

Riverside Customer Voice Constitution



Customer
Voice

 **Riverside**
Your opinions count

Customer Voice

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To find out more about the stories behind our photographs visit the website
<https://www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/get-involved>

Amended 2020



Members of Riverside Customer Voice - Kent

1. Introduction

1.1

Riverside Customer Voice (RCV in this Constitution)

1.2

This constitution defines the purpose, including the aims and objectives, of RCV. It sets out the rules for operation and organisation of the RCVE, shows how people can become members and describes its governance.

2. Membership

2.1

Members of RCV are Riverside Tenants, Leaseholders and Licence Holders as defined below (Collectively referred to as MEMBERS in this constitution)

- Tenants: those adults who have a formal contract with Riverside or its partners or who appear on the tenancy agreement in relation to the rented accommodation in which they live.
- Leaseholders: those who have a formal contract with Riverside in relation to the non-rented property in which they live.
- Licence Holders: those living in temporary accommodation provided by Riverside.

Everyone in the above groups will automatically become members as soon as a formal contract exists between them and Riverside.

2.2

RCV also recognises that there are people who will be affected by our decisions and activities who are not Tenants, Leaseholders or Licence Holders (members as defined above). The involvement of such persons in local level structures only, is a decision for the relevant local Committee members. If accepted onto a local committee, such persons will be expected to comply with this constitution as though they were a member, as a condition of their continued participation in local structures and activities.

2.3

Tenants of Irvine Housing Association do not have a formal contract with Riverside. However, due to the constitutional relationship between Irvine Housing Association and Riverside; RCVE will formally invite **one Observer** from Irvine Housing Association to specific meetings, to allow the flow of information and best practice to be shared across the two landlords.

2.4

In the event of other subsidiaries joining the Group, or a fundamental restructure, the RCVE shall review their composition to ensure RCVE reflects the changed membership. This could also include giving prospective members an observational seat as they perhaps undergo transition to become a full RCV member.

Exemptions

No two members living at the same address may serve on the RCVE simultaneously.

Riverside employees who are also members of the RCV may not serve as members of RCVE.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1

The Riverside Customer Voice Executive Committee (RCVE in this document) **is the principle governing body of RCV. It aims to:**

- Ensure that the views of members are brought to the attention of Riverside in relation to the services and service delivery Riverside provide, as well as in the development of its strategy and policies.
- Act as a lobbying and campaigning group. To influence wider decision making by the Government, its departments and agencies, and relevant organisations about issues which affect our members.
- Communicate with members to keep them informed of involvement activity in Riverside, empowering them in their relationship with their landlord.
- Promote and encourage good practice in participation amongst all members and Riverside staff.
- Work with Riverside to implement and review a resident involvement strategy, and good practice guidelines.
- Develop and maintain excellent working relationships with Riverside Committees, including the Neighbourhood Services and Care and Support Committees; who may for example wish to request that the RCVE commission a particular scrutiny exercise.
- Identify training requirements for members and deliver or manage training to meet agreed needs. Commissioning training both from Riverside staff and external providers.
- Promote the work of RCV to wider audiences and external organisations.

3.2

Whilst having no affiliation to any political party, to undertake an interest and actively engage in housing issues and Government policies to reflect further our members' interests, and voice their opinions and concerns.

3.3

To work with other agencies to achieve our aims and objectives.

3.4

RCV will promote, apply and continually review our; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (**Appendix 1**). RCV will seek to engage its members in all areas of our activity without any discrimination, in line with the Equality act 2010 as well as current Human Rights Legislation and the HCA regulatory framework.

3.5

As such and in addition RCV will provide safe environments within meetings where respect and consideration will be shown. Any form of discrimination, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

3.6

RCV Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy statement is further detailed in **Appendix 1** which forms part of this Constitution.

4. Management

4.1

The management and affairs of RCV are the responsibility of RCVE who in accordance with the selection procedure shall endeavour to ensure that The RCVE possess the qualities, skills, competence and experience which it has determined it requires, and as far as possible reflects the diversity of its members. Members no longer eligible to be on the group, could be considered to act as Customer Voice mentors for new members, to share their skills and experience.

4.2

RCVE will consist of a maximum 21 RCV members appointed as outlined in Rule 4.4 and made up where possible, as follows:

- Three members from each Riverside region (9)
- Three members from Care and Support (3)
- Three members from Riverside Home Ownership (3)

Plus, a further Six members selected by the RCVE Officers as National Co-Opted Members (6)

4.3

Co-Opted Members are selected by the Officer Group to fill positions for a specific time or purpose or to provide certain expertise, but who may be required to stand down at the request of the RCVE; For example, but not exclusively, to facilitate representation from areas of Riverside's Procurement and Growth or to provide different or local expertise; thus allowing RCVE flexibility to respond effectively and represent the needs of Riverside and RCV members. In any event any Co-Opted Members will automatically also be stood down at the end of each three-year selection period, but will be eligible to be selected again as per rule 4.4.

In all other respects Co-Opted RCVE Members will enjoy exactly the same rights, including voting rights and the right to hold Office.

