



# Customer Scrutiny Panel: recruitment pack

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## Introduction



Thank you for your interest in joining Sage Homes' Customer Scrutiny Panel. I'm Cedi and I'm the Chair of the Panel.

Sage Homes has an ambitious agenda and is moving forward at pace to deliver sector-leading, affordable homes. The Customer Scrutiny Panel hold the Leadership Team and Board to account, helping to drive continuous improvement across the organisation.

I'm keen to hear from people who can help us make sure the views and priorities of customers are at the heart of Sage Homes' performance and service improvement framework. The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) was established in October 2021, representing the voice of Sage customers. Our panel members help to link executive, research findings and the true customer experience to ensure that Sage Homes delivers the product and services that customers will value in their day-to-day lives.

We're looking for people with good strategic thinking, who can work as a team to challenge performance and are passionate about making sure Sage Homes provides excellent service and value for money.

The Customer Scrutiny Panel meets online four times a year. If you become a member, we'll give you the technology you need for the role, access to induction, training and development and £2,000 a year.

We welcome applications from the widest ranges of backgrounds. If you're interested, please read this recruitment pack and then complete the application form.

I look forward to hearing from you,

**Cedi Frederick**  
Customer Scrutiny Panel Chair



## About Sage Homes

Sage Homes is a Registered Provider of affordable homes across England. We work with the largest house-builders to deliver new homes for Shared Ownership (part buy, part rent) and low-cost rental homes.

Our customers are at the heart of our business. We're committed to providing high quality homes and an excellent service. Since 2017, we've delivered over 10,000 homes. We're able to bring more capital and options to the UK housing market, making affordable rent and Shared Ownership available to as many people as possible.

Our rented homes are let exclusively to those on Local Authority waiting lists, while our Shared Ownership homes let people get onto the property ladder. We're regulated by the Social Housing Regulator and pride ourselves on our high standards, from our homes' build quality to our customer service.

## Person specification

**Role title:** Member, Customer Scrutiny Panel

**Responsible to:** Chair, Customer Scrutiny Panel

### Experience and knowledge

- Understanding of corporate governance and/or the housing sector
- Experience of working in a committee setting or of representing collective interests of a wider group of people
- Experience or knowledge of working in a regulated environment.

### Abilities and skills

- Has time and energy needed to fully undertake the role's responsibilities, including attending quarterly virtual meetings, preparing and reading papers in advance, attending induction and training and carrying out other scrutiny tasks as needed
- Able to analyse, interpret and absorb performance information and evidence effectively and identify relevant points for discussion
- Able to undertake research and contribute to reports and recommendations that are balanced and evidence-based, taking into account regulatory standards, good practice and the operating context
- Able to co-lead customer insight groups to help extend Sage's customer consultation to reach a wider customer base
- Able to express views clearly and effectively in meetings, making reasoned and thoughtful contributions
- Committed to service improvement and value for money
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Shares the vision, values, commitments and ethos of Sage Homes
- Future-focused: embraces change, improvement, self-reflection, learning and development
- Able to work in a team, acting and thinking about what is best for Sage Homes and all its customers.

## Principal terms and conditions

- Position:** Member, Customer Scrutiny Panel
- Remuneration:** £2,000 per annum plus provision of technology and expenses as required, as well as induction, training and personal development
- Hours:** Approximately four days per year to attend quarterly meetings (held in the evening) and carrying out preparation required. Occasional invitation to attend Sage's Customer and People Committee meeting. Participation in induction, appraisal, training and development and scrutiny tasks as required
- Location:** Quarterly meetings will be held virtually. There may be occasions where a meeting will be hosted in-person.
- Application:** To apply, please complete this online application form.

You'll receive a confirmation email within 24 hours (working days) acknowledging receipt of your application. It's your responsibility to make sure we've received your application.

## Key dates

Date	Activity
6 December 2023	Applications close
December 2023/January 2024	Shortlisting and interviews
End of January 2024	Selection of new panel member, onboarding and training
February 2024	First Customer Scrutiny Panel meeting

# Customer Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

Sage Housing Ltd; Sage Rented Ltd; Sage Shared Ownership Ltd

(collectively "Sage Homes")

## 1 Background and purpose

1.1 Sage Homes has created the Customer Scrutiny Panel (the CSP) in fulfilment of its commitments under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (TIES) within the Regulatory Framework for social housing in England (Regulatory Framework). TIES requires landlords to "ensure their tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in ... the scrutiny of their landlord's performance and the making of recommendations to their landlord about how performance might be improved."

