

# Scrutiny and Empowerment Partners Ltd

## Training and Consultancy Services



## Welcome!

**Scrutiny and Empowerment Partners Ltd (SEP)** was set up by Linda Levin and Yvonne Davies to help landlords and their tenants to develop and sustain excellent tenant scrutiny and empowerment arrangements.

Linda is an experienced service improvement and tenant involvement consultant and Yvonne, an experienced consultant and former Head of Housing & Economic Development at the Audit Commission, have set up this partnership to help tenants and landlords meet and exceed expectations of customers.

**SEP** offers a comprehensive range of services and tools to help tenants and landlords achieve excellence across all services.

We are experienced in service review and we can build the capacity of your staff and tenants to work with us, in a partnership that promises to challenge the way you work as well as delivering practical outcomes for landlords and customers.

Our products and services are always tailored to suit the context of the organisation we work with, we know that one size does not fit all and so we will work with you to develop a brief that meets your needs.

*Read on to find out more about our most popular service offers, but remember if you don't see what you want on the list, just give us a call.*

## 1. Supporting landlords and tenants to set up scrutiny arrangements

Are your tenants and staff getting ready to up the tempo on scrutiny arrangements as the new changes to the tenant empowerment standard appear this autumn? Services we offer include the following:

### *Helping you to develop your approach to scrutiny*

We can help you to develop your approach to scrutiny, taking into account your operating context, what your tenants want and the regulatory framework.

Scrutiny arrangements will need to fit in with governance structures in order to meet regulatory requirements from April 2012 as the regulator monitors consumer protection through the governance standard and tests the effectiveness of the tenant challenge:

- ✓ Aims and objectives for your approach to scrutiny
- ✓ Terms of reference, codes of conduct and confidentiality
- ✓ How relationships and communications will work between your scrutiny panel and Board/Cabinet/Committees, the executive team, staff and other tenants (involved and non involved)

### *Recruiting scrutiny panel members and customer inspectors*

- ✓ Development of person specifications, skills and roles to ensure diversity of access for tenants
- ✓ Advice and support on effective recruitment and selection methods and access to the right training to support partnership working between landlord and tenant
- ✓ Involving diverse customers and young people
- ✓ Harnessing support from your existing involved tenants

### *Preparing your staff and Board for scrutiny*

- ✓ Structures and frameworks for scrutiny
- ✓ What to expect from scrutiny and how to embed this
- ✓ How to support and challenge findings

- ✓ How to develop SMART action plans with measurable outcomes
  - ▣ *Induction training for tenants on how to scrutinise*
- ✓ Defining co-regulation and scrutiny and what it means in practice
- ✓ How scrutiny works and the steps to follow
- ✓ The national standards and local offers and how to measure them
- ✓ Developing a framework for scrutiny and choosing topics to scrutinise

## 2. Training & support for staff and tenants, including away-days, taster sessions, one off bespoke training and a series of accredited training.

Training can truly empower your tenants and build their capacity and help to address worklessness and career progression. Investment in the right type and level of training will reap huge rewards for the tenants and landlords, particularly when it's as practical as ours. We offer a range of accredited training, including CIH qualifications. Here are just some of the most popular.

### ▣ Training

- ✓ *Team building and soft skills development, for example: assertiveness, presentation, and negotiation skills.* It is so important for tenants and landlords to work together. Respecting each-others' point of view, reaching agreement and demonstrating a united front will help any panel to achieve amazing results.
- ✓ *Technical skills* in broad terms, for example: interviewing skills, analysing data, recording evidence, producing reports and monitoring action plans
- ✓ *Reality checker training: including:*
  - Defining the role of a customer inspector/empty property auditor
  - Assessing the landlord promises, including website; leaflets and social media content
  - Mystery shopping techniques - by telephone, email, web enquiry, text, office visit and letter

- Estate, block and scheme inspections
- Customer survey techniques and how to use feedback to improve services

### Support

- ✓ **Training needs assessments and personal development plans:** we have developed a detailed framework for assessing the Panels strengths and areas for further development.
- ✓ **Training the trainer:** building the capacity of your staff to deliver training to tenants, including fun exercises, templates and programmes of work
- ✓ **Coaching clubs:** Practical coaching and mentoring events for tenants and separately for staff involved in scrutiny. Events allow those from different organisations to come together to:
  - Share learning and ideas
  - Receive presentations about the latest hot topics from experts
  - Network, discuss issues and make new contacts
  - Coach and mentor each other, with the support of trained facilitators
  - Action learn, get motivated and take away action plans
- ✓ **Hot topic workshops and away-days for staff and/or tenants**

Interactive training and networking on practical topics can be one off, a series of workshops, or, can be delivered through staff and tenant away-days such as:

- Value for money and assessing costs of services
- Diversity & inclusion, recruiting and involving hard to engage customers
- Top ten questions to ask when interviewing on service review
- Linking scrutiny with your other involvement structure

- Soft skills like communication, conflict handling and managing meetings

*Why not join with another landlord(s) in your area and commission a joint workshop session and keep your costs down?*

### **3. Service reviews using our assessment expertise and involving your tenants in a major way in those reviews**

We have built a bank of good practice in empowerment and our experience of regulation and service review enables us to use inspection techniques, hand in hand with your tenants to complete service health checks and service review.