4.4

At the end of each 3 yearly cycle, 7 members will be selected by vote onto the RCVE: 5 officer positions and 2 other members, a total of one third of the maximum 21 (The quorum 7) of the maximum 21 and will be considered as elected for a further 3 year term to ensure continuity and management. All others are obliged to stand down and the 8 vacancies, open to all our members, will be widely advertised, including through both social media and on our web site. Members can stand for reselection, but no member shall serve for more than nine years continuously on the RCVE. The 8 RCVE members will be selected in a fair and transparent way by means of an assessment and selection process, overseen by a panel of members who are not themselves standing for selection.



4.5

Members selected for co-option to the RCVE that are made outside of the 3 yearly selection process (as a result of resignations for example or vacancies not filled by the selection process) must be reported to all members of the RCVE within 7 days for their approval and ratification within 14 days. The co-opted appointment will be made if the majority of those who express a view are in favour. Any co-opted members will only serve the maximum period of time remaining up to the next three yearly selection date and rule 4.3 will apply throughout that time.

4.6

Meetings of RCVE will normally take place every 2 Months. The Chair may use their discretion and call any additional meetings, if they feel matters require such to ensure the smooth and democratic process prevails and Members best interests are served. It is expected that the need for additional meetings will be infrequent and should only be called if they serve in the interests of the wider membership and the urgency of the matter deems the need for an additional meeting. All meetings will be convened by the RCVE Secretary.

4.7

The Executive Officers Group
There will be five Officers of the RCVE:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Social media lead

These five posts will be elected every 2 years, by the RCVE at the RCVE's April meeting in even years and will form the Officers' Group.

4.8

The Officers' Group will be responsible for overseeing business between meetings of the RCVE and making any necessary urgent decisions. Such decisions will include the co-option of members to fill vacant positions on RCVE. All such decisions must be reported for approval and ratification to the next meeting of RCVE.

4.9

The Officers' Group will review, update and oversee the implementation of the RCVE annual work plan and will prepare the agenda for the full RCVE meetings. It will also take reports from the RCVE's Scrutiny Working Groups and forward relevant information from that Panel to the full RCVE.

4.10

Members may vote only if they are present at meetings of The RCVE (including video and phone conferencing).

4.11

RCVE can invite Riverside staff, Observers and Guests to attend meetings, but they will not be allowed to vote.

4.12

The roles and further responsibilities of the RCVE are as defined in **Appendix 2**



5. Annual General Meeting

5.1

The RCVE will endeavour to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in December, but always within 3 months of the 12-month anniversary of the previous AGM and always before the April election of Officers.

5.2

The RCVE can invite Riverside Staff, Observers and Guests to attend their AGM but they will not be allowed to vote.

5.3

RCVE members will be given a minimum of 21 days' notice of the date of the AGM and its agenda.

The AGM agenda must include:

- The minutes of the previous AGM for approval.
- The Treasurers independent and externally scrutinised accounts and financial Report.

5.4

The AGM may also amend the Constitution, provided such amendments have the support of a majority of the members voting.

5.5

Casting Vote; In all votes at all meetings the chair can exercise a second or casting vote. A casting vote can only be used if the person presiding has already cast their deliberative vote. If the chair puts the issue to the vote, but does not vote him or herself and there is a tie, then the casting vote does not apply because they have not yet exercised their deliberative vote.

6. Quorum

6.1

All meetings of the RCVE, including the AGM, shall have a Quorum of seven members or one third of the current sitting RCVE (if less than 21) who are able to engage and comment on the proceedings. If there is no quorum within thirty minutes of the appointed meeting time, the meeting will be adjourned. If at the following re-arranged meeting a quorum is not present within thirty minutes, the members present may, if they feel competent, continue with the business in hand and any decisions made must be ratified at the next RCVE meeting.



7. Riverside Customer Voice Scrutiny Working Group (SWG)

7.1

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England sets out the standards registered providers are expected to meet. This framework supports tenants to shape and scrutinise service delivery and hold their landlord to account for meeting those standards. With collaboration and as Riverside's 'Critical friend' RCVE will robustly undertake this important role.

7.2

A Scrutiny Working Group (SWG) will be formed by the RCVE as and when required from among the current members of the RCVE, and may include members of the wider membership co-opted for the duration of the exercise.

7.3

The selection of a SWG will be based on the skills required as well as local knowledge and expertise.

7.4

The number of members that make up a SWG will be decided by the RCVE Officers and will reflect the scope of the task.

7.5

For the purpose of management, organisation and reporting, RCVE Officers will select a SWG Chair for the duration of each scrutiny exercise.

7.6

The SWG will remain accountable to The RCVE and report their findings and recommendations both directly and through the Officer Group. The RCVE will in turn report to the Neighbourhood Services Committee the Riverside Care and Support Committees and other appropriate groups and report the outcomes back to the SWG. As detailed in Appendix 3.

7.7

Roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of the SWG Members when conducting a scrutiny exercise are further defined in Appendix 3 which forms part of this constitution.

8. Riverside Customer Voice Inspectors

8.1

Customer Inspectors will form an integral part of quality and compliance in order to ensure continuous improvement of the service standards; and will report their feedback and findings to the appropriate Riverside Quality Officer and the RCVE using the supplied forms and agreed channels.

8.2

Customer Inspectors will receive training to develop their interpersonal skills, increase their confidence and their expertise in order to provide achievable recommendations.

8.3

Highlights from Inspections will appear quarterly on the Riverside website alongside RCVE minutes.

