

Scrutiny Panel

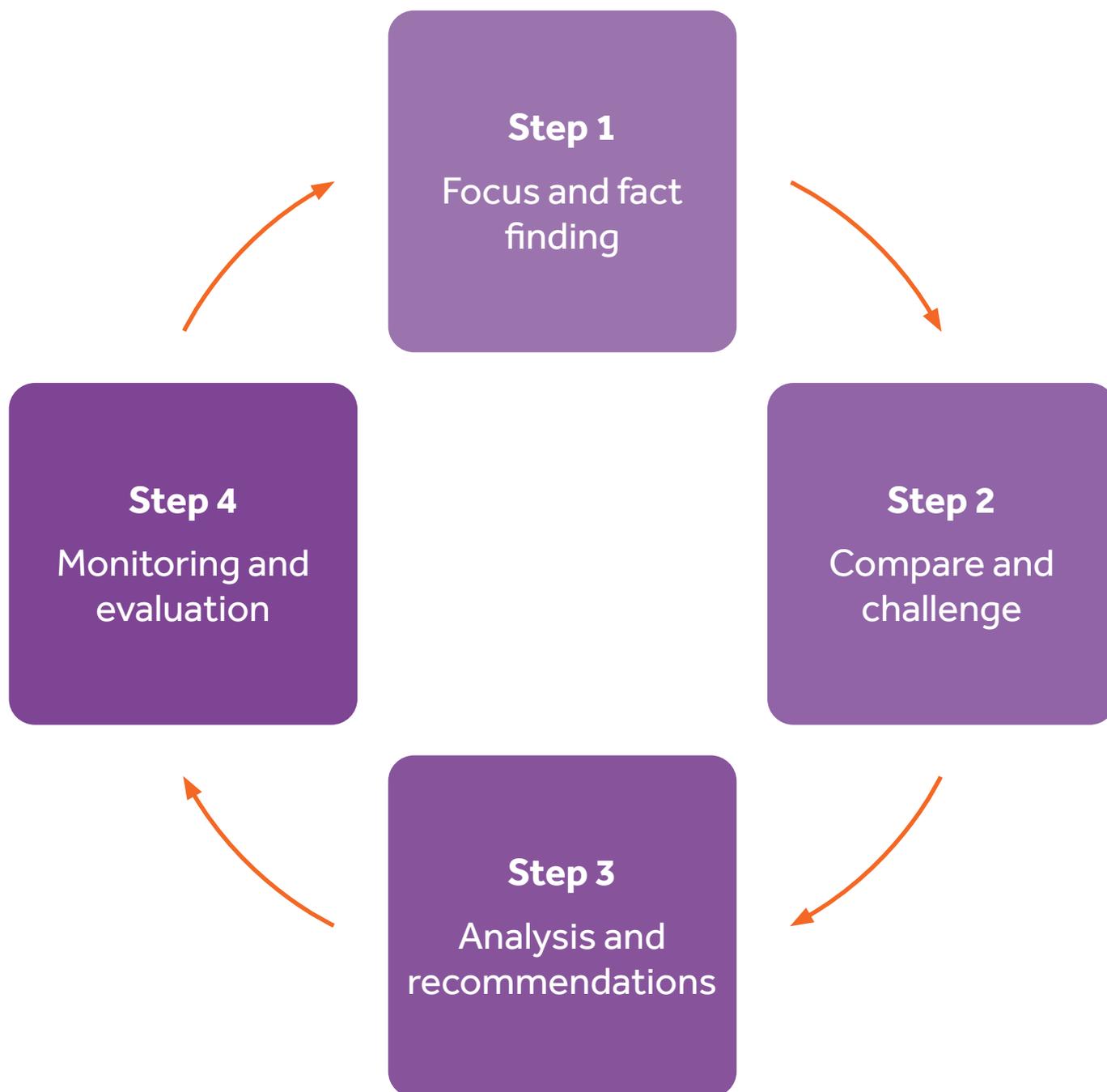
Process and guidance for service reviews



