



**MINUTES OF THE LONDON RESIDENT PANEL MEETING
HELD ON 12 JULY 2022**

PRESENT	JR SH SA AT TH CB	Executive Director of People & Partnerships Resident Engagement Manager Performance & Data Quality Manager Central Complaints Officer Resident Engagement Officer Senior Communications Manager (Building Safety)
IN ATTENDANCE	PG BM CJ DL IA	Panel Chair & Customer Service Committee Member Panel member Panel member Panel member Panel member
APOLOGIES	TB FH AS	Panel member Panel member Panel member
NOT PRESENT	RR VL TL	Panel member Panel Member Panel member
MINUTE TAKER	TH	Resident Engagement Officer

1	Introduction to new Chairs <i>For information</i>	SH
1.01	SH introduced PG to the panel and advised that PG had been successful through an application process	
2	Welcome and Apologies <i>For information</i>	PG
1.01	The chair welcomed the panel and stated that FH and AS were trying to join online but SH specified that the meeting was face to face	
3	Declarations of interest (declarations of interest to have been provided to the Chair) <i>For information</i>	PG
3.01	There were no declarations of interest	
4	Matters arising – Action Log	

	<i>For information</i>	PG
4.01	SH queried action 6.01 from a discussion from the pre-meeting in April. The action is relating to planned works and wasn't a proposed agenda item, but we can move it to the next meeting	RE Team
4.02	JR advised that the query was related to residents being more aware of what planned works are in the pipeline in their blocks-also relating to kitchens, bathrooms and windows internally.	
4.03	SH stated that the notes on action 6.01 will be updated, we can come back with more information and propose it to be on the October agenda	
4.04	Action 8.03 stated that a new category in the performance report, but SA could look at this in future reports	
4.05	PG & SH discussed the issues with panel members accessing the pre-meeting, so moving forwards a resident engagement member will be present at the start of the meeting to assist in the event of further difficulties. The RE officer starting the meeting will then leave so the panel can have their discussions privately.	
5	Governance update <i>For discussion</i>	SH
5.01	SH introduced the agenda item and advised that every 3 years, NH are required to have a review of our governance structure, to ensure it is robust.	
5.02	SH re-iterated how important the panels are in our governance structure to feed into the customer service committee and hold us to account	
5.03	CJ asked if the panel Chair inductions that would be relevant to the panel members as well, in terms of upskilling	
5.04	SH advised that there haven't been any significant changes over the last 3 years that will be included in the inductions. However, anything that has come up that would be beneficial to the panel members has been shared. We will also work with the Chairs on the content of the annual panel training sessions, to ensure all the relevant information will be provided.	
5.05	SH stated that there will be this year's panel training in the Autumn and if anyone has any ideas for things that can be included, they can send them across to us	
5.06	PG stated she has some ideas to put forward to bring the panel together as a team	
5.07	PG asked about the customer charter and customer facing pledges, and whether any more work has been done on it	
5.08	SH responded that we haven't taken any new pledges, but the ones we became early adopters of were the ' <i>together with tenants</i> ' initiative through the National Housing Federation, and we also signed up to the Houseproud pledge	
5.09		

<p>5.10</p> <p>5.11</p> <p>5.12</p> <p>5.13</p>	<p>RE Team to share any pledges we have signed upto with the panel</p> <p>SH advised that if there were any new pledges, we would ask the panel for feedback, and for the panels views on how we should communicate this and take them forward</p> <p>PG queried appendix 3.4 in the report, where it was stated that there were several areas where the matters of Governance could be achieved with less effort, greater clarity and more efficiently</p> <p>SH responded that within Network Homes' governance structure, there are several committees that we report to. The aspects in this paper that are relevant to the panel were included. These specific points related to the People, Governance & Culture Committee, which is responsible for the ethos of how we deliver services, employee matters and governance of the organisation. SH also added that we would always encourage the Chairs to speak to other panel members to offer feedback and ideas</p> <p>SH also added the agenda should be shared with the Chair six weeks prior to the meeting, and this can be circulated with the panel, so if there are any queries or any feedback with the agenda, there is enough time to make amendments before we share with colleagues</p>	<p>RE Team</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Consumer standards and the role of the panels <i>For discussion</i></p>	<p>SH</p>
<p>6.01</p> <p>6.02</p> <p>6.03</p> <p>6.04</p> <p>6.05</p> <p>6.06</p> <p>6.07</p>	<p>SH introduced the agenda item and confirmed that the role of the panel is to give assurances to the customer service committee, that we are meeting consumer standards. Or to escalate where residents don't feel we are complaint or making improvements</p> <p>SH advised that we'd really like to see the panel asking us questions that are directly linked to the strategic decisions of the organisation- so we can feed back what residents say at the core of our service.</p> <p>SH also acknowledged that the panel members sign up for the role and do give up their time to be on board. SH asked if the panel feel that the receipt of vouchers is adequate for the level of responsibility the regulator is asking of them. Does this feel right to the panel? What else can be done?</p> <p>The agenda item was held at 19:10 due to time and the panel moved onto the next agenda item due to the time needed for this discussion-as the request of the Chair</p> <p>The panel reconvened the agenda item 19:38</p> <p>SH stated that the last part of this section is for the panel to discuss what they feel the role of the panel is there any additional support that we can provide</p> <p>PG stated she would like to hear from the panel on what could be done differently to have the biggest impact</p>	