1.2 The Scrutiny Panel's aims and objectives are:

- 1.2.1 To make sure customers' views and priorities are at the heart of Sage Homes' performance and service improvement framework
- 1.2.2 To strengthen the links between customer involvement and governance at Sage Homes
- 1.2.3 To hold the Leadership Team and Board to account where performance fails to meet agreed and published standards
- 1.2.4 To consider value for money gains and savings in all aspects of its activities
- 1.2.5 To oversee and coordinate scrutiny activities and make sure other customers can contribute
- 1.2.6 To help drive continuous improvement at Sage Homes.

1.3 The Scrutiny Panel will:

- 1.3.1 Monitor and provide independent checks of (a) those services supplied to customers for which Sage Homes is accountable, and (b) Sage Homes' compliance with relevant aspects of the Consumer Standards of the Regulatory Framework (see appendix 1).
- 1.3.2 Where necessary, carry out in-depth service reviews, challenge service delivery and Sage Homes' performance and make recommendations for improvements in these and in customer satisfaction
- 1.3.3 Work on Sage Homes' customers' behalf to make sure Sage Homes provides excellent, focused services and value for money.

## 2 Functions

### Methods

2.1 The Scrutiny Panel's activities will focus on service quality and performance. It'll assess these by reviewing all available performance data relevant to the customer experience and conducting in-depth reviews.

### Choosing areas to review

2.2 The Scrutiny Panel may make its own decisions on what to look at based on performance information, complaints data and collective feedback from customers. Sage Homes may request a review of a particular area, but it's up to the CSP (acting reasonably) to decide to accept the request. In the event of refusal to such a request, the CSP must set out its reasons to Sage Homes in writing.

2.3 The Scrutiny Panel may supplement or vary its programme of work by:

- 2.3.1 Maintaining an overview of overall performance and fast-tracking services and topics which display evidence of weakness or failure
- 2.3.2 Fast-tracking services and topics which are subject to collective requests for scrutiny by tenants
- 2.3.3 Undertaking 'light touch' inspections, where services have been subject to previous scrutiny and/or internal audit or review.
- 2.3.4 Undertaking specific pieces of research, where these are felt to be of benefit to Sage Homes or the CSP.

2.4 Subject to its obligations under paragraph 7.1, the CSP will be:

- 2.4.1 Given access to performance information, benchmarking information and customer feedback (eg through complaints or surveys)
- 2.4.2 Able to use other customer involvement groups and activities to help gather information (eg mystery shopping)
- 2.4.3 able to request relevant documents (eg policies and leaflets)
- 2.4.4 able to carry out surveys and/or interviews with Sage Homes colleagues
- 2.4.5 Able to carry out surveys and/or interviews with Sage Homes customers

### **3 Accountability and reporting**

3.1 Although tasked with providing independent scrutiny, the CSP accepts the Board reserves the right to make final decisions

3.2 The CSP must be accountable to the wider customer body

3.3 The CSP must add value to the business

3.4 The CSP's reports and recommendations must be balanced, evidence-based and take into account regulatory standards, good practice and the operating context

3.5 The CSP must have due regard for value for money in all their activities and recommendations

3.6 The Scrutiny Panel will be required to:

- 3.6.1 Conduct its reviews in accordance with the Scrutiny Process (see appendix 2) and to report on its findings and activities to the Customer and People Committee (the Committee) for review, and if relevant, approval and/or escalation to the Board(s) of



Sage Homes.

- 3.6.2 Report on their activities, findings, recommendations and the outcomes of any scrutiny reviews in the Annual Report
- 3.6.3 Explain the reason for any service reviews, the methods used and how they came to their recommendations in any scrutiny report
- 3.6.4 Publish an impact assessment of their activities on an annual basis.

#### **4 Membership**

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Panel shall consist of at least three and no more than seven members of which:
  - 4.1.1 The majority must be Sage Homes customers and as far as possible represent the geographical spread of Sage Homes developments
  - 4.1.2 At least one must be a Sage Homes Board member.
- 4.2 Customer representatives will be selected to focus on key areas of customer service delivery (eg service delivery, repairs or customer complaints)
- 4.3 Only one person from each Sage Homes household may be a CSP member
- 4.4 Priority will be given to achieving a CSP make-up that reflects Sage Homes' customer profile as far as possible.

#### **5 Recruitment and Training**

- 5.1 Members will be recruited and appointed via a recruitment process agreed between the Committee and the CSP
- 5.2 Each member will undergo an induction programme and an initial six month probation period, at the end of which their appointment may be confirmed by the CSP and the Committee, subject to satisfactory performance
- 5.3 The individual performance of the customer members of the CSP (and the collective performance of the CSP) will be appraised at least once a year. Part of the aim of the appraisal process will be to identify individual training and development needs, and develop a training programme for the CSP.