Our service provides landlords with a robust assessment of their services and an action plan for change/improvement to achieve excellence: This service involves your tenants in service reviews alongside us, building their capacity at the same time as your services are subject to independent scrutiny:

- ✓ Involving your tenants in project management
- ✓ Working alongside tenants to complete interviews; design reality checks; review documents; agree recommendations which are customer service enhancements and jointly report their views
- ✓ Supplementing this with a technical audit of whether services are being delivered by reviewing systems, working procedures and testing delivery
- ✓ Capturing ideas from Board/Committee, managers, staff involved and non-involved tenants to improve services
- ✓ Assessment of outcomes against national and local standards
- ✓ Assessment of good practice from other organisations
- ✓ SMART action plans, evaluation and monitoring

#### 4. Accreditation rewards and awards

The regulator and government are encouraging independent validation. We are working with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to develop a good practice guide on behalf of the TSA, based on learning from the 10 co-regulatory champions. We are using that experience to work with landlords and tenants to pick up the best practices which work and to develop an **accreditation scheme** to recognise developing, good and excellent practices for landlords and their tenants involved in scrutiny which is **outcome based**.

Recognition of the hard work landlords and tenant volunteers put in is the best way to celebrate your investment in scrutiny and can help to take you to the next level. Accreditation assessments are underway **with 10 organisations**

Our scheme has three levels of accreditation:

- ✓ **Bronze**
- ✓ **Silver**
- ✓ **Gold**

#### 5. Reviewing and enhancing Customer Involvement Strategies, linking this to continuous improvement strategies, the role of governance and the achievement of value for money.

As value for money becomes even more important, many organisations are taking the opportunity for a whole scale review of existing mechanisms for involving tenants and linking this to continuous improvement strategies, business planning and the work of their Board.

We can help you add value through review, renewal and reinvigoration your involvement strategy and its important links to your business. For example:

- ✓ Challenging your existing strategy and the outcomes it delivers, in partnership with your staff and tenants
- ✓ Reviewing your existing involvement activities and feedback surveys to help you understand how they can achieve a lean fit with your

existing reality checkers; service improvement groups and your tenants voice

- ✓ Agreeing a new vision and strategy based on the needs and expectations of your customers, the needs of your organisation and tenants, including regulatory compliance and structures of challenge and approval through governance.
- ✓ Reviewing your continuous improvement strategies to link with the involvement strategy
- ✓ Reviewing your structure of reporting improvements to board, to ensure these are lean and deliver efficient outcomes for customers

## 6. **New product development, for example: Helping you to develop & promote the Right to Manage and Tenant Cashback; helping you to use social media and to involve young people.**

### **Right to Manage (RTM)**

Our experienced associates have set up over a dozen co-operatives from scratch and used the RTM as a pick and mix to take on the management of small local services and whole estate management. New directions in July from the CLG will mean a greater expectation for landlords to promote RTM in 2012.

- ✓ Bringing you up to date with progress on all aspects of the RTM and forthcoming expectations
- ✓ Presenting information to tenants on the art of the possible
- ✓ Facilitating debate and understanding big and small successes
- ✓ Walking interested organisations through the RTM and what would change if services are managed by trained and experienced tenants

### **Tenant cashback**

From April 2012 landlords will be required to introduce tenant cashback schemes. We know there are pros and cons. In learning from our customers who are pilots, we can help facilitate the debate with your tenants, covering issues such as:



- ✓ What conditions for cashback might be acceptable?
- ✓ How can this promote good tenancy management?
- ✓ How can we manage health and safety?
- ✓ What opportunities can this give for apprenticeship/trainee and social enterprise models?
- ✓ How can this to work for landlords, whilst enhancing tenant choice?

### 📱 Social Media and feedback from un-involved tenants & young people

Are you up with the times?

- ✓ Have you chosen the right social media platform to engage your customers?
- ✓ What are you using social networking for?
- ✓ Have you been successful in engaging new and young customers?

## 7. Benchmarking and good practice through membership of Scrutiny and Empowerment Partners' web based services

SEP set up benchmarking arrangements with members of our web based national scrutiny network, **Scrutiny and Empowerment Partnership**.

The network gives access to free courses, advice, guidance, good practice and you can share what other members are doing, including their activity, success, hints and tips as well as their working structures and scrutiny reports on services scrutinised (to name but a few)

**Why not become a member of our Scrutiny and Empowerment Partnership to access all of this extremely useful information on Tenant Advisor?** Membership fees are £450 plus VAT per year.

Organisations with 1,500 properties or less pay only £250 plus VAT. Once you join, we will send you a unique password for access to

[www.tenantadvisor.net](http://www.tenantadvisor.net)

## Why choose SEP?

- ✓ Our training is externally recognised, and our reviews are based on extensive experience, so you can trust the quality
- ✓ Our associates are experienced in all aspects of service review, assessment and improvement, tenant involvement and empowerment from a landlord and tenant perspective.
- ✓ We have great partnerships with landlords and tenants who demonstrate excellence and have worked with us to advise on and deliver projects
- ✓ Landlords and tenants are left with confidence, templates to carry on and achieve fantastic outcomes, when our work is complete
- ✓ We are proudly working with Centre for Public Scrutiny and the Co-regulatory Champions to produce good practice guidance based on the Champion's experience, on behalf of the Tenant Services Authority
- ✓ We have built excellent relationships with national policy, the Tenant Services Authority, Communities & Local Government and the Housing Ombudsman services.
- ✓ Our costs are very competitive

***Want to know more about our services, or ask any questions?***

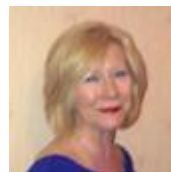
Please call us - we will listen and design a service which is specific to your needs

**Yvonne & Linda**



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