6.08	BM stated that the panel came to a clear agreement at the panel training session last October, as to what the panels concerns were and what they felt was going well, and what wasn't	RE Team
6.09	SH advised that we are happy to revisit anything that the panel feels hasn't changed. The notes from the session were shared with the panel, as was the panel mandate, but we're happy to support further.	
6.10	To re-share the mandate with the panel	
6.11	PG stated that she will read the notes from the session and previous meeting minutes to get a glimpse of the panel's feelings on this subject	
6.12	BM asked PG to start a conversation on the panels Whatsapp group, so it can be discussed outside of the meeting	
6.13	PG stated she will do this. IA is the current admin of the group and will add PG as another group admin	
6.14	DL stated that she has found this meeting to be constructive, and the way the panel has been engaged with has been great, and without jargon.	
6.15	DL also stated that it is the panel members role to read the papers in good time, to be able to come back to us with questions.	
	JR added that he would be happy for the panel to state which agenda items don't seem as interesting to them, so we have a high level on engagement and get the most out of the agenda items with full discussions in the meetings. Items such as these don't have to be a full conversation in the meetings, but the papers can be circulated so the messages are still communicated to the panel so thy are in the know	
7	Building Safety <i>For discussion</i>	
7.01	The agenda item was introduced and as the papers were taken as read, was summarised by CB	
7.02	CB stated our Fire Safety, Resident Engagement and Building Safety teams had training by Tpas last week and this highlighted how we can most effectively communicate the new legislations to residents in a clear way. This will be in the comms plan that is currently being devised, including posters in communal areas, letters, webinars, website videos etc	
7.03	DL asked about fire safety education to residents, as it will be resident responsibility to understand what's expected of them. How we will engage with	

	residents in an inclusive way, as not everyone will stop and take notice of a communal poster or read the letters.	
7.04	CB advised we will work closely with our Fire Safety team as they hold a lot of knowledge in this area	
7.05	SH confirmed that the Resident Engagement and Building Safety teams have a group meeting booked in to discuss how we can best work together to promote and inform residents on this	
7.06	BM asked that even though we have an in-house fire safety team, will we be checking with the fire brigade to ensure our policies and information are up to date	
7.07	CB confirmed that this is something that we do, and she will also be working with our central comms teams to ensure that we promote this as widely as possible	
7.08	BM said that some street properties are 5 storeys high and asked if they will fall under the new bill	
7.09	CB advised that 5 storey building fall under the 11-metres and over high bracket so yes will be included	
7.10	CB said that following a fire in a block earlier this year, and a stay put policy was in place and residents evacuated instead of staying put what it means	
7.11	SH stated that this will be a bit issue for some time, and if the panel have further questions, they can email CB or get in touch with the RE team to continue the conversation.	
7.12	IA said that people respond differently to absorbing information, such as webinars, or a fire safety expert can do a tour of a block with residents, so they can advise residents on each piece of fire safety equipment	
7.13	SA suggested having QR codes on posters, so when the code is scanned it takes the user to a video link which can explain at the equipment is used for and how to use it	
7.14	All panel members present agreed this would be good for residents	
7.15	CB stated that we will be flexible in our approach to this. It's a new piece of legislation, and there is alot to it so we'll need to ensure we have the correct format for it, with the right people with the right expertise	
7.16	IA stated that she noticed text messages weren't included in the comms plan, and it might be a good idea to send a text as a reminder for a webinar, so people don't forget about it	
7.17.		CB

