



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

tpas

The Tpas guide to
scrutiny

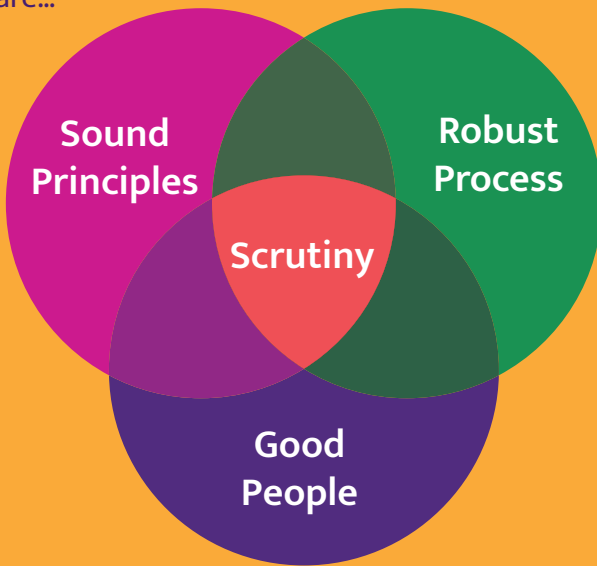




Our brand new scrutiny guide isn't about what scrutiny is, where it came from, or why you should be doing it – as that ground is covered in many of our other fab Tpas scrutiny documents.

Instead this no nonsense guide cuts straight to the chase, offering top tips and sound advice on the big three elements of scrutiny that our members have told us need to be in place to deliver successful scrutiny.

The big three are...



And there's a section on each – so wherever you are on your scrutiny journey we hope there's something for you!



Louise Thompson
Head of Business Services



1. Principles

There are lots of different models that are used to deliver scrutiny from central panels to task and finish group and bootcamps. (Check out our online resource hub, or come along to one of our scrutiny pop up events for more info on the different scrutiny models).

Tpas is not advocating one over another.... it if works for your organisation and your tenants are happy with the arrangements then that's the right model for you.

What we do advocate however, is that your scrutiny, regardless of the model, is guided by our key principles to ensure it remains consistent, meaningful and effective.

- **Independent:** Tenants lead and own the scrutiny process. By this we mean choosing topics, being given the information asked for, and compiling their own recommendations.

- **Inclusive:** Scrutiny is outward looking and connects well with other engagement structures and the wider tenant base. It also provides opportunities for all tenants to contribute to the scrutiny process.
- **Positive:** The organisation encourages and supports tenant led scrutiny. All staff, board members/Councillors know what scrutiny is, welcome it and understand the benefits it brings.
- **Constructive:** Scrutineers are “critical friends” who identify improvements, hold the organisation to account, while also recognising good practice.
- **Purpose:** Scrutiny makes a difference by delivering service improvements, better value for money, or increasing transparency and accountability.



2. Process

Having an agreed, open and transparent way of “doing” scrutiny not only keeps everyone focussed and on track, it also shows the outside world that you have a consistent process in place that delivers evidence based outcomes. What your process looks like is of course down to you to agree but we really like our new four step approach that involves:

Planning, Investigating, Reporting and Reviewing.

Step 1. Planning

It is vital to get your topic selection and scoping right as it will save you lots of time and energy in the long run.

Choose a topic by looking at

- Satisfaction surveys
- Key performance indicators
- Complaints data and trends
- Listening to suggestions from other engagement groups, tenants, staff and board members

If you have a few topics on your short list use the Tpas matrix to help you decide (found in our resource hub).

Once you have agreed on a topic use a scoping document to map out what the aims of the scrutiny are, what the key line of enquiry will be, and what areas you won't be looking at. You can find an example of a scoping document in our resource hub.

