



Your guide to our . . .

Service Improvement Group

Empowering you to scrutinise our services
& recommend improvements

Glen Oaks
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



This document describes what tenant scrutiny is and how you could become involved in influencing and improving our services by joining our Service Improvement Group.

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Glen Oaks Housing Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services that meet the needs of our tenants. We value your opinion and want you to help us improve our services.

What is tenant scrutiny?

Tenant scrutiny is the term used for involving residents in the self assessment process, where they independently look into their landlord's processes and performance.

It is designed to put power into the hands of residents and encourage change.

At Glen Oaks, tenant scrutiny is welcomed as an opportunity for us to get feedback on our services from the people who actually use them. It also demonstrates that we are transparent in everything that we do.

The Service Improvement Group has our full support and when they put forward recommendations for improvement, they are fully considered by the Board.

What is the role of the Service Improvement Group?

The Service Improvement Group (SIG) carries out a range of scrutiny activities within Glen Oaks. In addition to making recommendations for improvement, they also share information on what we do well.

The role and aim of the group is:

- To operate on behalf of service users to ensure Glen Oaks provides a service that meets the needs of its residents
- To independently review and monitor service delivery and performance
- To promote the group and encourage other residents to get involved and share their views on areas of the service they receive

What are the benefits of being a group member?

There are many benefits of being a group member and we will work closely with you to ensure you gain the most from this experience. We will provide you with training and cover any expenses, such as travel costs.

As a member of the Service Improvement Group, you could;

- ▲ Influence services
- ▲ Hold us to account
- ▲ Ensure tenants and others understand how we operate
- ▲ Ensure services reflect residents needs and priorities
- ▲ Ensure value for money
- ▲ Suggest improvements to the way we work
- ▲ Gain work experience
- ▲ Gain skills and confidence
- ▲ Meet new people in the community
- ▲ Work together to achieve change
- ▲ Improve the community and area

What are the requirements for being a member?

As long as you are a tenant of Glen Oaks, or currently an applicant on our waiting list, you are able to join the group.

If you are keen to use your own experience to help us provide the services our tenants need and want, then we would encourage you to join.

Being a member brings a certain amount of responsibility as you are representing the community and Glen Oaks. You must agree to the group's Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct. Both of these set out the roles of the group and the responsibility you have as a member.

How you choose to be involved is entirely up to you. All we would ask is that you aim to attend the group meetings, which tend to be once a month on a Tuesday, as this is where decisions will be made and all of the findings from other activities discussed.

Tenant Information Service (TIS)

We also have an independent representative, from Tenant Information Service, to support the group.

This means the group can benefit from the experience and knowledge gained from scrutiny panels in other housing associations or local authorities.

They provide training and development to the group members and help them to produce the reports they prepare for Glen Oaks Board.



Scrutiny methods

There are many investigative methods of scrutiny that can be used ranging from tenant-led inspections to staff interviews. The method used depends on what you feel comfortable with and the area of the service that is being reviewed e.g. mystery shopping could be used to test the frontline service.

Desk top audits – review association policies, customer satisfaction feedback, complaints and any other relevant documents.

Mystery shopping – this can be done face to face or over the telephone. Members will pretend to make a service request such as a repair and test that the service is meeting the agreed standards.

Tenant-led inspections – this includes visiting empty houses or carrying out estate inspections with staff to see the standard of the service.

Work shadowing – follow staff in their daily jobs, ask questions and gain understanding of their roles.

Interviews – staff and tenants are interviewed in order to understand how the service operates and seek tenants' views.

Surveys – design and conduct surveys with staff, tenants and other customers to seek their views.

Service reviews – reporting to our Board

The group works independently and decides what area of the business they want to review. This can be done by using their personal experience of a service or by looking at our performance and selecting an area they think could be improved.

In order to gain a full understanding of the service the first thing they do is carry out a desktop audit. This involves looking at all of the information relating to that

service such as satisfaction levels, number of complaints received, key performance indicators, policies and other relevant information sources.

Once they have a clear understanding of how the service should be delivered, the group can then check to see if it is 'fit for purpose'. A report is then compiled and passed to our Corporate Management Team and Board.