8.4

Customer Inspectors will hold their position for a term of three years and will then stand down from the role unless asked to continue by the RCVE Officers, for example in order to maintain the desired numbers and level of experience of the Customer Inspector Team.

8.5

Roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of the Customer Inspectors are as further defined in Appendix 3, which forms part of this constitution.



9. Riverside Customer Voice Complaints Panel

The role of the panel is to scrutinise the performance of the complaints service by reviewing the quality of the complaint handling and making recommendations for improvement. The panel will hold Riverside to account for putting into practice the learning from customer complaints. The purpose of the panel is to act as a critical friend in advising Riverside on how it can improve its service to customers in formal complaint handling as well as ensuring that learning happens from customer complaints as part of continual improvement.

9.1

The Complaints Panel meet bi-monthly and for each meeting will be provided with a random selection of anonymised complaint responses to quality assure as well as updates on learning outcomes.

9.2

The Riverside Complaints Team will provide all the required information at least one week in advance of the meeting and will attend each meeting.

9.3

Riverside colleagues are required to attend the meeting to report on the implementation of learning recommendations, if required by the panel members.

9.4

The role and responsibility of the panel is further defined in Appendix 3, which forms part of this constitution.

10. Obligation and Commitment

10.1

If you are successfully selected to serve on the RCVE, or any of those member groups covered by this constitution, you must confirm that you are able to allocate sufficient time to meet the requirements of your role. This involves a significant commitment, not only to attend meetings, but also to engage across the regions in the promotion of the projects as determined by the RCVE.

10.2

Every member of The RCVE and wider groups accepts that they have a privileged role to play and a responsibility to actively participate in activities, as delegated to do so, to properly fulfil their role as a representative of the wider RCV membership.

10.3

Any member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of The RVCE or Scrutiny Working Groups, or standing committees appointed by RCVE, without offering apologies that are accepted by the meeting will be considered to have resigned their position. Should a member submit apologies for a third consecutive meeting those apologies are automatically rejected and the member will also be considered to have resigned. The member may appeal to the RCVE Officers' Group.

10.4

Should a member miss 50 % of the convened meetings of The RCVE, Scrutiny Working Group or Standing Committees, in any one year from AGM to AGM; their membership will be suspended pending a meeting with the RCVE Officers' Group.

10.5

If the Officers' Group rule that membership of the relevant committee should be terminated the member may appeal this decision to a hearing comprising three non-officer RCVE members.

10.6

Attendance and participation will be monitored by the Chair(s) of RCVE and other standing committee meetings.

11. Special General Meeting

11.1

The Chair or Secretary of the RCVE may at any time call a Special General Meeting (SGM) of the RCVE to consider any matter that it may decide should be referred to members in general.

11.2

A SGM will also be called after a written request from not less than one third of The RCVE is given to the Chair or Secretary, stating the reasons why they have requested the meeting. A meeting requested in this manner must be organised within 21 working days of the request being received. The meeting will only discuss the business identified in the written request.

11.3

All RCVE members will be notified of a meeting called under 11.2 with the names of those who have requested it at least five working days before it is to take place.

11.4

A SGM has the power to amend the constitution provided such amendments have the support of 51 % majority of the members voting.

12. Code of Conduct

12.1

The code of conduct sets out the way that all members are expected to carry out their duties and behave in meetings, conferences and all activities carried out by the RCV or Riverside. Members are expected to abide by the code of conduct at all times when carrying out their duties. Any failure to do so may result in the member being suspended or excluded from RCV activities. In addition, acceptance of the code of conduct means that as a member you must adhere to your contractual agreement with Riverside or its partners throughout the term of your involvement.

12.2

The full RCV Code of Conduct forms part of this Constitution and must be signed by those members who hold positions at meetings locally, regionally or nationally. All attendees at such meetings will also be subject to the Code of Conduct.

12.3

The RCV Code of Conduct is further defined in Appendix 4 which also forms part of this constitution.

16. Your opinions count



Michael from Stoke who served as an RCVE member for a full term of 9 years

13. Training and Support

13.1

Training will be supplied to all members of the RCVE to develop their potential and equip them with new skills. The training will be ongoing and members will be expected to attend training sessions.

No one will be expected to have all the skills required on appointment.

13.2

The RCVE members will be supported by Riverside's Customer Engagement Partners Team who will co-ordinate meetings and provide other administrative support.

13.3

An initial and annual skills audit will be carried out on each RCVE member to identify strengths and any areas that require additional training to ensure a suitable and relevant skill level across each group.

14. Finance

14.1

The RCV expenses policy forms part of this constitution and is detailed in **Appendix 5**.

14.2

All income and property shall be used solely towards the promotion of the RCV and in pursuit of activities authorised by the RCVE.

14.3

The Treasurer will ensure that proper independently and externally scrutinised accounts are kept.

14.4

A financial report will be produced at the AGM for the previous year.

14.5

No member will profit financially by receiving payment for their work as a RCVE member.

14.6

Expenses will be given in line with the RCV Expenses policy.

14.7

The RCV expenses policy will be monitored by The RCVE Officers.

15. Dissolution of the Riverside Customer Voice

15.1

In the event that the RCV be wound up, the assets of the RCV have been distributed through Riverside and belongs to the customers of Riverside. Therefore, The RCVE will ensure that all assets will remain to the benefit of Riverside's customers.



