circumstances of the people who you come into contact with;
- Actively show that you are *interested in and care about* the service you are inspecting, and want to make a positive difference;
- Choose the *right time, place and way to feedback* your thoughts and findings. Do not share your impressions and ideas with people while you are still collecting evidence from them;
- Keep to any relevant *rules and policies* e.g. observe any bans on smoking.

Being Objective

Your direct experience as a customer is what makes you special and unique as a Service Reviewer. Your own experience and views should **inform** but **not dominate or dictate** how you work. To help you stay impartial and avoid any conflict of interest, you must:

- a) Not audit or review parts of the service that have a specific or particular **link to you and your local area** e.g. you should not assess the front-line service at the local office which serves your home).
- b) Let the Housing Service Review Group know in writing if you have any **personal connection** with any part of the service that you asked to review, (for example, if you are related to a member of staff providing that service).

-
- c) Look for evidence to **test and challenge** your personal experience of the service and organisation. Do your views reflect those of customers generally?

Handling Information

You will have access to a lot of information about Aberdeen City Council and its customers. Some of this information will be personal or commercially sensitive, and you have to judge whether to share things, or keep them confidential.

This can be a difficult balance, so you should follow simple rules in all your work:

- Treat **all** information that you receive as confidential, unless there is a clear reason to share it more widely. So, for example, you should use and share information that you collect about what service is provided, how and why. But you should not share information about members of staff or tenants personal identities or circumstances;
- If you are in any doubt about whether something is confidential or not, please ask the Tenant & Resident Development Officer.

It is possible that you may come across something during your review that really worries you, if this is the case contact a member of the TP team.

Aside from these formal protocols, you will need to be **tactful and diplomatic** (italic) in all your dealings with people as part of the project. Only you can judge this, but always think about how you say what, to whom, and what impact it will have.

Being Fair

You must have and show respect for people you deal with, and take their circumstances and personal differences into account. This is about putting equal opportunities into practise in your role. The key is to simply **respect differences fairly**, so that you do not exclude anyone from participating, or treat anyone inappropriately or unfairly.

Again, this can sometimes be difficult, and only you can make it happen. So, when doing the project think about:

- **How you assess the service** – does it allow everyone to have a say? e.g. telephone surveys may exclude people whose first language is not English;
- **Where the service is based**- e.g. holding interviews in an upper floor office may be difficult for people who use a wheelchair or have limited mobility;

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- **When meetings are held-** e.g. holding focus groups during the day may exclude people with childcare responsibilities or who are at work;
 - **Being consistent.** For example, don't be 'tougher' on some people than others without reason.

Again, if you are in any doubt about how your role might affect different people, please ask the member of the Tenant & Resident Development Officer

Being Professional

Being professional is partly about all the things covered above, but it is also about how you personally conduct yourself. As a Service Reviewer you are an ambassador for yourself, all tenants, The Housing Service Review Group and Tenant Participation as a whole. Most people will judge the project on how you present yourself and behave. So, to ensure a good, professional image, think about:

- Your **personal appearance and dress** - be clean, smart and appropriate;
- How you **speak** – be clear, concise and courteous;
- Your **body language** – be relaxed, focused and positive;
- Be **organised and punctual** – plan and prepare things well, and be on time.

Being in control – never do an inspection if you have recently had alcohol, or prescribed drugs that cause drowsiness'), are too tired, or have done anything that might affect your concentration and poise.

Staying Safe

You must observe any rules and health and safety guidelines given to you by Aberdeen City Council, and take reasonable steps to ensure your own health, safety and welfare.

If you ever feel too much pressure or stress because of your role as a Reviewer please tell any member of the group and/or the Tenant & Resident Development Officer

I agree with the rules set out in the Code of Conduct. If at any time, it is found that I am not abiding by these rules I will automatically be taken off of the Housing Service Review Project.

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix Four:

Aberdeen City Council Data Protection

Housing Service Review Team must:

- Have legitimate grounds for collecting and using personal data;
- Be open and honest about their identity;
- Explain how you intend to use the data that you collect;
- Make sure that the individuals who take part in the review have consented to their data being collected and for it to be used for the purpose(s) in question;
- Ensure that any data collected is not shared with anyone out with the Council;
- Give individuals appropriate privacy notices when collecting their personal data;
- Ensure that all report data is collected anonymously;
- Comply with data protection;

Before the review, be clear to the participants:

- That they are under no obligation to participate and have the right to object to their data being collected;
- Why you are collecting personal data;
- How you intend to use the data collected;
- That the review is anonymous ;
- The report will be made public but tenants will not be identified and all responses will be anonymous;
- There will be no direct marketing as a result of taking part;
- No personal data will be shared with any 3rd parties;
- All data will be held on our secure server;