7.18	<p>CB advised texts do come with an added expense, but this is an option that will be looked at if the budget is there. CB states that she is favourable to the idea to communicating changes t fire legislation to residents via text</p>	
	<p>PG asked how the stay put policy is communicated to residents, do they understand why the policy is in place.</p>	
7.19	<p>CB stated that we had a fire in a London building in March (not on one of the floors we own, it was the floor above) and that was a good indication of a stay put policy. This means that the building itself reacted in the right way as it was designed to, so the fire was contained and then put out but residents were very worried, so they evacuated themselves. So, following this we have had discussion about updating our wording and what we tell people about stay-put policies.</p>	
7.20	<p>CB went on to clarify what '<i>stay put</i>' means: To stay put if you are unaffected- but everyone has their own personal right to leave if they want to in their own free will.</p>	
7.21	<p>CB advised she will re-iterate the stay put policy the building safety comms plan to remind all residents of that the stay put policy means, and why it is in place</p>	CB
7.22	<p>PG also asked how well we know who the residents are in a building that may have to evacuate (mobility issue's, etc)</p>	
7.23	<p>CB responded that within our high-risk emergency evacuation plans (for high-risk buildings we're planning to remediate) we will send out building safety comms, alongside all central comms that go out. These are regular reminders to let us know any resident has any issue that may affect them being able to evacuate the building. We will then put them in touch with a health & safety manager to develop a personal evacuation plan that works for them.</p>	
7.24	<p>DL stated that its crucial for residents to understand the polices and the fire safety equipment in their buildings so the educations pieces we'll be sending out are highly important so the need to be inclusive for everyone to understand them.</p>	
7.25	<p>DL stated that there have been many changes since the Grenfell tragedy, like smoke hoods, which are hoods that are carried on every fire engine (they are hoods that you can put on with air vents, so a resident can be safely escorted form a building) It may be reassuring for residents to know things like this have been put in place as a result of the Grenfell fire.</p>	
7.26	<p>The RE will learn more about the changes in fire safety legislation since the Grenfell fire to be able to highlight them to residents</p>	RE team
7.27	<p>BM recommended having posters or signs up in blocks highlighting what residents are not permitted to do, such as 'no smoking in the communal halls' as a constant reminder of the rules, rather than just having it stated in tenancy agreements</p>	

8	Complaints <i>For discussion</i>	AT
8.01	AT introduced the agenda item and provided the panel with the purpose of the current report	
8.02	AT provided an update on the complaint handling code, which went live in April. We are still fully compliant and work in alignment with this code.	
8.03	AT advised that the compensation policy has been amended and hopes this this will lead to greater transparency and trust. We have now published our compensation figures	
8.04	BM asked if the team reviewed the compensation figures	
8.05	AT advised that the figures were not reviewed. They are reviewed every 12 months, but they weren't reviewed on the previous report. It can be difficult to review this without a full in-depth analysis, and benchmark that against other housing associations and local authorities.	
8.06	BM said that it isn't right to charge a residents £50 for a repair to a lightbulb, but only offer them £10/£20 as compensation for a missed repair appointment	
8.07	AT responded that this has changed over time, as it was previously a gift voucher that the resident would receive and a gesture of goodwill- the compensation will either go into the residents rent account (if they're not in credit) or into their bank account s a monetary payment. It is looked at on a case by case basis and will investigate if we are able to offer a higher amount, depending on the case	
8.08	BM asked if the 12-month reviews are done alongside residents	
8.09	AT advised that t is reviewed and measured by the complaints handling code	
8.10	AT advised that if any residents are interested in getting involved in the next review to let the resident engagement team know, so residents can offer their views	
8.10	PG added that there is a breakdown of complaints that went to the ombudsman, but not a breakdown of the 207 other complaints and whether they were upheld or not. PG asked how many complaints NH felt we were accountable for	
8.11	Investigate if it's possible to have these breakdowns in reports going forward	AT
8.12	AT stated that it isn't something we currently report on but it's something we can do. The data is within or system, so anytime we put a complaint through on our system, there is an option to state the outcome, ie, upheld, partially upheld, etc.	
8.13	AT stated that we could possibly investigate offering a breakdown of complaints that didn't go to the ombudsman in the later quarters	AT

