



Service User Group Terms of Reference

1: Background

Service Users Groups (SUGs) are one of a range of ways that Bristol City Council (BCC) tenants and leaseholders can get involved, influence and scrutinise housing services and hold their landlord Bristol City Council to account.

2: Purpose

- To provide opportunity for BCC tenants and leaseholders to meet directly with Service Managers and Teams
- To establish a clear and defined role for tenants and leaseholders in monitoring the performance of specific housing services and in shaping delivery and service improvement.

3: Aims

- To make recommendations on how BCC tenants and leaseholders will be consulted and involved when changes to the service are proposed.
- To look at issues relating to the way specific housing services are delivered.
- To monitor service trends, performance and to work with staff to identify solutions to any issues arising.
- To look at how services are working to keep tenants and leaseholders safe in their homes and meeting regulatory standards and legal requirements.
- To record and promote how tenant and leaseholder voices have influenced decisions, strategy and shaped service delivery and improvement.

4: Meetings

There are two Service User Groups, covering:

- Estate Management Services (Estates and Sites, Lettings, Tenancy Management, Income Management, Support to Older People, Home Ownership Services, Safety and Compliance)
- Repairs and Maintenance Services (Response Repairs, Planned Maintenance, Voids Services, Building Services, Safety and Compliance)

Meetings are open to all BCC tenants and leaseholders and members of their households and meet bi-monthly. Each SUG meets on alternate months and are managed by the Service Manager/s and Service Teams, supported by Tenant Participation. The time between the meetings of each SUG, should not exceed three months.

The format, timings, communication for meetings will be reviewed by the SUG annually to ensure methods to involve tenants and leaseholders are working, and information shared is clear, accessible and appropriate.

Minutes will be taken at all meetings as evidence of discussion and shared with members. These will be made widely available via a dedicated SUG web page on the BCC website and available in

alternative formats upon request.

All tenants and leaseholders, (either individually or as a group) may suggest a relevant service-related topic as a future agenda item for agreement by the SUG. There will be an opportunity to do this at each meeting, but it can also be done by contacting tpu@bristol.gov.uk

5: Membership

Membership is open to all Bristol City Council tenants and leaseholders and members of their households.

Depending on the agreed format for the meeting (online or face to face) attendance numbers may need to be limited to accommodate the specific circumstances and requirements of the meeting. Where this is necessary information will be shared in advance of the meeting.

Members will be offered appropriate training as required by the Tenant Participation Team, to provide them with the opportunity to take an active role in the SUG.

Any observers wishing to attend should contact the Tenant Participation Team.

6: Fulfilling the purpose

The SUG will be supplied with timely performance information by Service Managers and Teams. This will enable tenants and leaseholders to hold the service to account for performance and suggest improvements related to the service area. Information will be shared in an easy-to-read format and will usually be available in advance of an upcoming meeting. Information will be sent to all those registered to attend the meeting.

The SUG will ensure there is opportunity given for tenants and leaseholders to ask questions and provide feedback. Information will be recorded in the minutes and actioned by the Service Manager / Service Team where appropriate. Progress updates and 'You said we did' reports will then be supplied at the following SUG, and beyond if required.

The annual report which analyses the performance of the service and details the activities of the SUG will be published on the on the BCC website and promoted extensively to all tenants and leaseholders in accessible formats.

7: Roles and responsibilities

7.1: Role for tenants and leaseholders

- a. Attend meetings and bring lived experience of services.
- b. Receive information and updates on service specific issues relevant to the SUG.
- c. Review how services are performing, monitor service trends and work with staff to identify solutions to any issues arising.
- d. Give views, ask questions, and contribute ideas and suggestions for the benefit of improving services for all BCC tenants and leaseholders.
- e. Review and monitor how tenant and leaseholder contribution has made a difference.

- f. Only refer to individual issues relating to their own or another person's property when it illustrates a common issue.

7:2 Role of the Service Manager/s and Service Team

- a. Ensure that a Service Manager attends and facilitates each of their service's SUG meetings, or if unavailable sends an appropriate representative.
- b. Make adequate resources available for meetings in terms of staff support and other resources as appropriate.
- c. Provide relevant information to the Tenant Participation Team at least 10 working days in advance of a meeting where practicable.
- d. Where necessary hold a pre meeting or briefing to give members specific advice or training on a forthcoming agenda item.
- e. Support the completion of 'You said we did' reports and ensure feedback to the SUG on actions taken because of resident's suggestions.
- f. Provide an explanation to residents on why a suggestion or idea may not acted on or followed up.
- g. Provide performance monitoring information twice a year.
- h. Review annually the work of the SUG and provide a Summary Report to the SUG detailing outcomes, including changes to the service and improvements made. The Report to the SUG will be completed with support, if required, of the Tenant Participation Team.
- i. Ensure all service areas, as listed in 4. above, report at least once a year and provide updates, this should be incorporated into the annual plan.
- j. Develop an annual forward plan in partnership with the SUG.