After the review:

You must:

- Ensure that the collected data is kept secure;
- Ensure that the personal data you hold about the individual is sufficient for the purpose you are holding it for & any data collected is purely for the Housing Service Review;
- Identify the minimum amount of personal data you need to fulfil your purpose & not hold any more information than is needed;
- Not use the data in ways that are unacceptable or unexpected by the person it is about;

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- Not do anything unlawful with the data you collect. It must only be used for the purposes specified at the outset;
 - Review the length of time you keep personal data & consider the purpose you hold the information for when deciding on how long to retain it;
 - Securely delete any information that is no longer needed via confidential waste;

Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles of the Data Protection Act, which make sure that personal information is:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with your rights
- Secure
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Housing Review Group

UNDERTAKING

For signing by members of the Housing Review Group who are undertaking a review of the services provided by the Council.

Confidentiality

I hereby;

- (i) acknowledge that, as a member of the Housing Review Group, I may be given access to documents, records and information of the Aberdeen City Council housing department which are of a confidential and/or sensitive nature;
- (ii) undertake not to copy, remove or disclose any such document, record or information to any other party without the prior written permission of Aberdeen City Council;
- (iii) agree to take all reasonable steps to prevent such disclosure; and
- (iv) accept that the confidentiality obligations of this undertaking continue even after I cease to be a member of Housing Review Group

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals):

Date of signing:

Please return the signed copy to:
Sarah Kemlo, Paralegal, Team 2, Corporate Governance,
Business Hub 6, Level 1 South, Marischal College, Aberdeen.

Appendix Five:

Housing Service Review of Estate Management

		Notes
Proposed Time Scales	The group agreed that clear timescales were required and suggested to start the actual review in April until June with the report launched in November 2015	Spring Summer was best time – would be in Offices June/September missing out July
Want to Achieve	Better Understanding of Estate Teams Consistency in Housing Offices New role of Housing Officer	Group want to work with the Teams
Names of Reviewers	Norma Groves Betty Simpson James Carroll Jim Galbraith Paul McMenemy Florence Cal Anglia Iain Thomson (new) and Edith Alexander Also Pearl Smart - not at meeting	Need to try to get new members for the main group
Housing Offices	Mastrick, Marischal, Tillydrone and Woodside	With regard to Kincorth Access point – group wanted to concentrate on where Housing Staff are based
Staff	Housing Managers Senior Housing Officers Housing Officers Assistant Housing Officers Void Control Officer	Require Job descriptions Citywide Roles of Managers Line Management Charts with names Policies & Procedures Leaflets Tenant Handbook Web Page Staff Training – Induction on job training etc.

Partnerships	Council Partners e.g. Police Community Hub Social Care – Case Conferences Bon Accord Care – Sheltered Housing Family Project Education	List to be looked at with Housing Staff
Specifics	Rent Management Void Management Allocations Tenant & Community Engagement New Support Team	Perhaps they could be looked at in more detail as part of review or new Support Service as a separate review.
Reviewers Require	Refresher Training Folder Notebook Questionnaires Photographer Input from Alana for ongoing editing	Perhaps use idea of having templates Review team to meet and plan questions they want to ask. Group also want to ask Housing Managers what they want to achieve from review Lesson learnt from last review – to collate information on going rather than leave it until the end
Advertising	Need to get more members for main group Review Group to speak to tenants – drop in Use Newsbite in Spring to advertise the review Use SHMU radio to promote/advertise	
Next Step	Timetable to be agreed with each Housing Office Questionnaires – on line for Officer v face to face	Timetable to be drawn up with Housing Managers or Senior Housing Officers

Appendix Six:

Timetable - Housing Management Review

Thursday 28 May	Friday 29 May	Monday 1 June	Tuesday 2 June
10am - meet & greet	10.30 - Tenants to meet Contracts manager and visit blocks.	AHO & HO - Trays	AHO trays
10.30am - Tenants meeting with Wendy	12.15pm - lunch	Lease Signings	Lease signings
12.15pm - Lunch	1.30 - Tenants to meet with Doug & Pauline	Margaret K - keys, voids, term	Mary reception
1.30pm - Tenants meeting with Jar		General complaints with HO	General complaints with HO
2.30pm - tenants meet with HO		viewings	Duty with AHO
3.00pm - tenants meet with AHO		routine visits	routine visits
3.30pm - finish	3.30pm finish	Environmental Improvements	Voids (1/2 set/full set/long term voids)
Tenants to see		Hub meeting	

AHO - Trays

HO - Trays

Lease signings

Routine Visits

General Complaints - parking/flytipping etc

Mary 1 hour

Margaret to see keys & terminations, bills

AHO - Duty (need to ensure that the tenant being interviewed is happy that tenant sits in cubicle)

Viewings

Voids - take them to see 1/2 set, full sets, long term voids

Environmental Improvement

Meetings

Questions for Assistant Housing Officer

1. What support do you give to the Housing Officer?
2. What would make your job better?
3. What is your role with regard to the Lease signing?
4. Do you have to deal with difficult customers?
5. What kind of training/support do you get to deal with difficult customers?
6. What is a typical day in the life of an assistant housing officer
7. Do you have regular team meetings with the Housing Officers
8. List four words to sum up how you feel about your job?