8.14	PG asked if there are common themes in the kind of complaints we receive	
8.15	AT advised that many complaints are either anti-social behaviour or repairs related, leaks from roof works. The repairs team do a lot of analysis on the complaints they handle, as they manage a lot of the stage 1 repairs complaints	
8.16	AT also advised the panel that the team are currently recruiting for a new complaints officer to help manage the load.	
8.17	DL asked if the team knows what the nature of the ASB complaints are AT advised the most common theme of ASB complaints is noise and added that residents aren't able to make complaints about ASB itself but more our role in processing/addressing it	
9	Network Homes' Performance Report <i>For discussion</i>	SA
9.01	SA introduced the item and summarised the report	
9.02	SA opened the agenda up to the panel to ask questions	
9.03	PG asked about the rent and service charged increases, and how these have been viewed amidst the cost-of-living situation	
9.04	JR advised this year we put up rents by 4.1%, which is the maximum we're allowed to put it up by based on rent setting calculation of CPI +1%. There was a paper brought to a previous panel meeting showing how the difficult decision was made.	
9.05	JR added that it seems the government may cap the next increase in September to 5%	
9.06	JR stated that the cost-of-living increases are difficult for everybody, but the rise in energy will be hard hitting for those living in blocks with communal/centralised systems	
9.07	IA stated that she lives in a building with communal heating system and wanted to say that residents in the block received two letters to advise of this rise. It did worry people, but it was clear in the communications that it wasn't NH's fault, and we had done all we could to give residents the best deal. The second letter stated that a new energy deal had been found. It was still an increase, but less than the previous one. The letters gave a lot of reassurance, and it was very clear and helpful	
9.08	The RE team will look at the letters as a template for a good way of sharing difficult news from positive feedback	RE team
9.09	BM asked if there will be a cost saving programme, someone going to properties and making suggestions for works to keep the heat in, doors and windows, etc	

9.10	JR advised that this falls under our sustainability work, to make homes warmer and more sustainable for residents. JR also advised we may be seeking external funding for this	
9.11	SH added that there is a pilot project in the Hertford region where 200 homes have been identified as having low energy performance have been asked to allow access to their utility data to see what we do to support them in reducing their energy bills. The take up on this has been low. Out of 185 people, only 5 people have signed up for it so far.	
9.12	SH stated that depending on what comes out of this project, we can look at scaling this out to all residents Network wide.	
9.13	BM stated its important to let residents know that there is support available to all, not just those on means tested benefits	
9.14	SH agreed, and therefore we need to make best us of the charitable fund JR also advised that many of the energy providers have hardship funds themselves, so speaking to them may be helpful for some who are struggling	
10	<i>Resident engagement update</i> <i>For discussion</i>	SH
10.03	SH introduced the item	
10.02	SH stated that one of the biggest challenges we have is with residents wanting to take part in the opportunities we're sharing with the. We know that the move to digital engagement has made it difficult for some residents, so we're excited to be getting back out into the communities with our face-to-face events	
10.03	SH advised that we'll be doing x2 events over the summer, and the theme will be sustainability, and we'll be supported by colleagues in various teams	
10.04	SH advised that we have recently completed two readers group assessments, but we weren't getting many people respond to them. So, we decided as there's always service improvement projects happening around the organisation,(mainly by our service improvement manager) and our service improvement manager has a schedule of when policies are up for review, and these include letters. So we will now allow our service improvement manager access to the readers group to enlist their help in future reviews. This will avoid overwhelming our residents involved	
10.05	SH added that on our last procurement exercise, we sent texts to all residents to offer them a place to take part, and only 48 residents responded. Although this wasn't a high number or participants, the feedback we received was high quality and excellent insight so it's definitely quality over quantity.	
10.06	IA suggested it may be useful for us to compile a spreadsheet, listing the kind of feedback and responses we're looking for, and profile what kind of resident may be able to feedback on specific topics- so the insight and feedback we would get would be the most useful and beneficial	

10.07	The RE Team will look into compiling a spreadsheet with various ways of listing the communications we use to gain feedback from residents	RE Team	
11	Panel Business <i>For discussion</i>	All	
11.01	PG asked the panel if anyone wanted to add anything to the October agenda		
11.02	IA stated that as it is close to fireworks night, would it be possible to discuss networks policy towards fireworks, as in her block there are often issues with people letting off fireworks in the communal outside area-when this was reported to us, she was advised we do not have a policy in place for fireworks		
11.03	DL stated that this also falls under ASB		
11.04	SH said we would look into what policies we have in place that would cover fireworks		SH
11.05	CB advised that the use of fireworks can be included in the residents responsibilities in the new building safety legislation- not just for fireworks night but for all celebrations throughout the year in relation to the use of fireworks		CB
11.06	IA requested cladding updates for large blocks to be included in the following meeting		
11.07	SH asked the panel about iPads- do the panel have iPads that are working and are happy with? If the panel has an ipad that isn't being used, please can they be returned		
11.08	SH asked the panel about the refreshments provided at the meetings, as we want to ensure we use our budget effectively, and offering the panel sustenance. Should we consider other types of refreshments?		
11.09	The panel stated that fruit and light refreshments will suffice		
11.10	Meeting closed at 20:25		
12	Minutes from the meeting of 19 April 2022 <i>For information – not to be discussed unless so requested</i>		
13	Building Safety <i>For information not to be discussed unless so requested</i>		
14	Housing sector hot topics <i>For information – not to be discussed unless so requested</i>		

The next meeting has been scheduled for 11 October 2022

Chair

Date.....