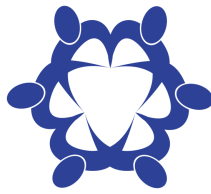


Date implemented: April 2025
Date for review: January 2026



ROTHERHAM FEDERATION

TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL



TERMS OF REFERENCE 2025

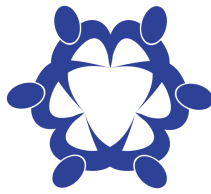
Rotherham Federation of Communities , Springwell Gardens Community Centre,
Eastwood View, S65 1NH

Rotherham Federation of Communities Ltd
Charity Number: 1158600 Company Number: 5913521

**Rotherham
Federation**



Strengthening Communities



INTRODUCTION

The housing regulator requires housing providers to establish a scrutiny panel as part of the co-regulatory framework. This framework involves a collaborative partnership between residents and the provider (the council) to assess and review housing services. As a result, it is essential that all activities of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel are directed and guided by resident members, with support from council staff.

WHAT IS TENANT SCRUTINY?



Tenant scrutiny is used to improve council housing services such as repairs or tenancy checks. A topic is chosen, council officers are talked to, tenant views are asked for, we compare Rotherham to other areas, and then we write a report for the council to read and make any improvements needed. We aim to do this for three topics each year.

PURPOSE

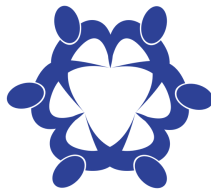
Rotherham Tenant Scrutiny involves Rotherham council tenants and residents to look at the actions and decisions of the council, in relation to housing services, and make suggestions for how they could be improved. Tenant Scrutiny panel members have their say in how council teams work to provide the best results that they can for tenants. Working together with council officers, tenant scrutiny makes sure that tenant voices are heard to make improvements for tenants and council outcomes.

AIM

To work as a group of tenants and residents of Rotherham Council to challenge the council to make sure that it provides high quality services that meet tenants needs.

OBJECTIVES

- To offer opinions on behalf of Rotherham Council tenants and make a positive difference for them.
- To be a 'critical friend' to the Council to be able to work together to make improvements for all.



- To look at and examine how housing services are performing, comparing them to local and national standards, and other housing providers to ensure that they meet required levels of quality.
- To present clear reports to the council that support ongoing improvement of services to meet tenant needs and address any issues found.
- To make fair, evidence based, independent recommendations.
- To actively help improve housing services by creating best practices that increase tenant satisfaction, service quality and better value for money.

PANEL MEMBERS

The panel has a minimum of 6 members and a maximum of 10.

The panel members can serve on the panel for 8 years after which their membership is reviewed and they can choose to resign or to continue.

The panel members are Rotherham council tenants and residents.

The panel will review the position of Chair in January each year.

Panel members join after a recruitment process with positions being advertised through the Connectors Pool, via Rotherham Federation website, and through community networks.

Tenants from under-represented groups, and diverse backgrounds and circumstances are supported to join as panel members.

Panel members are confirmed after a trial period, to make sure that the new member understands the way the panel works and feels that they can add value to the panel.

Panel members can sit on other council Housing Panels but need to declare this on a declaration of interest form.

If there are more than 10 Tenant Scrutiny panel members at any one time, involvement will be rotated to make sure that everyone takes part in an investigation at least once a year.

SUPPORT FOR THE PANEL

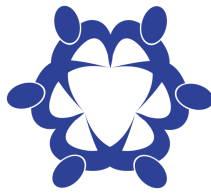
Rotherham Federation provides a member of staff to write the agenda, take minutes, and to send out documents ahead of panel meetings.

Rotherham Federation provides members of staff to support in the meetings to ensure discussions flow and decisions are made.

Tenants involved have access to Rotherham Federation's suite of tailored training and will be supported to use TPAS support and training resources.

Tenants can request a one to one with Rotherham Federation staff member for tailored





support, as well as receive peer support from other tenants through the “tenant buddies” scheme.

Rotherham Federation provides an independent person to gather evidence, contact other areas, and to create reports from the topics that have been scrutinised.

Rotherham Council provides a nominated officer to attend all panel meetings to make links to council teams and processes.

Rotherham Council ensures that the reports produced are actioned and that the panel is kept informed of the recommendations progress.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

The panel meet monthly in person at Rotherham Federation, Springwell Gardens Community Centre, with the option joining online through Microsoft Teams.

The panel will receive and read information between the monthly meetings.

The panel complete a declaration of interest for each topic.

QUORUM

The panel meeting will be cancelled if there are less than 4 members in attendance.

If a panel member doesn't attend 3 consecutive meetings without sending apologies, they will be contacted to find out if they want to resign.