Questions for Void Controller

1. Have you ever lost a key?
2. How long have you been doing this job?
3. How many terminations do you deal with in a year? (approx. number)
4. What kind of training or support do you get?
5. What is the best part of your job?
6. We have heard a bit about the void path on the computer – what do you think of this?
7. What ideas do you have to improve or make your job better?
8. List four words to sum up how you feel about your job?

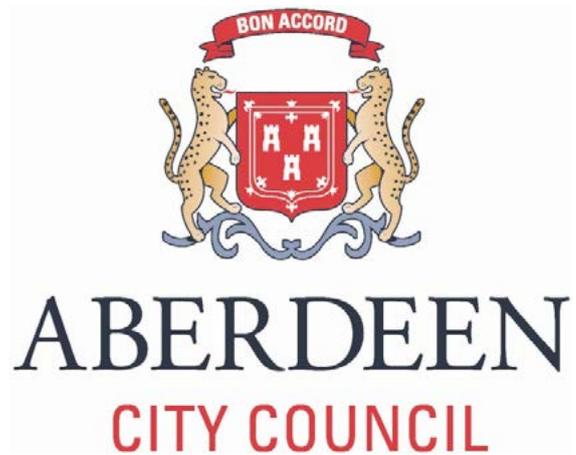
Questions for Front Line Reception Staff

1. How many customers do you speak to in a day? (Approx. number)
2. What is the most common reason customers come into this office?
3. Do you get many difficult customers?
4. What kind of training/support do you get to deal with difficult customers?
5. What would you do to improve your job?
6. Do you think the opening times of this office meet the needs of the customer?
7. Do you think there are enough staff on duty at all times?
8. List four words to sum up how you feel about your job?

Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group.

My Review of

Name of Reviewer.....



“Working Together for Better Services”

Draft Reviewers Notebook

This Booklet has been put together by members of Aberdeen Housing Service Review Group with the support of the Tenant & Community Engagement Officer. It is intended as a guide to help you put the information on paper to make it easier for this to be collated. Of course this is only a guide and you can add any information to this which you feel should be included – it is important that every member of the review team feels that their views matter because they do! Remember to approach each review with an open mind – you should have no preconceived ideas about what you are going to find.

At the start of each review a member of the review group will be appointed by the group to collate the information and draft the final report. This report has to be agreed by the entire review group as well as the main group before it is submitted to the service manager(s) undergoing the review.

You can help by:

On each page please put the **date, the venue and the time you arrived and left** – for our records – this will help with pulling the report together – gives an accurate time spent doing the review. Try to print or write clearly as this will save time – if you want to, you can type up your notes – the choice is yours.

Who did I meet – make a list of the people you meet as well as their job titles and what you spoke about. Perhaps you just completed a questionnaire with them and this could be noted. You may have job shadowed or just had an informal chat – please note as much information down on paper at the time. We can always cut down on text in a report but we cannot make it up!

What did I see – eg Policy, Job Profile (similar to a job description), Procedure, Leaflet, etc. When you are making notes – think about – was it easy to understand, did you ask the staff member about their job profile. Perhaps make a list of the items and then put comments beside each one.

What did I think was really good – this is a very important part of the process as it is what YOU think – perhaps a staff member handled a difficult situation really well, perhaps a policy was very clear, the initial meeting with the manager was very good, you were made to feel very welcome. These are just a few suggestions – but remember it is what you think! Please include as much information as possible.

What did I think could make our service better – this is what it is all about – your suggestions as everyone sees things differently. Perhaps you think it is such a small thing – you don't want to mention it but remember other members of the review group may or may not see this so write it down. There are no right or wrong answers. It is all about trying to improve services for everyone.

Draft Reviewers Notebook

General Comments to help you

Don't think you have to write down every word said to you.

Learn just to bullet point things eg Staff - very helpful, Office very busy 12 - 2

Read over your notes on the day or the day after and clarify anything

before you forget.

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand the first time.

But the most important thing is to enjoy the experience - after all you are giving up your time to work with Aberdeen City Council.

