

**Minutes of Regional Consumer Panel Meeting
Monday 11th May 2009 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Docklands Sailing & Watersports Centre**

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| Members present: | | |
| | Tony Ford (TF) | Nadia Mahmood (NM) |
| | Dave Keeley (DK) | Jan Bros (JB) |
| | Sammy Samuels (SS) | |
| | Emmanuel Ejimonyeabala (EE) | |
| | Jill Skeels (JS) | |
| OHG: | Michelle Mulcare – Jennifer Jones – Barbara Wellington - Christine Foley - | Community Investment Manager – OHG – Chair (MM) Community Investment Officer – OHG – Secretary (JJ) Service Improvement Officer – OHG (BW) Housing Services Manager – Island Homes (CF) |

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| Apologies | Pam Cole (PC) – Board Representative Claire Higgins (CH) - Panel Member |
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| MINUTES | | |
| Minutes from previous meeting – n/a | | |
| Matters arising from minutes – n/a | | |
| | | Action |
| 1. | Welcome and Introductions. | |
| 2. | MM Introduced herself to the panel, and confirmed the duration of the meetings. | |
| Meeting Governance | | |
| 3. | Code of Conduct: | |
| 3.0 | MM read through the Code of Conduct, and asked for comments. ACTION: all member were requested to sign the document (a | |

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| | copy will be held on file) | JJ |
| 3.1 | JS asked for clarification on 1.7 of the Code of Conduct – and asked if any resident can request to observe meetings. | |
| 3.2 | MM stated that observers can be residents or a member of staff from OHG or Island Homes, in agreement with the Chair and Panel. | |
| 3.3 | CF stated that her attendance at tonight’s meeting was n the capacity of an ‘observer’. | |
| 3.4 | MM asked panel members that as they had not been notified of CF attendance, if they would like to votes against her attendance at tonight’s meeting – Members agreed to her attendance. | |
| 3.5 | MM stated that panel members could not use these meetings to raise any personal issues, if they have any personal issues they can have them recorded on a Resident Enquiry Form, which would be passed onto the relevant department. | |
| 4. | Terms of Reference: | |
| 4.0 | MM read through term of reference, and asked for feedback. | |
| 4.1 | MM reiterated that this Regional Consumer Panel is for Island Homes. | |
| 4.2 | MM reminded Panel Members that they can only have two memberships for One Housing Group. | |
| 4.3 | MM stated that copies of the minutes will be distributed 14 days prior to the next meeting; some may have to be tabled at the meeting. | |
| 4.4 | CF suggested that another meeting should be held before the scheduled meeting on Monday 20 th July 2009, as she felt that this first meeting was a fact finding one. ACTION: Members agreed to an unscheduled meeting on Monday 1st June 2009 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm. | |
| 4.5 | MM stated that members are entitled to an attendance allowance of £30.00 and £25.00 *Carers/ Childcare allowance. ACTION: a signed receipt is required from any member wishing to claim. | |
| 4.6 | JS stated that she does not agree with Panel members being paid for their attendance at meetings as JS feels that it could attract residents to the panel for the wrong reasons. | |
| 4.7 | MM stated that panel members did not have to claim the attendance allowance, and that panel members were at liberty to request that it is donated to charity, | |
| 4.8 | SS stated that he felt that JS opinion was a sad indictment on | |

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| | residents. | |
| 4.9 | JS stated that she was entitled to an opinion, and commented on SS perceived manner. | |
| 4.10 | SS apologised to JS if he had caused offence. | |
| 4.11 | MM asked members to sign the Terms of Reference, and gave members the option of taking home the documentation and returning it. ACTION – Panel members to sign-off and return in the FREE post envelope provided. | JJ |
| 5. | Declaration: | |
| 5.0 | MM stated that this had been covered within the terms of reference – members agreed. | |
| 6. | Regional Consumer Panel Equalities Diversity Statement: | |
| 6.0 | MM informed members that she would like to introduce the above to the agenda – members agreed. | |
| 6.1 | MM read through the equality and diversity document, members were asked for feedback. | |
| 6.2 | TF felt that the term under point 4 “disadvantaged groups” meant that if assistance was only given to disadvantaged groups, then groups who worked to support themselves would be at a disadvantage if they never received help/support from Island Homes. | |
| 6.3 | MM stated that the intention was to support ‘disadvantaged groups/residents in order that they could ‘get involved’. | ALL |
| 6.4 | TF requested that the wording should be changed to “all groups”. | |
| 6.5 | NM said that some groups did not see themselves as disadvantaged. | |
| 6.6 | MM asked the panel if they were in agreement with TF suggestion. ACTION: members agreed to the change of wording, to ‘get involved.’ | JJ |
| 7. | Complaints Audit Report December 2008: | |
| 7.0 | BW the Service Improvement Officer introduced herself. | |
| 7.1 | BW presented the Complaints Audit Report and read through the briefing notes. | |
| 7.2 | BW read through the Audit Report, with members and asked for comments. | |