Appendix 1: Riverside Customer Voice Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

RCV is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture amongst the whole membership. It is in our best interest to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination.

Our aim is to ensure that all members are given equal opportunity and that our organisation is representative of all sections of its membership. Each member will be respected and valued and able to give their best as a result. This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equal opportunity and fairness to all our members and not provide less favourable facilities or treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, or sex and sexual orientation. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All members, staff and participants that come into contact with our RCV will be treated fairly and with respect. When selecting candidates for positions, training, or any other benefit, it will be on the basis of their aptitude and ability, and we will as far as possible aim to select candidates to reflect Riverside's diverse customer base. All members will be given help and encouragement to develop their full potential and utilise their unique talents. Therefore, the skills and resources of our members will be fully utilised and we will maximise the efficiency of our whole organisation.

Our commitments:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all team members are recognised and valued
- To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every person in attendance.
- To not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy
- To make training and development opportunities available to all
- To promote equality in the wider community
- To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures
- To encourage our members to treat everyone with dignity and respect
- To regularly review all our practices and procedures so that fairness is maintained at all times

We will also inform all members that an equality and diversity policy is in operation; and that they are obligated to comply with its requirements and promote fairness in all our undertakings. The policy will also be drawn to the attention of funding agencies, stakeholders and working partners. Our equality and diversity policy will be monitored continually and reviewed annually to ensure that equality and diversity is continually promoted.

Appendix 2: Riverside Customer Voice Executive

RCVE is the principle organisation of Riverside's tenants, leaseholders and licence holders and represents its members at a national level.

It will be the body with whom Riverside will discuss and consult with on all aspects of service delivery, including standards and quality of the services it delivers, strategy development and broader business and policy issues. As such the RCVE will create opportunities for members to develop and discuss their views.

The RCVE undertakes to consult and communicate with its members regularly and as effectively as possible.

The RCVE acts as Riverside's "critical friend" - Independent but working in partnership with Riverside, to ensure members views and concerns are heard and taken into account at all levels of the organisation.

The RCVE will routinely be consulted by Riverside when implementing or reviewing policies or considering major changes.

The RCVE's role will be to consider these changes and formulate a response from its member's perspective.

The RCVE will also carry out campaigns on behalf of its members, wherever possible working in partnership with Riverside on such campaigns.

Look for opportunities to influence external policy and strategy development in relation to housing issues, especially around service delivery.

The RCVE will agree with Riverside member representatives to be offered for selection to all national tenant organisations such as Tpas and other national or regional tenant groups.

Look for opportunities to empower members and promote projects around the Riverside Group, for example around financial inclusion and employment and training. RCV may raise funds or hold equipment in relation to those projects.

Nominate members to be Riverside Group Board Tenant Members and members of committees and working groups of Riverside.

Tenant Board members should normally be members of RCVE, if under exceptional circumstances such representatives are not or cease to be members of the RCVE, they are obliged to report to the RCVE meeting upon request.

RCV Officer Group will set the RCV budget for three years. As well as manage its financial affairs in line with financial policies which will be agreed at a meeting of the full RCVE.

Appendix 3:

1. RCV Scrutiny Working Groups

RCV recognises that Scrutiny is an essential and valuable tool for ensuring that RCV members can hold Riverside to account for its performance and behaviour and will also:

Scrutinise the service Riverside provides, drive improvements from member's perspective, and provide through The RCVE a 'critical friend' to Riverside as part of Co-Regulation.

The role and work will be independent from Riverside Board and staff and will support the self-assessment and improvement planning process.

Its findings will be published on Riverside's website.

RCVE will decide what services to scrutinise, commission scrutiny and Inspections, but will in doing so consider recommendations from NSC & RC&S and other Riverside Committees.

A SWG will be expected to:

- Monitor performance including strategies and best practice examples
- Analyse feedback from Riverside working groups
- Produce reports on scrutiny findings and make recommendations
- Seek responses to any service improvement issues raised and recommendations made.
- Ensure compliance with RCV and Riverside's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies

ACCOUNTABILITY

SWG members are accountable to RCVE.

A SWG will consult and communicate with members using all available methods including social media.

The process of reporting the findings and any recommendations of the SWG will be as follows:

- The SWG Chair and Mentor will present their report to the RCVE
- The RCVE Review and once the report is accepted
- The RCVE Chair to arrange a date with Riverside to present the report
- The Report will be professionally prepared for presentation to Riverside
- The RCVE Officers together with the SWG Chair and Mentor present the report to Riverside
- Outcomes from presentation meeting with Riverside reported back to RCVE

2. RCV Customer Inspectors

RCV Customer Inspectors form an integral part of RCVE customer involvement strategy and are an essential and valuable tool for ensuring that RCV members can hold Riverside to account for its performance and behaviour and will also:

- Encourage and support their peer group by sharing knowledge and skills
- Carry out inspections in an impartial manner within agreed criteria and evaluate objectively
- Treat all information collected during the inspection process in a confidential manner
- Not take part in any inspection where they have a personal interest
- Not bring up personal issues when carrying out inspection duties
- Promote the benefits of the Customer Inspector team and other customer involvement opportunities
- Participate in an annual personal review to ensure ongoing support and development needs are met
- The Customer Inspector role is subject to change to meet the needs of the RCVE and Riverside. Where this is the case, Customer Inspectors will be given an opportunity to step down if they do not wish to continue in the role
- RCVE reserve the right to request an Inspector stands down if they are no longer willing or able to deliver the role of Customer Inspector
- Relinquish their identification badge when they cease to be a Customer Inspector
- Ensure compliance with RCV and Riverside's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies
- Any Inspector who fails to attend two arranged inspections without offering apologies that are accepted by the RCVE will be considered to have resigned their position
- Should a member submit apologies for a third consecutive inspection those apologies are automatically rejected and the member will also be considered to have resigned. In this circumstance the member concerned may appeal to the RCVE Officers' Group

REPORTING BACK

Following each Customer Inspection, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the RCVE for their records by the customer engagement team

ACCOUNTABILITY

RCVE Customer Inspectors are accountable to RCVE, its Constitution and its Code of Conduct.