Part Example of a Service Action Plan
COMMUNITY SAFETY
HOUSING SERVICE REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

	Recommendations – City Wardens Service	Accepted Yes / No	Action / Comments	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date / Update
1	Utilise technology better to allow direct reporting of faults and issues found on the street, from the street.	Yes	This is now ongoing new software has been added to the City Warden's handhelds. The software is being tested on street at the moment. Once this has been done it's hoped that additional reporting information can be developed such as reporting street faults, fly tipping etc.	Robin Donald	Ongoing
2	Encourage residents to report issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, road and lighting faults.	Yes	This is done through community engagement, with Wardens attending community meetings, schools, community centres. Also getting the word out through partner agencies, leaflet drops etc.		Ongoing
3	Improve training for Council staff and Police to ensure they understand what help the City Wardens can offer.	Yes	Any future training for new City Warden staff will include input from our partner agencies and colleagues. The aim through the Community Safety Hub is to make everyone aware of what all agencies have to offer.		Ongoing
4	Expand the use of body worn CCTV to all City Wardens.	Yes	Additional Body Worn Video has been purchased, which means that Wardens working in the evenings all have access to this kit. Additional cameras will be purchased when funds become available.		Complete
5	Make pay by phone or indeed app parking available to street parking as well as car parks.	Yes	Cashless Parking was rolled out on street across the City in mid March 2013. The only areas not covered are the Controlled parking zones in Foresterhill and Garthdee, it is hoped these will be added soon.		Complete
6	Examine how the sides of parking ticket machines could be utilised to promote parking rules and community safety issues, removing the blank spaces for vandals to place graffiti tags, as carried out in Edinburgh and Dundee.	Yes	The sides of Pay and Display machines have been utilised for advertising the Cashless Parking option as well as letting customers know the location codes.		Complete
7	Assess the current parking zones in the city centre and especially Golden Square to ensure the rules are fair and evenly implemented.	Yes	Elected members have made a request for officers to look into the current charges and zones across the city, this includes Golden Square, and a report is expected to be put to committee in November 2013.		Ongoing

Appendix Ten:

Example of Part of a Service Action Plan Re – Review

Recommendations	Response	Actions	Responsible Officer	Due Date	Update July 2012
1. The council should finish voids to a higher standard in a similar manner to housing associations and automatically swap locks out when occupants change.	Minimal letting at standard endorsed committee. It would cost £40,000 to change all locks so not financially viable to change locks on all occasions but should tenants return only one key then this is done automatically	Cost for decorations for all voids and change locks. Costing implications	Jim Taylor	Complete	TARF group were given a presentation by QA & PM Officers – average cost spent on each void is £2964.00 for last year
2. An internal and external media campaign should be devised to raise awareness of the costs to tenants of both anti-social and DIY related damage to Council property.	Use Newsbite opportunity in 2012	Cost of re-chargeable repairs in voids. Enter information into Newsbite.	Donald Mclean	April 2012	This is on going – to check that National award for Nicola has been recognised – have used Newsbite
3. A welcome pack given to tenants should include a letter from the chair of any existing residents association and information as to how to start an association where none exists. The		Chair of Tenants Association /Anti Social Behaviour. Discuss with TPO's to assist. TPO's to	TPO Carol/Caroline Housing	April 2012	“TP Needs you” is ongoing and looking at other ways to promote

<p>pack would make clear the problems of over enthusiastic DIY and provide information on dealing with anti social behaviour issues. Clear guidance given on a web hub for tenants (perhaps including a forum) and in leaflets should clarify what might be done at the end of a tenancy in terms of costly remedial works following DIY works</p>		liaise with Sales and Consent.			<p>“harmonious living” – getting a tenant approved logo. Leaflets are being reviewed – tenants and residents will be involved</p>
<p>4. A unique reference number should be attributed to all fault or complaint reports whether given to staff in person at a surgery or visit, or via a call centre or online. This reference should be given in all emails, letters, online fault report tracking and when customers use the call centre or web reporting. This unique reference number should be applied to all reporting via the call centre.</p>	<p>System unable to do that but unique reference numbers are attributed to each job</p>	<p>To be investigated further in terms of systems integration to produce unique number.</p>	Allan Small	Complete	<p>Not feasible to do this at present – have a 7 digit number</p>
<p>5. Customers calling the call centre should be offered a text of email update on their fault, this would ensure they were aware of the reference number and would also allow updates to be provided.</p>	<p>Not possible at present</p>	<p>Investigate possibility further</p>	Kenny Don	Complete	<p>Text customer when on way to the job</p>



Rita Buchan (Tenant)

**In memory of Rita Buchan who died on 3 Nov 2016.
She was a Tenant Participation Champion
for many years in Aberdeen City Council**



So you have decided to
come through the door
– Carol and the Group
look forward to
meeting you

DSB0553/LM/V1.0

For more information please contact:

Carol Hannaford
Development Officer – Tenant & Resident Participation

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