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**Terms of Reference**

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| * ‘‘‘insight’’’ is the name given to our customer scrutiny panel * Great Places Housing Group will be referred to as GPHG throughout the document * Customer is used as a generic term that refers to anyone who needs, requests or receives a service from the GPHG, including tenants and leaseholders, applicants for rehousing, residents who live in neighbourhoods managed by GPHG and people buying their homes from GPHG |

**Introduction**

* ‘insight’ will play a critical friend role ensuring GPHG services are delivered to the highest standards. Members of ‘insight’ undertake this role on a purely voluntary basis and do not receive remuneration from GPHG.
* ‘insight’ does not have any executive powers
* The Board has overall decision making powers, through their legal constitution.
* The Board will support the work of ‘insight’ and ensure members are adequately resourced to complete their duties as outlined in this document.
* The Board supports the role of ‘insight’ in holding their landlord to account. This is expressed in the Regulatory Standards (the latest version of which was produced by the Homes and Communities Agency operated from April 2012)
* This document lays out our methodology and expectations of how we will work with GPHG to improve services and how our work is incorporated into the governance structure. Also, outlined are areas of support that GPHG will give ‘insight’ to enable success.
* The Terms of Reference will be signed by each ‘insight’ member and a GPHG senior manager ie) the Customer Involvement Manager and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct, the Confidentiality Agreement and the Role Profile
* Co-regulation as a partnership is at the heart of service scrutiny

# Aims of ‘insight’

* To provide an opportunity for customers to scrutinise services acting as a critical friend, including specific service standards making recommendations for improvement to ultimately increase both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency
* To measure and benchmark performance of a scrutinised service area, against performance of other landlords and national / local standards
* To support co-regulation and good governance making sure information is available and transparent, which enables customers to hold GPHG to account
* To ensure all customers have the opportunity to have their views heard during the scrutiny of services and the wider views of customers are brought to the attention of GPHG at the highest level, including improvements in performance and positive changes to services
* To work with other GPHG customer involvement groups, engaging for their views, gathering their ideas for scrutiny and inviting them to take part and support scrutiny projects
* To commission other customer groups including the Mystery Shopper team to contribute to the agreed service scrutiny
* To investigate core service areas of service delivered by GPHG and provide feedback of performance of GPHG’s service both good and bad
* To support GPHG to take corrective action where performance standards are not being met
* To investigate and suggest value for money for services provided
* To support continuous improvement in all areas of GPHG’s work
* Using the principles of Co-Regulation, ‘insight’ will work in partnership with the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator, other GPHG staff and Board at all stages of the scrutiny process, ensuring ‘insight’ remains independently minded in their views of services provided
* To scrutinise approximately 3 services pa, (after receiving appropriate training and support) and make recommendations by a formal reporting mechanism to senior managers, the landlord Boards and involved customers of the Customer Services Voice. The wider customer base will be made aware of these reports through websites, customer newsletters and Annual Reports
* To formulate a strategic plan of recommendations of service improvement to the Board
* To communicate a customer’s assessment of GPHG’s service performance
* To oversee implementation of action plans from service reviews and assess whether positive outcomes are being achieved for all customers and communities
* To evaluate our work through individual appraisal and collective group appraisal annually conducted by the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator and to address training needs, to improve the effectiveness of ‘insight’
* To ensure ‘insight’ are ready to commence a scrutiny exercise by completing the criteria included in the scrutiny checklist

1. **Membership of ‘insight’**

* ‘insight’ will consist of up to 15 customer members who will meet the requirements in the Role Profile, which describes the duties and expectations of ‘insight’ members
* ‘insight’ members will serve no more than 3 years without re-application
* ‘insight’ members will have an individual assessment within their first year of their membership of ‘insight’ to identify any issues with capacity, capability and team dynamics which will be conducted by the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator
* No members of the same household or immediate relatives, in different homes will be allowed to be a member of ‘insight’
* ‘insight’ welcome co-optees who may choose to gain scrutiny skills, give specialist knowledge or participate as observers until they decide if to express an interest for formal membership
* ‘insight’ will consider the merits of no more than one expert co-optee to support a scrutiny review to be undertaken with agreement of GPHG
* ‘insight’ Members will look favourably on any customer interested in supporting their work and will encourage shadowing and support through existing members
* A maximum of 3 members of ‘insight’ including the Chair maybe independents providing they live or work in the geographical area where GPHG operates
* ‘insight’ do not wish to exclude anyone, but members who think they may have a conflict of interest with the scrutiny subject or part of the scrutiny will bring this to the attention of the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator. If deemed necessary the member, may be asked to step down from some parts of the scrutiny project being undertaken

