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# Homes and Neighbourhood Panel: our guidelines

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**Date of issue: June 2021**

**Review date: February 2021**

This panel will support the work of the Customer Committee, by reviewing key areas of the customer experience.

The panel's key goals are to:

- Recommend areas for improvement
- Support compliance with important/legal standards
- Be the link between informal customer involvement activities and the Homes and Neighbourhood Panel, Scrutiny Panel, Customer Committee and Board
- Ensure customers are supported to influence change at NCHA.

## Keeping things in check

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The Customer Committee will oversee activities via panel meeting minutes. They'll also complete reviews after the first 12 months of the panel's work, then every two years.

All panel members share responsibility for the decisions made. Actions will be taken only in the best interest of NCHA and its customers. Panel members must not act on behalf of any other group or themselves. They should put the interests of our customers and NCHA before their own interests.

The Homes and Neighbourhood and Scrutiny Panel Chairs will meet quarterly to ensure their work is aligned. This will include an annual review meeting. From these meetings, they'll produce short, quarterly reports for the Customer Committee.

The panel may be asked to provide ad hoc reports to the Customer Committee as needed.

The panel can review these guidelines after the first 12 months, then every two years. Recommendations from these reviews will be made to the Customer Committee.

## Support for the panel

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The Head of Homes and Wellbeing will be the lead NCHA employee who supports the work of the panel. NCHA will cover members' expenses where necessary.

## Membership and voting

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The panel will include the following membership:

- 1 Panel Chair (customer)
- 1 support to the Panel Chair (lead NCHA employee)
- 10 customers
- Head of Communities
- Head of Rents and Leasehold
- Customer Involvement Manager
- Department Head – Maintenance Services
- Department Head – Technical Services.

New customer members will be recruited in line with NCHA's Recruitment Policy. They'll be appointed by the Head of Homes and Wellbeing, the Panel Chair and customer member(s) of the Customer Committee. Where possible membership will include care and support project and housing customers, as well as leaseholders. The Panel Chair is appointed by the Head of Homes and Wellbeing, a customer member of the Customer Committee and the Customer Committee Chair.

The Panel Chair and customer members can't hold other positions within NCHA's formal involvement and governance structure.

Members will serve for an initial two years, subject to successful involvement in the panel. This can be extended by another two years at a time, up to a maximum of six years.

Customer members will have a review 12 months after they join the panel to ensure they're still fit for the role. This will also help to identify training and development needs. The Panel Chair and Head of Homes and Wellbeing will confirm whether customer members are still fit for their role. Future reviews will take place every two years.

For making decisions, there will be one vote per customer member. NCHA employees will not have voting rights. If a majority decision can't be reached, the decision will be referred to the Customer Committee.

## Attendance

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NCHA employees may be invited to attend all or part of panel meetings. Attendees will usually include:

- Head of Homes and Wellbeing
- Head of Customer Contact
- Governance Manager
- Other directors and managers as required
- Members of the Customer Involvement team as required.

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## Meetings

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The panel will meet six to eight times a year. The meetings can take place in person and virtually. For meetings to take place, at least five customer members including the Panel Chair will be needed.

## Areas to oversee

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The panel will monitor customer feedback and performance data in key areas.

They'll also oversee the informal involvement activity for NCHA. This includes engagement via the online portal/app, community voices, events and other activity that engages customers. The panel will review the effectiveness of these activities and use the feedback/data gained for future improvements.

The panel will monitor, progress and provide feedback on customer-related corporate projects and service improvement plans.

The panel will be informed of the key priorities of internal management groups, such as the Strategic Property Group or Health and Safety and Fire Panel. They'll use this information to give feedback on areas that affect the customer experience.

The panel will review progress on Community Improvement Fund work and make recommendations on future applications.

The panel will receive and record any feedback from the Customer Committee. Agreed actions will be recorded and tracked.

The panel will receive, record and give feedback on budget performance for disabled adaptations. The panel will record when the budget has been spent and new adaptations are put on hold until the new financial year.

## Areas of activity

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The panel will co-produce and recommend the Homes and Neighbourhood Standard to the Customer Committee. It will also contribute to its ongoing development.

The panel will receive reports and support the work of NCHA's Environmental Panel.

The panel will support NCHA with buying activity that affects the customer experience, such as grounds maintenance.

The panel will co-develop NCHA's approach for customer involvement in building safety strategies.

The panel will support the Customer Committee and Care Committee in developing improvements relating to customer experience across all tenancy and house types. It will refer to improvements raised by the Customer Committee, Scrutiny Panel, informal involvement activities, external and internal feedback.

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This includes the following areas:

- Complaints
- Property management and maintenance, including landlord compliance
- Customer and service user satisfaction
- Service charge services (grounds maintenance, caretaking, cleaning etc.)
- Anti-social behaviour
- Rent arrears
- Allocation / lettings and tenancy management
- Estate management and improvement.

The panel will support and deliver specific projects as required by the Customer Committee.

The panel will make recommendations to the Customer Committee in relation to the formal and informal structure of customer involvement. This will ensure that customers' views are influencing decisions that affect the customer experience. This will include market rent, leaseholder and shared owner views, alongside affordable and social customers and service user accommodation.

The panel will provide quarterly updates to the Customer Committee on its activities, including:

- Details of outcomes delivered for customers and service users
- Barriers preventing meaningful engagement
- Effectiveness of social value activities.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

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The panel will support NCHA's commitments outlined in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy.

The panel will ensure fair and equal treatment for all, regardless of any protected characteristics.

This panel will ensure obstacles that may prevent customers from getting involved are identified. It will find a way to remove those obstacles.

The panel will review its membership every two years after the initial 12 month review. This will ensure membership is representative of the communities where NCHA operates.

The panel will abide by NCHA's policies on equality and diversity. Members will attend equality and diversity training as part of their role.

## Confidentiality

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Customer members of the panel will have access to sensitive and confidential information. Any confidential or sensitive information seen must not be shared outside of the panel.

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Customer members will sign NCHA's Code of Conduct and confidentiality statements as part of their role. They'll be expected to uphold NCHA's values at all times.