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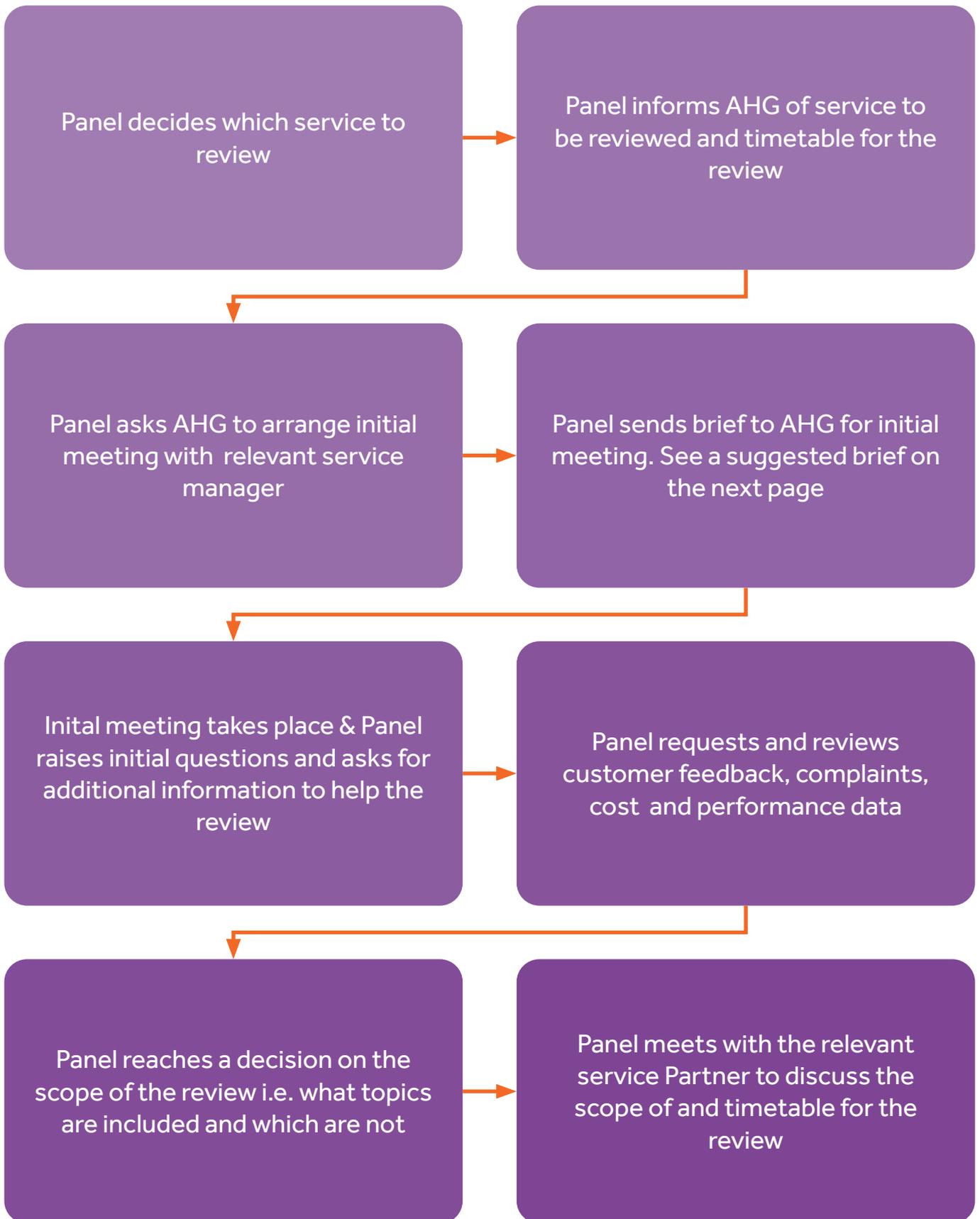
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1. Overview of service review process

**Please note:**

There is a considerable amount of work to do at each stage of the review and it would be unworkable for all members of the panel to be involved in every task. Instead, the Chair should allocate tasks amongst members and hold frequent progress meetings to share findings.

2. Step 1: Focus



a. Suggested brief for service manager

The purpose of the brief is to set out the information that the Panel will need the service manager to provide at the initial meeting. The service manager will be required to give a presentation at the initial meeting. The Panel requires a copy of the manager's presentation, at least five working days in advance of the meeting to help them prepare.