Members of ‘insight’ will not:

* be Board members, staff working for GPHG or members of Customer Services Voice
* be in serious or wilful breach of their tenancy terms and conditions, including but not exclusive to having a Notice Seeking Possession, in relation to rent arrears without an active payment agreement in place, have breached an agreement to repay rent arrears or be subject to any anti-social behaviour order or investigation

A written explanation will be provided by GPHG on behalf of ‘insight’ to all applicants who are ineligible outlining the reasons why, in-line with the guidelines as stated in the above criteria

It will be mandatory for ‘insight’ members to sign this document, a Code of Conduct, Role Profile and Confidentiality Agreement

1. **Recruitment to ‘insight’**

* New future ‘insight’ members will be recruited with support from the GPHG’s Customer Involvement Co-ordinator, application will be considered from GPHG customers
* Recruitment processes will be transparent and selection will be based on objective criteria according to the Role Profile of ‘insight’ members, based on skills, ability (or willingness and commitment to learn) and behaviours including an informal discussion to assess skills
* ‘insight’ will always seek to have a fair representation of its diverse customer base and those who live in the homes of different landlords, however the overriding recruitment will be on skills (or willingness to train to attain the necessary skills) for scrutiny
* The landlord will support ‘insight’ by advertising for new ‘insight’ members when required and upon the agreement with ‘insight’ and GPHG. Any person expressing an interest will be given a Welcome Pack including information about ‘insight’ along with the expected commitment, prior to confirming their interest formally for vacancies as they occur
* When vacancies occur, the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator will discuss opportunities for recruitment and expressions of interest with ‘insight’
* Any key positions on ‘insight’ will be elected annually by an anonymous ballot, based on an agreed Role Description, following a request for ‘insight’ members to nominate themselves.
* If more than 1 member volunteers, interested members will be asked to make a short presentation to ‘insight’ of their approach and how they will act in the interests of ‘insight’

1. **Equality and Diversity**

* ‘insight’ will aim to ensure they are representative of the customer profile, having regard to the strands of diversity. ‘insight’ will encourage applications from all customers
* Meetings of ‘insight’ will be held in places and at times convenient to most members and will provide documentation and supporting information in a format that best suits individual’s needs. ‘insight’ will consider impact of service equality in all aspects of their work
* ‘insight’ will work with all customers or their representatives and community leaders, to ensure the improvements recommended are fair for everyone

**5. Communication and Support**

* GPHG will provide the resources for ‘insight’ to meet and provide transport and reasonable expenses to enable their delivery of service scrutiny
* GPHG will provide full access to internal data, survey results and comparative benchmarking data, subject to relevant Data Protection policies. It will also provide access to staff to aid the enquiries for the service scrutiny being considered
* Working directly with the governance team, the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator will facilitate the route to the Boards and Committees for ‘insight’
* The Customer Involvement Co-ordinator will support and facilitate the day to day arrangements for the delivery of the scrutiny report and recommendations by ‘insight’
* The Customer Involvement Co-ordinator with the aid of the Communications team will support and facilitate a communications plan with staff, Board and customers
* ‘insight’ will present their draft findings to the service manager/s of the area being scrutinised, to enable initial feedback on their report prior to concluding their findings to Board and customers
* The service manager/s will be given the opportunity at this point in the scrutiny process to draft an action plan based on any agreed recommendations. This will accompany the scrutiny report when presented to the Board
* Agreed delegates of ‘insight’ will present their reports in detail to the Board for decision
* In the event of any disagreement by Board of recommendations made by ‘insight’ that would either put customers in serious detriment or make the landlord non-compliant with the regulatory code, ‘insight’ may request to address Board on those matters
* The Board may ask questions on the report and supporting action plan that could alter the actions the company will take, ‘insight’ should be aware that the Board’s decision is final
* Monitoring of the action plan resulting from scrutiny will be undertaken by Customer Service Voice, ‘insight’ will receive a progress report from service manager
* ‘insight’ will consider requests from GPHG to scrutinise specific services with reasons of other topics, which involved customer groups are raising - decisions on services to be scrutinised will be informed by performance data, complaints and compliments, satisfaction data, the feedback of other involved customers and experiences of the wider customer base
* ‘insight’ will have both the programme for scrutiny and the results of scrutiny published in the GPHG’s customer newsletter, Annual Reports and on the websites through the Communications team who will keep this information refreshed
* GPHG will support an annual review of training needs of ‘insight’ members after induction. There will be a mechanism in place to capture good practice and learning arising from the work of ‘insight’.
* ‘insight’ will receive administration support via the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator who will facilitate the use of a buddy system if required to support individuals