Service Improvement Group

compiles a report, with recommendations on how the service could be improved and highlight areas that are working well.

Board

Reviews final report and agrees which recommendations will be actioned.

Feedback is provided to the Service Improvement Group.

Corporate Management Team

Reviews and comments on whether recommendations can be implemented.

Our journey so far . . .

We have 7 dedicated members on our group, from Arden and Darnley, and initially they all had the same goal. They wanted to improve the experience tenants have when moving home. Having previously moved home themselves, they were keen to give a tenant's perspective of where we could do better and promote the areas they thought we performed well in.

Customer service review

The group started by looking at the service our customers receive when asking for an application form, as they wanted to start at the beginning of any customer's journey with us. To scrutinise this service, the group carried out some mystery shopping. This involved visiting the office, phoning and emailing at different points of the day to check that the information they were receiving from different staff members was consistent. The group put forward 13 recommendations which included staff having more visible name badges and introducing colour coded booklets for display at reception.

Lettable standard review

The SIG then looked at the standard of our empty properties (lettable standard), initially carrying out a desk top audit of all of the facts and figures, satisfaction levels and complaints relating to this subject. They also inspected a few properties with one of our Technical Officers. They compared the condition of the house when it was initially handed back to us to when any repair work had been completed and finally when the property was due for re-let. The group submitted their final report to the Board which included a large number of recommendations. Almost all of the recommendations were implemented.

Estate management review

The third area for review was estate management. This included desktop audit, estate walkabouts, a service specific survey and much more. Estate management covers a wide variety of services such as close cleaning, grass cutting and landscaping. The group wants to improve the environment that everyone lives in.

Improvements made so far . . .

Since the group was set up, they have made a difference to the standard of services every tenant receives. Their recommendations have resulted in an array of improvements being implemented. Some of the more substantial improvements are:

- ✓ Colour coded information booklets, that are numbered and have a brief description on the front cover explaining what the booklet is about. The group felt that the previous booklets looked too similar making it difficult to find the relevant booklet. It is hoped that the colour coding, numbering and description should make it much easier for the tenant to get the correct information quickly.
- ✓ A lettable standard information booklet was designed, which is now given to all applicants. It is also part of the handbook that all new tenants receive when moving in. This booklet details the standard of the property when you move in. The SIG wanted it to be partially pictorial to allow tenants to see the standard rather than just read about it. See **Booklet 15 – Glen Oaks lettable standard**.
- ✓ All repairs are now completed prior to a new tenant moving into their home and the standard of clean carried out is to a "sparkle finish". This has resulted in a much higher percentage of new tenants being satisfied with the standard of their home.

Award Winners!

The group made a massive impact in a short space of time and this was recognised at the national TIS Service Excellence Awards 2017. The Group won the award for "Most Inspiring Scrutiny Newcomer" recognising excellence in scrutiny practice that others can learn from. This, in turn, inspires future tenant

scrutiny development in Scotland. It rewards the work of a newly formed group, that has created an outstanding improvement or change for tenants. We are incredibly proud of their achievement and anyone joining the group will help to continue their fantastic work.

Hear what our members have to say...

“The reason I joined the SIG was because I was interested in doing tenant led inspections. The things I found out visiting houses to let was a real eye opener. I have also enjoyed meeting new people.”

“Being part of the Service Improvement Group allows me to show that I care about the community and Glen Oaks. It is great that Glen Oaks staff and Board members want to work together with the SIG and tenants to make things better for everyone.”

“We are really pleased to be part of the Service Improvement Group to work in partnership with Glen Oaks to review and improve services for all tenants. Our tenant scrutiny of the lettable standard was a great experience. We were delighted that Glen Oaks Corporate Management Team and Board listened to our views and took on our recommendations.”

“We are a great little group who are slowly but surely working through various areas of Glen Oaks’ work. What we do is scrutinise and recommend, or in simple terms, delve into and fine tune various working processes of the Association. We aren’t there to right the wrongs and make demands, but we do make suggestions to the Board who have taken forward many of our recommendations so far.”

Contact Us

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Our office opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 9am - 1pm

Friday: 9am - 4pm

Our office is closed for staff training from 1pm every Wednesday.

TIS

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