Customer Voice

3. Customer Complaints Panel

Terms of Reference

This document sets out the terms of reference for The Customer Complaints Panel and will help them carry out their duties effectively.

The Customer Complaints Panel is part of the overall customer engagement framework and is a sub-group of the Riverside Customer Voice Executive (RCVE). The panel can at any point request a review of this terms of reference to ensure the panel remains fit for purpose.

Purpose of The Complaints Panel:

- To support Riverside to continually improve its service to customers who make a formal complaint, by offering customer feedback, oversight and scrutiny on Riverside’s complaint service.
- Provide a quality assurance role to Riverside’s complaint service to support it to provide a quality complaint service that meets the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code.
- To hold Riverside to account for its complaint service performance and identifying and acting upon learning from complaints.

How will it do this?

- The panel will meet bi-monthly, in the alternate month to the RCVE bi-monthly meetings.
- The panel will review a selection of randomised complaint responses from all complaints teams i.e. Evolve, Building Safety, Complaints and Dispute Resolution Team, and provide feedback as appropriate using a defined scoring matrix.
- The panel will review complaint responses based on complaint type, Stage, region, tenure type and any other themes that it feels is appropriate, in order to support Riverside in understanding customer dissatisfaction and make recommendations.
- The panel will review complaint performance information and will support Riverside in working towards providing a complaint service that has high customer satisfaction.
- The panel will track the implementation of learning from complaints.
- The panel will invite relevant Riverside colleagues to the panel meetings to assist their understanding and their ability to effectively scrutinise the complaint service.

Outside of scope

- The panel will not provide individual responses to any customers as part of the complaints process.
- The panel will not provide any advocacy or advisory role to any customers who are making a formal complaint.
- The panel cannot request follow up information about individual complaint cases.
- The panel will not reinvestigate any individual complaint cases.

Reporting:

- The panel will provide feedback and recommendations via regular reporting to Riverside’s Complaint Team and to the Riverside Customer Voice Executive.
- The Riverside Customer Voice Administrator will provide administrative support to the panel.
- The Riverside Customer Voice Executive will report the panel’s findings and recommendations to Riverside via their bi-monthly meetings and reporting framework.

Responsibilities

The Complaints Team

- The Complaint’s Team will provide a selection of random and anonymised complaint responses to the panel one week in advance of their meetings.
- The Complaints Team will provide complaints performance information and relevant customer insight to the panel one week in advance of their meetings.
- The Complaints Team or other Riverside colleagues will attend a panel meeting if the panel requests it.
- The Complaints Team will transfer the information to the panel in line with GDPR procedure.

Customer Involvement and Engagement Team

- The CI&E team will provide administrative support to the panel.
- The CI&E team will offer induction and training to assist the panel.
- The CI&E team will enable access to a device if a panel member needs it.

The Customer Complaints Panel

- The Panel will handle any information provided to it in line with confidentiality and GDPR procedure. Panel members will not make copies of information nor transfer this outside of the Riverside IT network.
- Panel members commit to undertaking training to support it in its duties.
- Panel members must use a Riverside email address, rather than a personal email address, for the handling of the anonymised customer complaint information.
- If from the anonymised information, a panel member identifies that they are either related to, knows personally or lives in the immediate neighbourhood of the complainant, they should declare this immediately. This complaint will be withdrawn from the panel’s remit.

I understand and agree to this Terms of Reference in order to participate in the Customer Complaint Panel.

Name:

(please print)

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 4: Riverside Customer Voice Code of Conduct

RCV recognises that in order to carry out its work: members at all levels need to behave in a co-operative and respectful way, that any conflicts need to be resolved in an amicable way so that activities are not hampered by them.

This code of conduct is to enable the smooth running of the RCV.

It ensures that aggressive or abusive behaviour can be dealt with and eliminated.

That meetings can be conducted in a civil and efficient way.

That personal issues are excluded from consideration and that respect for all is the guiding principle in all activities.

It defines the rules of behaviour that members are expected to abide by within RCV.

Respect for others:

- All members should treat everyone - other members, staff, invited guests and visitors - with consideration and respect
- Members should be polite and courteous and appreciate that contributions from all are welcome

Conduct at Meetings and Events:

- All members have equal status when attending meetings. If a member becomes aggressive or acts in a threatening manner in a meeting, the Chair will ask the member to desist and may stop the meeting until this happens. The Chair can ask a member who is continuously disruptive or aggressive to leave a meeting. In extreme cases of conflict, the relevant parties will be encouraged to meet along with the Chair and vice Chair to discuss the issues. If a resolution is not reached the parties may be asked to try some sort of mediation in order to prevent differences from becoming personal.