Next, draw up a project plan – this can be done using a simple table or an online piece of software such as yammer, trello, or basecamp, but whatever tool you use make sure it has the

- **What** – a list of key tasks
- **Who** - names of who is responsible for completing the tasks
- **When** - dates for individual tasks, milestones and the overall completion of the scrutiny review



Step 2. Investigating

Gathering the Knowledge

If you are going to delve deep into a service you need to know as much about it as possible. Our tips for doing this are

- Ask staff who work in that area of the business to talk you through the service and how it works
- Use the power of google – see what industry experts are saying and what the latest thinking is
- Read all the relevant documents - so if you are scrutinising repairs appointments, look at procedures, policies and service standards
- Talk to your networks – have other tenants scrutinised this area? Is there any areas of good practice you could use? Why not join the Tpas National Scrutiny network to help you with this
- Identify all the key issues to be investigated in the next stage.

Gathering the Evidence

All scrutiny recommendations have to be evidence based so it's essential your research is robust.

This means choosing the appropriate research methods to suit your investigation, and carrying out the research to a high standard. (Tpas has training on research methods to help you get it right).

Common methods used in scrutiny reviews include

- Interviewing
- Observing the service in action
- Mystery Shopping
- Focus Groups
- Surveys – face to face, digital, or telephone
- Customer Journey mapping



Step 3. Reporting

Once you have completed your investigations you need to make sense of it all, and pull it all together into a report. This needs to cover

- What you looked at
- Why you chose this
- How you did the review
- What you found
- Your recommendations

Remember your report doesn't have to be written, it could be a video or animation – see examples in our resource hub of different report styles and formats.

Once you have your first draft ready it is useful to sit down with staff and discuss it. This helps identify any risks related to proposed recommendations and also any quick fixes.

Once this is done you can finalise your report and present it to the Board.

Step 4. Reviewing

Yes we know it's tempting to move right on to step 1 and start another review but don't!

You need to take time to let people know about the scrutiny you have done, and also agree how to monitor and track recommendations and impact. Tips to do this include

- Drafting a communication plan showing how you will feedback results to other tenants and stakeholders using a variety of methods
- Appointing a tenant and staff member to be scrutiny review champions, to take on the role of checking whether recommendations have been implemented and the difference they have made
- Developing a scrutiny recommendation log which tracks all the scrutiny recommendations and make this available on the organisations website

You also need to take time to reflect on the scrutiny process itself to identify what went well, what didn't and what you might change next time. You can then amend and revise the systems, processes and documents for future reviews.

3. People

All scrutiny models need people to be successful, whether that's the scrutineers themselves or the staff members involved in the review. There's no point in having a fantastic set of principles and an amazing process if the people driving and delivering scrutiny are not right.

So how do you get good people engaged in scrutiny – here are some top tips

- Market well – attract a range of people by using a wide range of methods from staff referrals to social media
- Have a great induction and information pack for people new to scrutiny and offer on-going one to ones and mentoring
- Recruit scrutiny staff ambassadors to promote and “sell” scrutiny in their area of the business

- Invest in training – do a skills audit and see what training is needed – check out the Tpas training programme.
- Value your scrutineers – maybe offer incentives or rewards, or sometimes a simple thank you is enough
- Give choice – give people lots of ways to contribute to scrutiny from completing surveys to suggesting topics to look at
- Offer it as a volunteering opportunity – tag it with employability and CV development
- Promote the difference it makes – whether this is formally in annual reports or a page on your website – people get involved to make a difference so show them how scrutiny does this.

More Information: we hope that this guide has been useful but if it's left you wanting more you can

1. Check out our online resource hub – this is free for members and gives you access to lots of scrutiny good practice, case studies and reports.
2. Join our national scrutiny network – contact us for details

3. Attend our scrutiny training programme and pop up events


Tpas wish you all the best on your scrutiny journey and don't forget to let us know what difference your scrutiny works has made – we would love to share with all our members and show the sector just how successful tenant led scrutiny is!



Manchester Head Office:

Tpas Ltd
7D Paragon House
48 Seymour Grove
Old Trafford M16 0LN
T. 0161 868 3500

E. info@tpas.org.uk
W. www.tpas.org.uk

 [@tpasengland](https://twitter.com/tpasengland)
[#tpasscrutiny](https://twitter.com/tpasengland)

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