

# Training courses for scrutiny groups

**Effective scrutiny by tenants** is now an essential part of running social housing. Resident scrutiny groups play a crucial role in regulating their landlords' housing services, ensuring they meet national and local standards, and helping them improve. These courses are designed especially to help scrutiny groups carry out different aspects of their important role.

Each course should ideally be run over 1 day. A typical programme would be:

10.00-11.15	Session 1
11.30-12.45	Session 2
12.45	Lunch
1.30-2.45	Session 3
3.00-4.00	Session 4
4.00-4.15	Course review and finish

## Understanding social housing

What do we mean by 'social housing'?

What are the roles of housing associations and council housing?

What does a good housing service consist of?

How is social housing paid for?

What laws and regulations affect the way social housing is run?

Why is tenant involvement important, and how should it work?

## Holding effective meetings

How to organise meetings to get the best out of everyone

Preparing agendas and keeping a written record

Holding insightful and creative discussions

The skills needed by an effective chairperson

The process of reaching clear and wise decisions

Managing disagreement well

### **Using performance information**

How to gather information about housing services  
Understanding the performance management process  
Selecting the best performance indicators  
Recognising the different sources of information  
Interpreting and analysing data, and benchmarking  
Making recommendations that make a difference

### **Consulting residents**

When should residents be consulted... and about what?  
Consultation – exploring the range of methods available  
Designing and using questionnaires  
Conducting interviews with individuals and groups  
Mystery customers and tenant inspectors  
Participatory techniques for engaging with residents

### **Working as an effective group**

The principles of effective team-work  
Recognising and making best use of members' strengths  
Developing great communication skills  
Planning a scrutiny project  
How to avoid and manage conflict  
Developing as a team over time

### **Writing and presenting scrutiny reports**

How to organise and structure a report  
Using evidence to make recommendations  
Plain language for report-writing (also known as 'jargon-busting')  
Presenting your report to the board  
Disseminating and publicising your findings more widely

### **Negotiating with service-providers**

Skills for negotiating with your landlord and other service-providers  
Making recommendations: how to make your case for change  
The tools of effective persuasion – selling your ideas  
Recognising different interests and pressures: the win-win approach  
Taking action: agreeing a time-line and reviewing progress