7.3: Role of the Tenant Participation Team

- a. Arrange meetings, organise the payment of any expenses as required and maintenance of records relating to the meeting. Provide information relating to resident engagement and feedback.
- b. Responsible for the recording of minutes, including the distribution of them together with sending out invites and agendas before each meeting.
- c. Promote activities on behalf of the SUGs.
- d. Act as a point of contact for tenant and leaseholder enquiries relating to the SUG.
- e. Support the recruitment of new tenant and leaseholder SUG members and provide training opportunities as required.
- f. Arrange joint meetings with other SUGs as required to share issues and ideas.
- g. Support any associated task and finish activities.
- h. Support the Service to produce annual summary report detailing outcomes from the SUG.

7:4 Responsibilities of all members

- Work together to fulfil the purpose and aims for the SUG and in accordance with the code

of conduct for meetings (Appendix A).

8: Escalation to the Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP) and Housing Management Board

8a. Requesting a Referral to the Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP)

In line with the aim to monitor service trends, performance and to work with staff to identify solutions to any issues arising, if tenant and leaseholder members of the SUG are dissatisfied with the performance of the Service they can refer the matter to the HSP. A referral can happen providing there has been an opportunity given, either to correct such performance and/or incorporate into an annual improvement plan and report the action taken back the SUG.

Tenants or leaseholders requesting that a matter is referred to the Scrutiny Panel should raise this at the SUG in first instance. They will then complete the required proforma to trigger this escalation, either as an individual or on behalf of the group if agreed with SUG, and with the help of a Tenant Participation Officer if required. Information on how the HSP prioritise areas for review using feedback and information from a range of sources is set out in the terms of reference for the HSP.

8b. Escalation to Housing Management Board

Tenant and leaseholder members of the SUG can refer serious matters for concern regarding service delivery and/or safety or related issues to the Housing Management Board. This can be done via the chair of the Board or its public forum for consideration and possible action, with the help of a Tenant Participation Officer if required.

To aid both the Scrutiny Panel and the Housing Management Board in its dealings the SUG (both tenants and staff) will provide evidence as required.

9: Reviewing these Terms of Reference (TOR)

These TOR should be reviewed annually usually at the start of each year with SUG members to ensure they are fit for purpose and intended aims are being met. Any suggested amendments will be collated by the Tenant Participation Team and re-shared for agreement before implementing changes.

Date of last review: 2023 / 2024

SUG name:

Date of meeting reviewed:

Document Revision History

<u>Agreed amendments</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Amended by</u>

Appendix A. Code of Conduct (Adapted from the Tenant Participation Partnership Agreement)

Anyone attending a Service User Group (SUG) will agree to abide by these rules during any meeting or activity connected to the SUG for e.g., meetings, visits, training or events.

1. The meeting will make visitors and observers feel welcome and will encourage new membership.
2. Attendees will show civility and courtesy to each other. All tenants and leaseholders are entitled to be heard with respect.
3. All attendees will wait for the chairperson’s permission to speak. It is not acceptable to talk when someone else is speaking unless there is an open forum.
4. All attendees have the basic right to express an opinion without fear or favour and each person’s opinion is of equal importance.
5. Aggressive, abusive, or discriminatory behaviour, shouting or bad language are not acceptable.
6. Decisions relating to the meetings of the SUG (Point 4) are to be made through discussion and by way of a simple majority vote. Any dissensions will be noted.
7. Individual problems are not a matter for the SUG unless they are used as an example to demonstrate a common issue.
8. Attendees must not speak, write or act on behalf of the SUG without its prior agreement.
9. Attendees are asked to respect confidentiality. Any Personal information about any individual should automatically be treated as confidential.

Dealing with complaints and disputes

Any breaches of the code should be brought to the attention of the chair and or other council staff in attendance.

Breaches can usually be managed within the meeting by the members or, where appropriate, the chair and/or other council staff in accordance with the Tenant Participation code of conduct.

The chair and other council staff in attendance reserve the right to ask any individual to leave the

meeting in the event of a serious breach.

Following the meeting chairs and any complainants will be supported by Tenant Participation to implement the code of conduct procedures and equalities policy.

Individuals can be written to following a breach of the code of conduct and may be:

- Asked to apologise in writing to the SUG
- Asked to attend appropriate training provided by Tenant Participation
- Asked, if the breach is an equality issue, to attend equalities training or seek mediation from the Equalities Team if the issue is more complex.

If issues are of a serious nature and/or involve Council staff the council's corporate policies and/or complaints procedure will apply. Serious or persistent failure to comply with the code of conduct could result in removal or suspension from the SUG or result in a ban from tenant involvement activities. Individuals subject to code of conduct procedures have a right to be heard by the Tenant Participation Team, as part of any investigation.