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| 7.3 | MM stated that members did not have to feed back tonight, as a copy of the Complaints Procedure may assist with aiding feed back on the report. ACTION: provide members with a copy of the Complaints Procedure, | JJ |
| 7.4 | SS stated that it appeared that better communication was required on the complaint procedure. | |
| 7.5 | BW confirmed that this had been highlighted before on the Community Regional Consumer Panel, and that the complaints looked at the Audit where closed cases that had not reached the ombudsman. | |
| 7.6 | BW stated that the panel should read through the report and make suggestion for change i.e. Complainants should be spoken to during the audit. | |
| 7.7 | TF asked BW how had they made their choices on which complaints to review in the audit? | |
| 7.8 | BW they were chosen at random. | |
| 7.9 | JB asked that the figures on page 8. of the Audit Report be changed as they read in such a way that misrepresented the number of cases involved. ACTION: BW to carryout changes to the Audit Report. | BW |
| 7.10 | DK asked if in relation to page 7 and 3 of the document - had auditors spoken with residents, as it was not clear. | |
| 7.11 | BW replied that complainants had not been spoken to. | |
| 7.12 | BW gave a briefing to panel members on Community Housing's three stage complaints procedure. At present the Complaint Procedure is being reviewed and will be incorporated across OHG. | |
| 7.13 | JS pointed out that Call Centre is not working; it's a complaint in itself. You often have to hold for long periods of time, this situation needs to be resolved. | |
| 7.14 | MM asked if complaints, needed to be reported within a certain time period. | |
| 7.15 | BW stated that if there was no time restriction, that ideally there should be some history to the complaint. | |
| 7.16 | MM suggested that in view of the questions arising about the call centre, that a representative should be asked to attend a panel meeting – members agreed. ACTION: JJ to invite Lesley Sullivan from the Customer Services Contact Centre. | JJ |

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| 7.17 | NM asked if the audit was conducted by an independent organisation. | |
| 7.18 | BW stated that it was conducted by OHG staff, but they did not work within complaints. | |
| 7.19 | NW asked how cases had been chosen for the audit. | |
| 7.20 | BW replied that files had been randomly chosen. | |
| 7.21 | BW asked that the panel take the time to respond to the two questions outlined on the Complaint Audit Questionnaire – see attached. ACTION: members to complete and return by Monday 18th May 09 in the FREE post envelope provided by JJ. | JJ |
| 7.22 | NM asked if translations are available of the Complaints Procedure and there availability in Brail. | |
| 7.23 | MM, BW and CF confirmed availability upon request. | |
| 7.24 | BW stated that Officers were also available to capture complaints from residents. | |
| 7.25 | MM stated that translation can be sent direct to residents upon request and interpreters made available at meetings. | |
| 7.26 | NM asked if the organisation had access to people who could do Sign Language. | |
| 7.27 | MM replied that this was a service available. | |
| 7.28 | CF stated that a resident profile form had been devised and had been sent out to all residents, CF asked that members took the time to complete it and encourage others to do so. | |
| 7.29 | MM stated that the organisation wanted to expand on the information that we held in this area, and that the resident profile form would redress the situation. | |
| 8. | Former Tenants Arrears Report: | |
| 8.0 | MM informed members that Lisa Mayo (the author of the report was unavailable to attend tonight’s meeting, and asked if members would still like to go through the report or defer it until the next meeting – members agreed. | |
| 8.1 | MM presented the report and asked for feed back | |
| 8.2 | DK asked for clarity on whether this included Leaseholders. | |
| 8.3 | TF asked what the likelihood is of recouping the charges. | |

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| 8.4 | JS requested a update on services charges for Leaseholders | |
| 8.5 | DK felt that there should be another bullet point added under Objectives – “Communicate effectively with former Tenants”. | |
| 8.6 | CF stated that in the case of a deceased tenant – rent is still liable for four weeks. | |
| 8.7 | SK asked if residents no longer receive two weeks to close the property up. | |
| 8.8 | CF we are not legally obliged to do this. | |
| 8.9 | DK asked who decides the date of termination. | |
| 8.10 | CF replied that it was the tenant or the Executor. | |
| 8.11 | MM stated that tenants sign a Tenancy Agreement, so it’s important that residents read it and terminate their tenancy in accordance with the procedure. | |
| 8.12 | DK asked if there was an issue with residents not terminating in accordance with their tenancy agreement. | |
| 8.13 | CF stated that Island Homes did not have a high rate of abandonment. | |
| 8.14 | NM asked if the document was legal. | |
| 8.15 | MM informed NW that the document was legal and that advice had been taken from Devonshires. | |
| 8.16 | MM suggested that in view of the questions arising, an officer should be invited to attend one a panel meeting and feed back. ACTION: Lisa Mayo to be invited to panel meeting on Monday 1ST June 2009. | JJ/MM |
| 9. | Training Needs Analysis: | |
| 9.0 | MM provided members with the Training Needs Analysis Form and highlighted the training programme for 2009 and additional training, and stated that the courses would ensure confidence in understanding the issues raised at the panel meetings. ACTION: members to provide JJ with completed applications. | ALL |
| 9.1 | MM stated that she will provide members with the Regional Consumer Panel Training Schedule. ACTION: MM to supply JJ with the schedule for mail out to members. | MM/ JJ |
| 9.2 | MM asked members to feed back on any relevant courses that they are interested in, and stated that training dates/times would be flexible | |

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| 9.3 | MM informed members that some courses will be out of London, but that members will be reimbursed. | |
| 9.4 | MM stated that FREE post envelopes would be forwarded for the training request forms. ACTION: JJ to mail out envelopes to panel members. | JJ/ALL |
| 10. | AOB:. | |
| 10.1 | MM to invite Amanda Ball - Group Income Manager ; Steve Schollar - Group Leasehold Manager to the special meeting on 1 st June 2009, their presentation should include: Process and Procedure Housing Benefit Cycle Death Certificate Termination of Tenancy Income Collection Policy Former Tenants Arrears | |
| 10.2 | MM provided all members of the panel with a copy of the following: Community Investment Starter Pack Guide to Resident Involvement <i>Copies are available on request or from reception</i> MM stated that the documents highlighted the resident involvement framework (RIF) and the support and resources available to residents. | |
| 11. | Next Meeting: The date and time of the next Island Homes Regional Consumer Panel Meeting is Monday 1 st June 2009 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm @ Island House Community Centre Roserton Street London E14 3PG (Training Room) | |