



Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Blackpool Customer Scrutiny Assembly (BCSA) provides an independent, customer focused, advisory and consultative role to Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) and Blackpool Council. They act as a positive critical friend assessing and challenging the service that BCH provides on behalf of its customers. As part of co-regulation BCH is committed to greater involvement of tenants and residents in decision making and scrutiny of service that will lead to greater customer satisfaction and an excellent service.

2. Mission Statement and Vision

Blackpool Councils vision is to “build a Blackpool where aspiration and ambition are encouraged and supported. We will seek to narrow the gap between the richest members of our society and the poorest and deliver a sustainable and fairer community, of which our communities will be proud”

Its priorities are to:

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement
- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable
- Expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer
- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged
- Attract sustainable investment and create quality jobs
- Encourage responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of our communities
- Improve housing standards and the environment we live in by using housing investment to create stable communities
- Create safer communities and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce

BCH reflect these overarching statements by its mission to be “an organisation working with current and future customers as well as partners to improve not only

peoples homes but also their quality of life – Working together to Achieve Quality Living.” Their vision is to be the best housing service in the North West and to be an excellent employer. They aim to provide services that their staff are proud to deliver and that their customers are delighted to receive.

The BCSA aim to support these by ensuring that they are upheld and inherent in the work that it carries out and in its role of scrutinising BCH.

3. Role

The BCSA agrees what areas of BCH frontline services it wishes to scrutinise and is provided with the information required, in order to gain a detailed view of how BCH performs in that area. The BCSA’s role and duties includes the following:

- Producing an annual scrutiny programme and meeting schedule scrutinising individual areas of BCH’s frontline services on a programme basis.
- Monitoring performance of individual service areas and making recommendations for improvements.
- Maintaining links and ensuring effective communications with the Board, Senior Management Team and Service Improvement Groups.
- Ensuring the Board and Senior Management Team decision making meets residents’ reasonable expectations.
- The independent assessment and scrutiny of complaints prior to ombudsman involvement.

The Scrutiny will:

- Ensure that tenant/customer priorities are being used as a basis for performance assessment
- Provide tenants/customers with the opportunity to comment on service delivery and to drive forward service improvement
- Enable tenants/customers to benchmark services with others
- Link in to existing customer involvement activities and customer feedback to inform their work
- Assess how services scrutinised link to local service standards

The BCSA will access a range of performance indicators and reports to keep an overview of performance and to help inform the selection of topics for future scrutiny.

The BCSA will report to the Senior Management Team their findings upon the completion of each scrutiny review. This will take the format of the presentation of a written report containing recommendations followed by a discussion workshop. The Senior Management Team will then have 6 weeks to produce an action plan responding to the recommendations within the report.

If the BCSA feel that the SMT have not responded appropriately, failed to act or cannot agree, the BCSA can refer the matter to the Board and the Council.

The BCSA will feedback to customers and staff via team meetings, BCH intranet the Customer Magazine and website. Members will also attend other resident involvement events to discuss and promote their work.

4. Code of Conduct

Each member will sign up to a code of conduct between members. The Code of Conduct document outlines and sets the standards for how the BCSA conduct themselves towards each other, and also everyone they come into contact with, during the course of the scrutiny work they are involved in.

5. Conflict of Interests

The BCSA member must:

Disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any tenant or customer group, which might possibly affect or influence their approach to a scrutiny or service review task. They must also offer to withdraw from a scrutiny where a conflict of interest is clear and substantial.

A member of the BCSA must not be a member of any other customer involvement panel such as SIPs or a member of the board as this constitutes a conflict of interest. Involvement will mean the resignation of their membership of the BCSA.

6. Confidentiality

The BCSA member must sign an Agreement to maintain Confidentiality. During the course of their duties the BCSA member will come into contact with information that is confidential to BCH, its customers, partners and stakeholders.

The BCSA will respect the confidentiality of personal information regarding individuals and their views which is provided for the purpose of conducting a scrutiny. The BCSA will not mention specific individuals or cases which may lead to the identification of an individual.

7. Gifts and Hospitality

If any gifts or hospitality are received by any member in the course of acting as part of the BCSA these must be declared to the group. These will be logged by the Scrutiny Officer in line with BCH and Council policy.

8. Membership

Members will be recruited by the BCSA members with the support of the Scrutiny Officer and BCH Customer Involvement team.

Recruitment will be open and transparent and selection will be based on objective criteria and members will be required to undertake a CRB check.

Each member will be required to complete a questionnaire designed to capture experience and opinion. Each new member will also be invited to an informal meeting with the Director of Housing at BCH, Customer Involvement Manager, Scrutiny Officer and Chair of BCSA.

All members will be able to reclaim expenses for reasonable costs incurred in their role with the BCSA, in line with Blackpool Coastal Housings expense policy.

If a member wishes to step down/resign they should inform the BCSA via the Scrutiny Officer in writing/email.

9. Management

The BCSA will determine their schedule for meetings and Scrutiny during the year. It is expected that the group will meet regularly but will have no less than 12 formal meetings during the course of the year and complete at least 2 Scrutiny's in each 12 month period.

The quorum for any decision making will be 50% of the group present. The group will reach decisions by consensus. If this is not possible members will vote and a majority will be required. In the event of a tie the Chair has the casting vote.

10. Monitoring and Review

Each year a health check of the BCSA will take place by the Scrutiny Officer to ensure that it is performing its duties effectively. All agreements and documents will be reviewed as part of this process.

If there are concerns with the performance and/or conduct of the group the BCH Board have the right to commission an independent review of the BCSA.

Members of the group will receive training and support in order to carry out their duties as part of the BCSA.

11. Dealing with Breaches

Where a member is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference or Confidentiality Agreement or is involved in activity which brings the name of the BCSA or BCH/The Council into disrepute, action will be taken. This will be by the Scrutiny Officer in conjunction and agreement with the BCSA Chair (or nominated representative) and the BCH Customer Involvement Manager.

In the first instance or if the breach is deemed to be minor following investigation a warning will be given and the member will receive refreshment training on confidentiality and conduct.

In the case of a second breach or more serious breach, following investigation, the member will be suspended and removed from the Scrutiny Assembly and the outcome will be notified in writing.

Examples of serious breaches include but are not confined to the following:

Misusing or disclosing tenant feedback or other tenant information. Acting in a manner that causes offence to another person eg displays of prejudice, verbal or non verbal.

In all cases the member has the right to appeal to the Customer Involvement Manager at BCH.

All investigations will take place within 10 days and the outcome communicated within 3 days.

Signed by

Date