Formal Complaints:

In the event that an issue cannot be resolved by the above means then members have the right to submit formal complaints. Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts by the above means but if an issue cannot be resolved then members have the right to submit formal complaints.

If a RCV member or a member of staff has a complaint about another member or any aspect of how the business of RCV is conducted this will be dealt with in the first instance by RCVE Chair (unless the RCVE Chair is the subject of the complaint in which case it will be the Vice Chair of RCVE), who will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days of it being submitted.

If the member who is the subject of the complaint wishes to further (and finally) appeal against the outcome of a complaint:

- The decision to appeal, including the reasons, must be made known to The RCVE Officer who communicated the original decision within 10 working days of the date the decision was communicated. If communicated outside of this period, an appeal will not be heard
- Three members of the RCVE who have had no involvement at all in the complaint will hear the appeal (which can either be in person or in writing). The decision of this panel should be made and communicated within 20 working days of the panel considering the complaint

At both stages of the complaint the member will formally stand down from their membership of RCVE until a decision is made (maximum of 20 days at each stage).

- All complaints including outcomes are to be treated as 'Strictly Private and Confidential' and 'Without Prejudice' by all parties

In the event that the complaint is about a member of staff then this should be made in writing to the Director and it will be dealt with in line with Riverside's complaints procedure.

Confidentiality:

- Members should respect all aspects of confidentiality. Information made available at meetings may at times be identified as confidential. Such information shall be treated in the strictest confidence and shall not be disclosed, a data protection form will be completed and adhered to.

Conflicts of Interest:

- Individual members should only act in the interests of The RCV and its members

Individual members:

- Should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion at the start of the discussion. The chair may ask them not to take part in a discussion or to leave the room for that matter if the chair considers it appropriate
- Members should not seek, receive or expect any preferential treatment from the organisation for themselves or their relatives or close connections because of their position
- Must not use the RCV or its material to secure any personal financial gain and must observe its expenses policy
- Comply with the RCV policies and procedures about applications for employment or housing from staff, residents, board members and anyone related or closely connected to them
- Not be involved in the appointment of staff, or for decisions relating to their employment, where they are related or closely connected to them
- Must not be involved in the appointment of, or scrutiny related to, a contractor or supplier where they are related or closely connected to them
- Must try to avoid using the Riverside contractors or suppliers for private purposes where possible. Where this is unavoidable, they must not receive a favourable service as a result of their position with the RCV and they must declare it in the register of interests and make a written declaration that no financial or other benefit was secured as a result of their involvement with the RCV
- Must comply with the law and RCV policies on bribery and corruption
- Must not canvass or receive gifts or hospitality or other benefits. If they are offered them as a result of their position, approval should be sought before acceptance and they should be recorded in the register of interests
- Should declare any conflicts of interest, or any 'perceived' interest (this is anything which others may reasonable assume to be an interest) on the Declaration Form
- Always ensure that their entry in the register of interests is complete accurate and up to date

In the event that a serious conflict of interest arises it may be necessary for the member to leave a group or committee until the conflict is resolved. If a member becomes an employee of RCV, they will have to leave the RCVE and any group as long as they remain employed by the RCV.

Public Relations:

Members should understand the importance of their responsibility when representing RCV or Riverside externally. This applies to meetings and other public events, in the written media, on the internet, the television and radio. Members of the RCVE, the RCV Scrutiny Panels or any other recognised Tenant organisations within Riverside’s official involvement structures are bound by this code of conduct in relation to their personal use of the internet and social media regarding references to Riverside. When such tenants, residents and customers identify themselves on social media as official representatives we expect them to ensure that any comments/posts/pictures etc., reflect the visions and values of both the RCVE and Riverside, including its policies on equality and diversity and do not bring either organisation into disrepute. This is designed to protect freedom of speech in relation to any personal views expressed by individuals through ensuring that such views are not associated officially with RCV or Riverside. In the event of a member bringing either Riverside or the RCVE into disrepute through such channels the RCVE Officers can investigate and recommend suspension or expulsion from the RCVE or local and divisional forums and panels depending on the findings of the investigation.

Breach of Code of Conduct:

Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the RCVE. They will have the right to issue a warning, to suspend or expel a RCV member from all RCV Committees. In the event of a single serious breach or of repeated breaches of the Code the officers may bar the person involved for a specified period of time from involvement activities. Any member will have the right to appeal against such action at the next full RCVE meeting. You will also be considered to be in breach of the Code of Conduct if you are in breach of your Tenancy Agreement. You will be asked to step down from any appointed role temporarily until your tenancy issue is resolved.

Formal acceptance of the Code of Conduct:

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and the Constitution and I agree to comply in full with it. I understand that by not adhering to the Code of Conduct or the Constitution of which it is a part I may be asked to step down from my position. In the event of me serving as an Involved Customer, Volunteer, Board member or on any other Riverside or RCV body I hereby accept any specific variations in the Codes of Conduct governing those bodies:

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date _____

Appendix 5: Riverside Customer Voice Expenses Policy

Riverside and RCV are committed to ensuring members are involved and empowered; through listening and responding to their views and enabling them to influence how Riverside deliver the best possible service to all their customers. The quality of services and the way they deliver them is a key part of what we do and only the involvement from everyone ensures that we can assist Riverside to provide the most effective and efficient housing service.

