

Scrutiny Panel

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26



The customer
scrutiny Panel

Learning from the past, steering the future.

Mental Health Signpost Support: Spotlight Review

The demand for mental health support continues to grow, and while Stonewater isn't a mental health provider, we know that good wellbeing has a big impact on how customers engage with services and feel connected to their community.

We carried out this review to make sure that when customers need support with their mental wellbeing, colleagues have the confidence, tools, and knowledge to guide them towards the services best placed to help.

We made three recommendations, and we're pleased to say all three are now complete:

- 1. Review customer communications about mental health support** – Stonewater has refreshed all communications, including dedicated signposting on the website and a regular mental health feature in the Here to Help newsletter.
- 2. Strengthen signposting to mental health services** – Colleagues now work closely with local providers to ensure customers receive the right type of information, whether that's printed, digital, or locally supplied.
- 3. Review of local support** – A full review has been completed, and Stonewater is working with scheme-based teams to keep information consistent across all services.

As a Panel, we really valued the chance to focus on an issue that's incredibly important but wouldn't normally show up in performance data.

Right First Time (RFT) Spotlight review:

Stonewater currently measures Right First Time (RFT) by looking at how many enquiries the Customer Service Centre can resolve at the first point of contact, compared with those that need follow up. As a Panel, we felt this doesn't fully reflect what customers see as a successful or satisfactory resolution.

That's why we wanted to explore how Stonewater could better support the Customer Service Centre to increase the number of enquiries resolved first time.

We made four recommendations and are pleased to be working closely with Stonewater to make sure they're delivered effectively.

The key themes around this review are:

- 1. Create a new RFT measure that reflects the customer's perspective,** supported by clear guidance on how it should be delivered.
- 2. Encourage Stonewater teams to take greater ownership of enquiries,** ensuring customers receive a more joined-up and consistent experience.

Together, these improvements aim to make the customer journey smoother, clearer, and more efficient from the very first interaction.

Retirement Living Scheme-based engagement in-depth review:

We know that social engagement is an important part of wellbeing and independence.

In Retirement Living schemes, activities help people stay connected and feel part of a community. While taking part is always a personal choice, everyone should have the chance to get involved.

With this in mind, we reviewed how engagement activities are delivered across Stonewater's schemes.

Our review was inspired by the creative approach at Norfolk House, where a mix of talks, coffee mornings and social activities showed the positive impact strong engagement can have. It made us consider whether this experience is consistent across all schemes.

Our three recommendations focus on:

- 1. Clarifying the role of Scheme Managers** so customers understand how they support engagement.
- 2. Encouraging strong partnerships with external organisations** to broaden opportunities.
- 3. Ensuring Scheme Managers have the tools and support** to deliver and encourage customer led activities.

We're now working with Regional Managers in Retirement Living to help put these actions in place.

Learning and developing:

It's really important to us as a Panel to keep learning and developing our skills. Over the past year, different members have taken up a range of opportunities to build confidence, broaden knowledge and strengthen how we work together.

This has included:

- Coming together for our annual learning and development day, giving us space to reflect, share ideas and plan for the year ahead.
- Attending conferences and events, including TPAS's annual national tenants conference, to hear from other organisations and bring back fresh thinking and ideas.
- Taking part in a range of training, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Introduction to Scrutiny and Housing Knowledge. These sessions help members build confidence, deepen their understanding feel well-prepared when reviewing services.



Scrutiny Panel Recruitment:

We were pleased to welcome two new members to the Panel in 2025/26. Since joining, Funlola and Dave have each brought their own energy and skills, quickly making a positive contribution to the Panel.

We currently have six vacancies, so we'll continue working with Stonewater to recruit new members and strengthen the Panel even further.

"I have been a member of the Panel since July 2025. I enjoy working with the members of this panel as I think we all work well together. I want to think that I've been able to make an input to help shape performance and service improvements of Stonewater. The Panel has given me an opportunity to see my feedback turn into real change for customers. Being a member of the panel, has given me the opportunity to see Stonewater customers, and the Board work together to make sure customer views, voices, and priorities drive decisions. That co-creation model means you are not just consulted but you are helping to build the solutions. My favourite part of being on the Panel is working with other members in digging into the evidence, and seeing recommendations get implemented." - Funlola

"Having just joined the Panel, I see it as a chance for me to use knowledge that I gained in work roles, for the benefit of all customers. I also see it as a chance to comment and where necessary challenge ideas from the view of a leaseholder. I've valued the opportunity to put forward ideas on how we can improve the way we work, with suggestions that, if taken forward, could make things easier for customers and Stonewater colleagues alike." - Dave

What does 2026/27 hold for the Panel:

Over the past eight months as Chair, it has been a privilege to lead the Scrutiny Panel and work alongside fellow members, colleagues and customers to drive positive change.

All our work continues to be guided by Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This data helps us understand exactly where customers feel supported, and where improvements are needed - keeping us focused on the topics that matter most to you.

From day one, my vision has been clear: to build a Panel that truly reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. Bringing younger perspectives helps us become a well-rounded team, ensuring we understand and represent the needs of all generations. This is just the start. Recruiting more young and mature voices will remain a key focus for 2026/27, so that the views of all customers help shape everything we do.

2026 will be a landmark year, a year of change for everyone and change for the better. With new ways of working coming into place, we're entering a new era of cooperation with Stonewater. These changes will allow the Scrutiny Panel to play an even bigger role, helping to shape how services are delivered and ensuring that "your" vision for your homes and neighbourhoods directly influences decisions.

We are your eyes, ears and voice. Think of us as your direct link. We are here to listen, to gather feedback and to speak up on your behalf. "Use us" because we exist to turn your experiences and ideas into real improvements across Stonewater.

We will keep doing what we do best - collaborating closely with Stonewater and customers, reviewing critical areas of the business, and making sure every change delivers real value for you.

Together, we're building a stronger future for all our communities.

Trevor Kerby
Chair of the Scrutiny Panel.