#### **6 Terms and Conditions of Office**

- 6.1 Members' terms of office will be set by the CSP and may be for a term of up to three years. A member may apply for reappointment following the end or expiry of their term, but no member may serve on the CSP for more than nine years
- 6.2 Before their appointment, each member must sign a contract which will include a statement confirming they will meet their obligations to the CSP (including the expected standards of conduct). This contract may be reviewed and amended by the CSP and/or

the Sage Homes Board from time to time

6.3 A CSP member's term may be terminated in accordance with their contract.

## **7 Confidentiality and data protection**

7.1 Members (individually) and the CSP (collectively) must comply fully with Sage Homes' values and mission, reasonable instructions and policies and procedures, including (but not limited to) those relating to confidentiality, data protection and behaviour.

## **8 Conflicts of interest**

8.1 CSP members are expected to declare any conflicts of interest and any interest that may be relevant to the work of Sage Homes or any item that may be considered by the CSP. If a conflict of interest arises, the CSP member must promptly advise the Chair

8.2 Receipt of a particular service from Sage Homes does not generally constitute a conflict of interest. However, where a CSP member is directly involved in an ongoing complaint for a service which is being scrutinised or discussed, they will be deemed to have a conflict of interest and may not be involved in the discussion or scrutiny. It is important that individual issues are not raised to be resolved at meetings.

## **9 Meetings**

9.1 Members will be expected to attend meetings on a quarterly basis which, due to the geographical spread of customer members, will be predominantly held digitally. Members will be expected to read any briefing documents in advance of meetings.

### Quorum

9.2 The quorum (number of people needed to make decisions) shall be three members or half the current membership (whichever is the lower) but must always include at least one Sage Homes CSP member.

### Chair

9.3 The Chair must be a Sage Homes Board member. The Chair of the CSP is appointed by the Board and the Vice Chair will be elected by the CSP for a term of one year. In the event that the Chair is unable to chair a meeting, discussion or review (for whatever reason including, but not limited to, absence or a conflict of interest), the Vice Chair will take over the Chair's duties temporarily.

## **10 Support and resources**

10.1 Sage Homes shall allocate and make available to the CSP:

10.1.1 A Sage Homes Leadership Team member who will provide administrative support (when required by the CSP)

- 10.1.2 Access to appropriate equipment and meeting room facilities, including a tablet for use for virtual meetings
- 10.1.3 A budget for reasonable expenses, training and development, commissioning additional research and independent mentoring support
- 10.1.4 Clear routes of access to the business, its colleagues, contractors and Board.
- 10.2 Sage Homes recognises and respects the CSP's independence. However:
  - 10.2.1 Should there be any question, doubt or dispute as to the CSP's remit or powers, the decision of Sage Housing Limited's Board on the matter shall be final
  - 10.2.2 The Board of Sage Housing Limited reserves the right to 'step in' and appoint, replace or remove any or all of the CSP members in the event of the CSP's material dysfunction, breakdown or breach of its remit, these terms of reference, law, regulations of Sage Homes policies or code of conduct.

## **11 Payment and expenses**

- 11.1.1 Members of the CSP will be remunerated £2,000 per annum plus any reasonable out of pocket expenses (eg mileage or train fare) will be reimbursed via the Customer Involvement Team. Sage Homes will also provide a tablet for each member to access meetings conducted through video conference. Sage Homes will also provide support, training and development for individuals and the group.

## Appendix 1

### **Consumer standards**

These standards apply to all registered providers (RP). RP's Boards and councillors are responsible for making sure their organisation meets the consumer standards. The Regulator's role is limited to setting the consumer standards and only intervening where failure of the standard could lead to risk of serious harm to tenants (the 'serious detriment test').

### **Tenant involvement and empowerment standard**

#### **Required outcomes**

##### **1. Customer service, choice and complaints**

RPs shall:

- Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards
- Have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible, making sure the complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

##### **2. Involvement and empowerment**

RPs shall make sure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the:

- Formulation of their landlord's housing related policies and strategic priorities
- Decision-making around how housing services are delivered, including setting service standards
- Scrutiny of landlord's performance and making recommendations about how performance might be improved
- Management of their homes (where applicable)
- Management of repair and maintenance services, such as commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and the sharing in savings made
- Agreeing local offers for service delivery.

##### **3. Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants**

RPs shall:

- Treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- Demonstrate they understand their tenants' different needs, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.