Riverside and RCV recognise the importance of involving residents, but it is also recognised many could not participate without the need for residents to claim reasonable expenses. We believe that residents should not be prevented from being involved by reason of out of pocket expense therefore, an expenses policy has been produced that gives clear guidance for both residents and staff, which outlines what expenses can be claimed.

- Receipts for expenses must be submitted along with an official claim form within two months of the expenditure. If longer, approval must be sought
- No receipt equals no payment. Claims without a receipt will only be paid in exceptional circumstances and then only with Riverside Manager/Director approval, or with the approval of the RCVE Officers’ Group

Expense forms are available from the Treasurer or Riverside staff and should be completed by the resident applying for the payment. If a resident is unable to complete an expense form, then it can be filled in by a RCVE Officer or a member of Riverside staff.

Expense forms must always be signed by the person applying for payment or by a member of Riverside staff on their behalf.

Video Conferencing:

Riverside has invested significantly in new technology, which now makes video conferencing in to meetings a viable alternative to long distance travel. Most offices now have either a video conference facility or a webcam video conference facility via individual PCs. Residents who would ordinarily have to travel significant distances to meetings, should use video conferencing as the most economic means of participating in that meeting wherever possible.

Travel Expenses:

When travel is essential, we will reimburse travel expenses incurred by members.

- Travel must always be via the most economical way possible, and will normally be by public transport, i.e., bus, coach or train

Travel by taxi will be permitted where no convenient public transport links exist or with prior approval from a Riverside member of staff or the RCV Executive Officers’ Group.

- When taxi travel is used a receipt must always be obtained detailing the start and end point of the journey and signed by the driver. Taxi sharing to the same estate or area is encouraged where possible

- To request a taxi, residents must contact a local member of staff who can book via the Riverside taxi account, unless you are attending an event remote from a usual venue.

Wherever possible, the staff member responsible for the event will provide you with rail or coach tickets. Those who need to travel by rail regularly should purchase a railcard if eligible.

- The cost of the railcard can be claimed using an expense claim form.
- You must notify the Customer Engagement Team if you hold a railcard so that details can be added to a register for booking of tickets.

Rail tickets are much cheaper when booked well in advance so please notify a member of staff as soon as possible about your travel needs.

If residents use their cars for local trips or where it is the most practical option mileage will be paid at a rate of 45p per mile which is in line with the current HM Revenue and Customs rates.

- When claiming car mileage, drivers should record the starting postcode and end postcode. Routine audits will use tools such as AA Route Planner to verify distances claimed for.
- Car parking and toll road fees will also be paid on production of a receipt.

Residents are encouraged to consider the possibility of shared car travel in an effort to reduce costs where this is convenient and cost effective.

- If you give a lift to another person travelling to a meeting or event an additional 5p per mile per passenger can be claimed.
- The passenger details must be provided on the expense form. (See also “The Facts about Driving as a Volunteer” document for further information.) The current mileage rates are as follows;

Casual User Rate		1-10,000 miles per mile	£0.45
Casual User Rate		Over 10,000 miles per mile	£0.25
Motor Cycles	All combinations	Per mile	£0.24
Passenger Supplement	Cars Only	Per passenger, per mile	£0.05
Bicycle		Per mile	£0.20

Please note: Petrol hybrid cars are treated as petrol for this purpose.

Riverside will not accept responsibility for any car parking fines, damage to, theft from or theft of vehicles.



Overnight Accommodation:

Overnight accommodation will be arranged if attending a meeting or event which require you to leave home before 7.00am or arrive home after 9.00pm, unless this is what you would rather do. Overnight accommodation will also be provided for those with a disability which limits the length of time they are able to actively engage in a day.

Many of Riverside’s Retirement Living schemes have guest bedrooms. These can be booked in advance through your Customer Engagement Team. RCV may at its discretion make a payment of £10 towards the scheme’s social activities in return for use of the facilities.

When an overnight hotel stay is required, an evening meal will be provided if required and the reservation will normally be made on a bed and breakfast basis. Hotels will normally be 3 star or equivalent, with a £190 upper limit for bed and breakfast in London and a £100 upper limit for bed and breakfast outside London.

With the approval of a member of staff or the RCVE Officers Group, residents requiring an overnight stay may also elect to stay with friends or relatives. In these circumstances, a flat rate allowance of £25 is payable. This allowance replaces the bed and breakfast and evening meal ceiling.

Meal Expenses:

Meal expenses will be paid to residents who are prevented by their duties from taking a meal at their homes, or where they normally take their meals and as a result incur additional expenditure. Expenses that can be claimed are as follows;

Breakfast

The cost of breakfast is not normally repaid unless your journey starts before 7.30am. The maximum amount which can be claimed on production of a receipt is £8.

Lunch

Lunch is normally provided to residents who are carrying out duties during the lunch period (12 till 2pm). If lunch is not provided or a resident needs to purchase lunch for another reason (e.g. because they are travelling), up to £12 (plus any imposed service charges) can be claimed for lunch on production of a valid receipt.

Evening Meal

The cost of an evening meal will be repaid if you have to stay away overnight if a meal is not already included in the price of a hotel reservation. The maximum which can be claimed on production of a receipt is £32.50 (plus any imposed service charge). If you cannot get home before 7.30pm due to carrying out Riverside duties, you can claim up to £32.50 towards the cost of a meal on production of a receipt.