1. **Meetings**

* ‘insight’ will attend 75% of training and meetings to be able to deliver excellence in scrutiny. Should an ‘insight’ member be unable to attend due to holiday or sickness, they will inform the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator and maybe asked to stand down for the whole or part of a scrutiny if unable to contribute successfully. If this becomes a regular occurrence, a conversation will ensue to ensure their commitment to ‘insight’ and the potential to join other involvement groups
* During scrutiny ‘insight’ will meet collectively monthly to plan, allocate tasks, exchange information and review delivery, whilst scrutiny work will be carried out by sub groups of ‘insight’ at times to be agreed, in between these times
* At meetings of ‘insight’, no member is able to be represented under proxy by a member of ‘insight’ or any other person
* Over 60% of current ‘insight’ members will need to attend any meeting that requires a decision to be made and voted upon. A simple majority is required to carry a vote and the resultant decision will be binding

1. **Delivery of recommendations**

* The Board will have the ultimate power in regard to agreeing any recommendations and a timetable for delivery of any actions to be taken as a result of the scrutiny work
* Monitoring of the recommendations and action plan resulting from scrutiny will be undertaken by Customer Service Voice
* ‘insight’ will revisit the action plan formally with senior officers every 12 months and / or on completion of the action plan
* The Board will monitor delivery of agreed actions through Audit Committee who will receive an annual update on progress regarding scrutiny activity and outcomes of the action plan

1. **Dispute Resolution**

‘insight’ wants to develop effective co-regulation with GPHG. However, there may be occasions when ‘insight’ and GPHG may not be able to reach an agreement regarding a particular issue.

* Should a dispute / disagreement arise between ‘insight’ and an officer of GPHG, the Chair / Customer Involvement Co-ordinator will approach the Customer Involvement Manager and ask them to mediate
* Should the dispute / disagreement arise between ‘insight’ and a senior manager, the Chair or Customer Involvement Manager will seek intervention from the Director of Housing Services to act as an impartial agreed mediator to facilitate a mediation process
* It is proposed all such disputes be dealt with within 14 working days
* Time will be allowed for an amicable resolution
* If this is unsuccessful GPHG and ‘insight’ may consider appointing independent advice, they may:
* agree on a mutually trusted independent expert who will come to review and comment on the issue in dispute
* enable the expert to mediate between both parties to improve relations and to reach a compromise and resolution
* enable the expert to review the support provided to ‘insight’ by GPHG and vice versa then suggest reasonable compromises, based on experiences of working with other scrutiny groups and landlords
* if an independent expert is required this may take longer than 14 working days given a 3rd party is involved. Nonetheless, any such dispute should be dealt with in no more than 1 calendar month

1. **Review of this agreement**

* This agreement is subject to review annually by ‘insight’ in consultation with GPHG or earlier, if there is an urgent need to enable ‘insight’, Board and staff at GPHG to conduct business

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**In signing this Terms of Reference, I agree to abide by all requirements set out above:**

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

‘insight’ Group Member

**In return, GPHG will agree to provide training, support (including travel and other expenses) for the Group, which are identified upon appointment and in appraisals**

Print name: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of GPHG