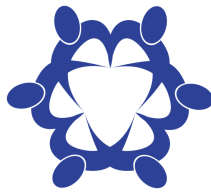
HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

Panel decisions at meetings will be reached by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, a vote should be taken. If required, the Chair has the casting vote. Urgent decisions can be made by email / telephone call with the Chair outside of the meeting, if needed.

HOW TOPICS ARE CHOSEN

The panel will select topics to be investigated, considering:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Importance of the topic
- Whether the topic size is manageable
- Whether the panel can have influence over the subject
- How many complaints have been received that are relevant to the topic
- If the timing is right for council services



- If the topic has been suggested to Rotherham Federation either through a referral form, conversation, or by the surveys carried out by the tenant scrutiny panel.

A discussion of these factors will take place, followed by a panel member vote. Three topics will be chosen to be proposed to the council each year with one in reserve in case one of the options is not suitable.

REPORTING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The process for the council escalating the recommendations in completed reports is currently under review and will be updated in due course.

Feedback is essential. Council officers will attend follow-up meetings within two to three months to update the panel on progress and seek their input on how recommendations are put in place.

Escalation of Unresolved Issues: If the panel does not agree with the council response, there is an escalation process where senior council officers can be consulted, or special meetings can take place.

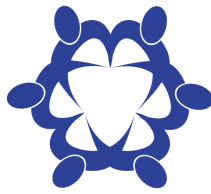


PUBLICISING THE WORK OF THE PANEL

A communications plan will be drafted/reviewed annually to ensure that the work of the panel is well-publicised. Current publicity is achieved through circulation of investigation reports and 'What we Achieved' leaflets for each topic. Other publicity will be through Rotherham Federation and Council websites, word of mouth, posters, and via the tenant surveys carried out as part of each investigation.

WHAT WE DO NOT DO

- The panel members do not work for Rotherham Council.
- The panel members have not worked for Rotherham Council in the past five years.
- The panel members do not have any current tenancy breaches.
- The panel members do not have legal proceedings in progress with Rotherham Council.
- The panel members do not ask for personal matters to be resolved during the meetings.
- The panel members do not scrutinise non housing services.



HOW WE WORK TOGETHER



- We respect each other in the meetings.
- We do not bully anyone in the meetings.
- We welcome and help each other in the meetings.
- We keep information from the meetings confidential.
- We are kind to everyone in our meetings.
- We are non-political in our meetings.

EXPENSES AND THANK YOU EVENTS

Travel and other out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed, for panel members attending the meetings in person. Detail included in the Rotherham Federation expenses policy that is shared with panel members.

We operate a tenant scrutiny incentive for members, [guidelines can be viewed here](#).

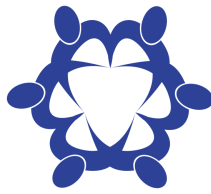
REVIEW

Rotherham Tenant Scrutiny panel will review these Terms of Reference in January each year, or sooner in the event of a change of policy, process, or procedure that would impact how the panel needs to operate.

The panel interacts with councils Improving Places Select Committee, through the lead council officer presenting the action plan of report recommendations at the committee. The Committee provides feedback on the report and action plan.

Where to find out more:

Contact Rotherham Federation to discuss the panel with on of the team.
info@rotherfed.org – or call 01709 368515



GLOSSARY

Chair – a person who leads the panel through each meeting.

Confidential – this means keeping what we talk and read about in meetings to yourself.

Critical friend – someone you trust to give you true feedback to help you to improve.

Declaration of interest – let other people know if you or a family member could benefit personally.

Documentation – information that needs reading.

Escalation process – to tell someone's boss if you're not happy with how things are going.

Feedback – telling someone how well things have gone and if they have improved.

Investigation – to take a closer look in to something.

Nominated Officer – council staff member who is trained on panel procedures.

Non-political – this means we do not talk about our opinions of government or council in our meetings.

Outcomes – the changes made due to something happening.

Performing – carrying out tasks.

Purpose – why something is there and is done that way.

Recommendations – a list of ideas for change.

Respect – we treat one each other in the way we would want to be treated.

Service quality – how well the council meets people's needs.

Scrutiny – to look at something in detail and provide feedback.

Tenancy breaches – things that go against your personal tenancy agreement.

Tenancy checks – visits to tenant's homes to check how things are.

Tenant connector pool – tenants who receive a newsletter and wish to take part now and then.

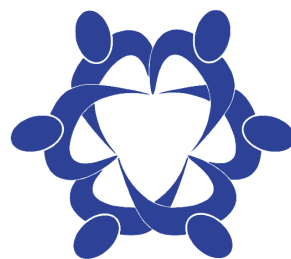
Tenant Satisfaction – happiness of tenants with the way things work.

Topic – an item for discussion.

Unresolved issues – problems that have not been solved or ended.

Value for money – if something is worth what you pay for it.

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