Personal Incidental Expenses:

When you are staying away from home or travelling between cities whilst carrying out Riverside duties, you may claim a daily personal incidental expenses allowance for things such as non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and newspapers, up to a maximum of £10 per day, upon production of a receipt.

Phone and Internet Costs:

RCV recognises that in order to guarantee the effective functioning of its role and that of the Officers' Group telephone and internet use are essential. To this end a maximum of £30 a month can be claimed by the RCVE and the Scrutiny Panel Officers towards telephone and internet costs.

To process such claims it is essential that proof of expenditure (receipts and/or bills and statements) are provided to the RCVE's Treasurer. This allowance may not be used towards the purchase of any equipment but only for the use of such equipment. RCVE and Scrutiny Committee members and members of other national groups may claim a maximum of £20 a month towards phone and internet costs with the same requirement of providing proof of expenditure.

Loss of Earnings:

We will compensate working residents when it is necessary for them to attend events/meetings during normal working hours and loss of pay would prevent attendance.

- Any payment would be on proof of loss of earnings from the employer.
- For self-employed residents, proof of an average day's earnings should be provided.
- Payments will be paid at the Living Wage rate per full day.

Additional Support Needs:

If residents require an interpreter, or signer for a meeting, Riverside will source one if notification is given two weeks in advance of the meeting and provided you are able to give a brief of the specific support you need. The costs of external support booked on your behalf will be paid by Riverside. If you provide your own interpreter or signer, you can claim expenses at the same living wage rate. If you have other support needs which need to be met to enable you to participate, please discuss your needs with a member of staff and we will do our best to meet those needs.

Childcare and Carer Expenses:

Payment will be provided for additional costs incurred for someone to look after children or someone else cared for as a direct result of attending a meeting or event.

For formal childcare i.e. registered child minder or nursery, we will reimburse actual costs on production of a receipt. We will also cover the additional costs of child travel to and from school where these are necessary for you to engage in Riverside business.

For informal childcare i.e. a family member or friend, we will reimburse a fixed hourly rate as per table below. We will pay a maximum of 7 hours per day at the Living Wage rate. We do not pay a childcare allowance for children over the age of 14 during term-time. We will only pay for one child irrespective of how many children there are. Payments in excess of these hours or rates will require exceptional approval from Riverside staff or the Riverside Executive Officers' Group. You will be asked to provide the carer's contact details and proof of age.

Childcare expenses will only be paid upon production of a child benefit letter or other suitable evidence. Where adults need care, official proof in the form of a GP or social worker letter should be produced. We will reimburse any charge incurred for the GP letter on production of a receipt.

No expenses will be paid to someone who is normally a member of the same household. It is your responsibility to ensure the carer has received appropriate training.

Participants with Special Needs:

Those who require a care giver to attend meetings or events will be asked to provide a supporting letter from their GP or a health professional. This letter should clearly state whether you are already in receipt of funding for a care giver. We will reimburse any charge incurred for the GP letter on production of a receipt. Those who receive care giver support funded through an agency/organisation will not be able to claim additional expenses. Other care givers will be paid a rate based on the minimum wage, as per the table above. We will pay a maximum of 7 hours per day at the Living Wage rate. Payments in excess of these hours or rates will require exceptional approval from Riverside staff or the RCVE Officers' Group. Your nominated care giver must have received appropriate training in caring for you and be prepared to take full responsibility for your well-being. Any care giver attending to support you will receive meals at the same time as you and will have a separate or adjoining overnight room provided if needed.

Stationery:

Pads, pens and other relevant stationery items needed for resident to carry out their duties will be provided by Riverside. Residents may make use of Riverside's photocopying facilities provided it is for Riverside business. Hard copies of papers will be provided when possible to minimise the cost of printing to the resident. Residents may claim the cost of their print cartridges used for Riverside business provided prior approval from a Riverside Member of staff or RCVE Officers' Group has been sought. In the interests of value for money, printouts should be black and white, unless that would hinder the understanding or presentation of the content.



Payment of Expenses and Allowances:

Once an expense claim form has been correctly received within the 2 months since the expenditure, we aim to reimburse you within at least four weeks, though we will always aim to reimburse expenses before four weeks whenever possible. Payments can be made by BACS – direct into your bank account or by cheque.

For RCVE Members all expense forms should be sent through to the Customer Involvement Officer who will pass forms to the Treasurer for authorisation or another RCVE Officer if the Treasurer is absent. The Treasurer’s expense forms will be authorised by another RCVE Officer. Cheques made out to RCV Members will be signed by two authorised RCV signatories.

Checks may be made at any time to verify any claim for expenses. Any claims that appear not to have followed the policy will be investigated further. Annual accounts of expenditure should be produced. As the RCV is funded by Riverside, its internal audit team will routinely check the accounts and expense returns. Misuse of the Expenses Policy or attempts to falsify claims will be treated as serious misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly.

I hereby declare my acceptance of the RCV Expenses Policy and agree to abide by its contents.

Name

Signature

Date







“We would love to hear from you, please get in touch, here’s how.....”

Register your interest today by visiting:
www.riverside.org.uk/getinvolved

Or drop us a line to our Freepost address:

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Customer Voice