The presentation should include the following information:

-  An overview of the service and how it is delivered, i.e. who is involved and are there any external contractors or partners involved?
-  An overview of the legal requirements relating to this service e.g. names of Acts and some bullet points stating the main requirements
-  Details about which of the national standards relate to this service
-  A list of strategies, policies and procedures that AHG has in place for this service, along with a brief summary setting out when these documents were last reviewed and when they are due for a review
-  The current service standards and or local offer for this service and a brief description about when these were agreed, how customers were involved, and how they are monitored
-  Performance information (including targets and actual performance) and costs associated with the service for the last two years
-  Benchmark information relating to this service
-  Costs associated with the delivery of this service
-  Number and type of complaints and compliments received in the last two years in relation to the service
-  Customer satisfaction data for the service for the last two years – STAR survey and other survey results

The documents the Panel require at this stage are as follows:

-  Relevant strategy, policy and procedures
-  Service standards and/or local offer
-  A structure chart showing who is involved.
-  If AHG has completed a self assessment, please provide a copy of the section that relates to this service
-  Findings from any internal or external audit and/or regulatory assessment, relating to the service

b. Scoping and planning a review

Scoping a review simply means that the Panel describes what is and what is not included in the piece of scrutiny work they are planning to do. It's important to set out these parameters and to keep to them otherwise a review can expand and grow so that the purpose and focus is lost.

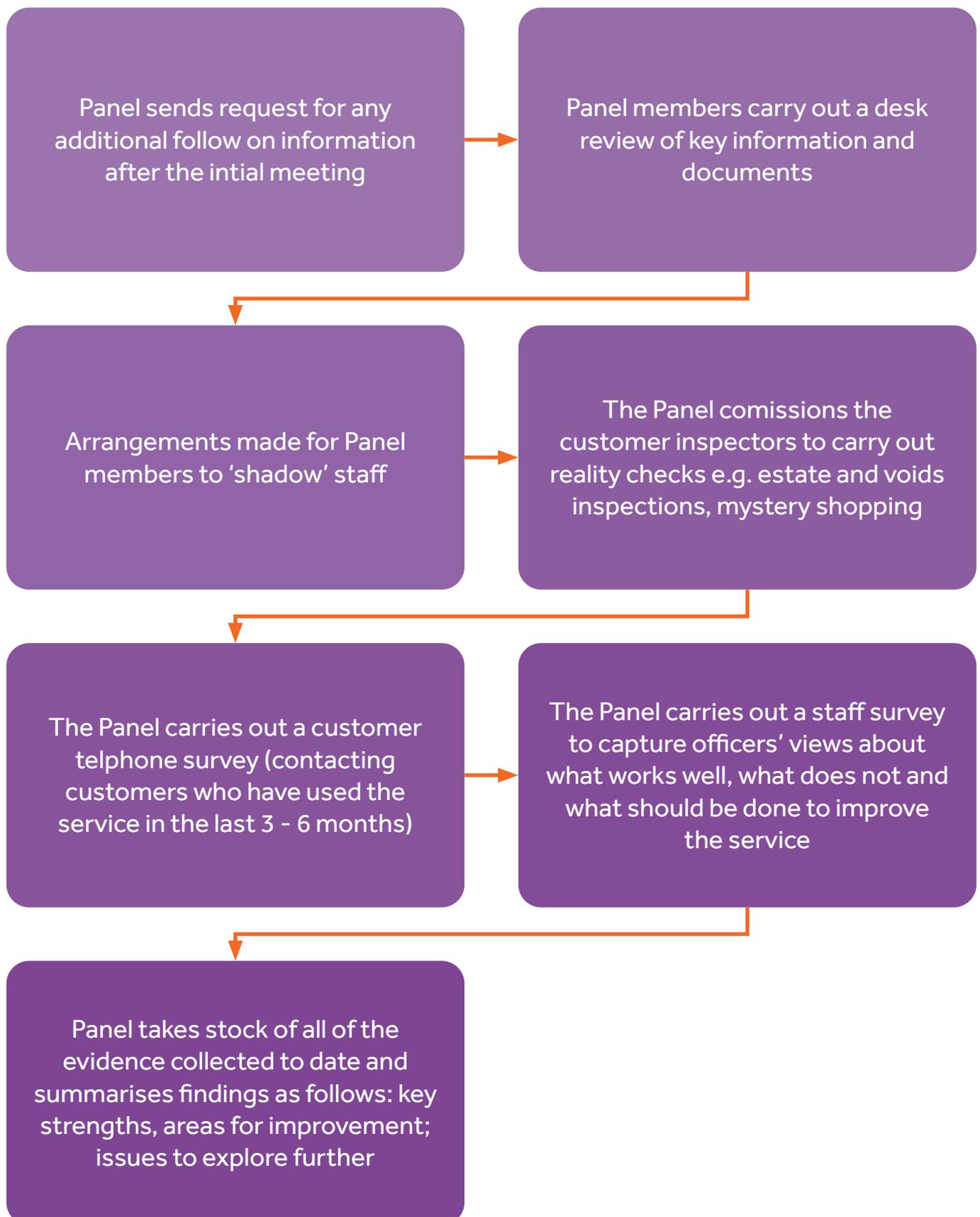
When it comes to planning the review, use the headings in the four stage process and the different activities linked to each stage. A couple of things to bear in mind are as follows:

- Which Board or Committee date are you aiming for? Once you have a date, work back from that
- Allow about three to four months to reach the point where you have completed your evidence gathering
- Allow a further month to six weeks to pull you report together and submit it for circulation prior to the Board or Committee meeting
- Share the tasks – it's a team effort so there is no need for all panel members to participate in every activity or task throughout the review

A template for scoping and planning a review can be found in **Scrutiny in Action, Four Stage Approach to Scrutiny** page of the toolkit.



3. Step 1 continued: Fact finding



a. Desk top review of key documents

The main documents and information the Panel should consider at this stage are as follows:

- The information provided by the service manager at the start of the review (at the focusing and scoping stage)
- Policy and procedures for the service
- Customer leaflets available for the service
- Information about the service that is displayed on AHG's website (panels may find that AHG does display any or enough information on their website about the service. This should be noted)
- The latest self-assessment carried out by AHG in relation to the service that is being scrutinised
- The latest internal or external audit report for the service

The important things to consider when **reviewing a policy and/or procedure** are as follows:

- Are the policy and procedures easy to understand?
- Do you get a clear understanding of the aims and objectives, the activities involved in the service and how the service works from reading these documents? Are there any discrepancies between the policy and procedures?
- **Customer focus** – does the policy focus on supporting and advising tenants? What customer care measures are included in the policy and procedure? e.g. is it clear what measures will be taken to keep customers informed once they have requested a service?
- **Diversity** – what arrangements are in place to ensure that the process is geared towards meeting different customer needs, e.g. vulnerable tenants' needs?
- **Value for money** – is the approach set out in the procedure as streamlined as it could be? Or is it very complex and does it involve administrative work that could be done more efficiently through the use of information technology? For example, are repairs inspectors writing out job specifications and then having to input the information on a computer when they get back to the office, when they could be using a hand held computer to input information directly on to AHG's computer system?

The most important issues to consider when **reviewing customer leaflets** are:

- What leaflets are available for the service being reviewed? (e.g. title of the leaflets and what topics they cover)
- What is good about the leaflets in terms of advice and information about what help is available?
- Are the leaflets written in a clear manner e.g. free of jargon, clear about who to contact and how you can contact them? Would they encourage you to seek help with arrears or other debts?
- Is there anything missing in terms of advice and support available for tenants? What would make the leaflets excellent from a tenant's perspective?

When **reviewing AHG's website**, the focus will be on the information available about the service that is being reviewed.

Therefore you should consider:

- Is it easy to find information about the service?
- What information is displayed on the website?
- Is it available in other languages and formats e.g. audio version
- Is there an online reporting facility for the service? E.g. if you are reviewing rent collection, can customers pay rent on line and access their rent account details through the website?
- Is the information provided clear and easy to understand?
- Is there anything that is not on the website, that you think would be useful for tenants who are looking for information about the service and/or who want to access the service online?

b. Shadowing staff

The purpose of shadowing staff is to gain a better understanding regarding the way the service is delivered. If the Panel has chosen to review repairs, it would be a good idea to spend time with the officers who take repair reports (e.g. contact centre staff) and inspectors or surveyors to find out more about the work they do.

Anyone shadowing officers should:

- Read a copy of the procedure for the service before shadowing officers
- Be good at listening and observing
- Take notes of what they have observed

c. Reality checks

The purpose of reality checks is to find out how good the service is from a customer's perspective. The type of reality checks that the Panel will carry out/commission customer inspectors to complete may include:

- Testing service standards or local offer for the service, through telephone, email, etc, mystery shopping exercises
- Carrying out visual checks such as estate walkabouts/inspections and ready to let property checks, again to check out performance against standards and quality

d. Customers' views

It is important that the Panel finds out how customers feel about the quality of the AHG's services, as it is the satisfaction of all customers that is important to the review, not simply the views of the Panel. Customers' views can be explored in any of the following ways:

- Carry out a telephone survey of customers who have used the service in the last six months, to find out what went well, what did not and what the AHG could have done to improve the customers' experience of the service

- Look at STAR survey results – the current and previous results, as looking at both will give an idea not just about levels of satisfaction, but whether these are improving or not
- Examining any other customer satisfaction survey results that are available for the service the Panel is reviewing e.g. repairs surveys, new customer surveys, etc. Do not simply look at the percentages, ask to review the comments made by customers and what the main reasons were for satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Reviewing complaints and compliments received about the service – what do these tell you about what is working well and what is not?
- Speaking to other involved tenants' Panels to find out about issues customers are raising

In collecting and reviewing customer feedback, the Panel should ask themselves these key questions:

- Are existing service standards being met?
- Are the existing standards the 'right' ones from a customer perspective?
- Do existing services meet customers' needs? If not, what needs to change/improve?

e. Staff survey

The staff who are involved day to day in delivering services are in a great position to inform scrutiny Panels about what works well and what does not. Therefore, it's recommended that a simple survey be circulated to all of the staff involved in delivering the service that is being scrutinised, simply asking them to state the following:

- What they think works well
- What they think works less well
- What they would change if they could

It's a good idea to carry out an anonymous survey so that officers feel less inhibited about providing their full and frank views.

f. Taking stock/reflection

By time Panels get to the end of this stage they will have amassed a significant amount of information. It is a good idea at this point to stop and reflect on the key findings, which can be supported with evidence, and summarise these as follows:

- **Strengths** – the things that have been found so far that are clearly positive aspects of the service
- **Areas for improvement** – issues that have been identified as weaknesses in the service. Again, the areas for improvement identified by the panel will be backed up with evidence collected
- **Issues to explore further** – there may be issues at this stage that are unclear and will require further activity, e.g. speaking to officers through interviews and good practice research. Therefore it is worth making a note of these and deciding how to pursue the answers/clarification

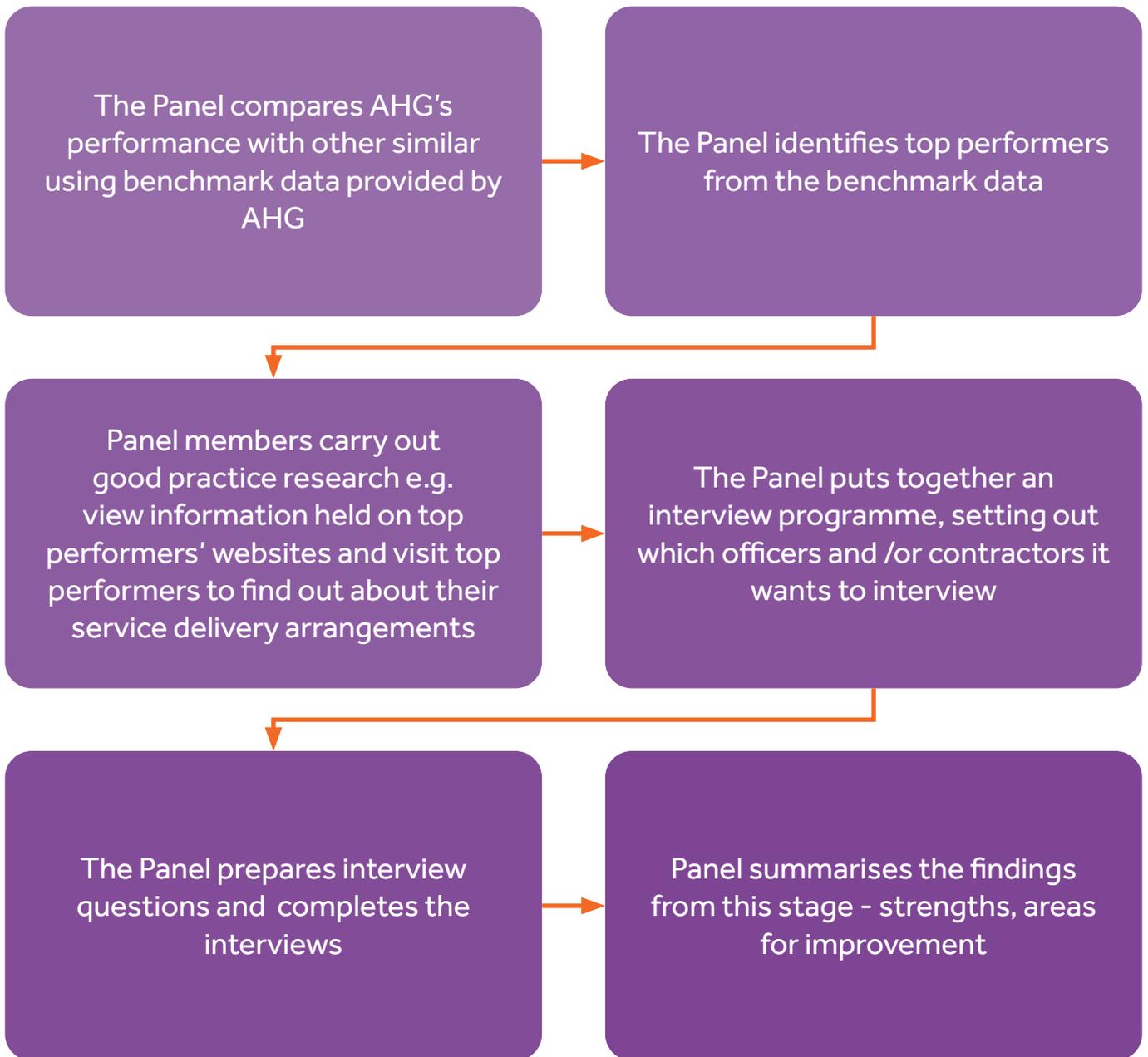
In pulling together a summary of findings, I would suggest using a template like the one on the next page, which includes a worked example:

Task/activity	Strengths	Weaknesses	Issues to explore further
Document review	The procedure and customer leaflet clearly set out how complaints are dealt with	No evidence was found regarding learning from complaints e.g. nothing set out in the procedure or leaflet; no learning points were publicised in the last couple of tenant newsletters or on the website	How AHG learns from complaints – to be asked in the officer interviews
Staff presentation	270 out 300 complaints responded to 'in time'	Too many complaints took longer than target time (30)	Reasons for delays – to be raised in the officer interviews
Customer survey	40 out 50 customers we spoke to were happy with the way their complaint was handled	10 of the customers we spoke to said it took too long to achieve a resolution	Reasons for delays – follow up in the officer interviews
Staff survey	18 out of 20 officers said that Trust takes complaints seriously	8 out of 20 officers said that there is no learning from complaints	How AHG learns from complaints – to be asked in the officer interviews

Summarising findings in this way makes it much easier to write the final report!

Templates for recording reality check findings can be found in **Scrutiny in Action. A Four Stage Approach to Scrutiny** section of the toolkit.

4. Step 2: Compare and challenge



a. Comparing costs and performance

The Panel will need to consider AHG's performance and costs in relation to the service they are reviewing. The type of information that will be useful includes the following:

- **Performance data** – AHG collect different types of performance information (e.g. rent arrears, rent collected, repairs completed in time and right first time, re-let times and much more). Panels should ask for all performance information the AHG has in relation to the service that is being reviewed. This should include:
 -  Current year and previous year's key performance indicators and how these figures compare with other housing associations (i.e. is the AHG in the top, middle or bottom of the table when compared to other similar AHGs?)
 -  Targets set for the current year and previous year, so that the Panel can see whether the AHG is setting and achieving better performance year on year
- **Cost data** – AHG have cost information for their services. They should be able to provide overall costs of each service they deliver and may be able to provide unit costs as well e.g. average cost of a repair, average cost of repairing an empty property. The cost information that Panels will find useful includes:
 -  Current and previous year's costs for the service that the Panel is reviewing. The AHG should be able to provide an overall cost for each service and a cost per property or a cost per transaction (e.g. cost per repair, cost of remedial action taken per ASB case, and cost per void).
 -  If the AHG is a member of a benchmark club, e.g. one of HouseMark's clubs, they will be able to provide detailed information that show how their costs and performance compare to other AHGs

The Panel needs to consider costs and performance together with customer satisfaction information so that they can reach a decision about whether a service is providing **value for money**.

For example, if a service has average performance, high costs and low customer satisfaction, value for money is not being achieved. However, if costs are low and satisfaction and performance are high, the service is giving value for money.

Please follow this link to view a **repairs benchmark report** which is available on the internet [http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/resourceslookup/RepairsVFMreport.pdf/\\$File/RepairsVFMreport.pdf](http://www.housemark.co.uk/hmresour.nsf/resourceslookup/RepairsVFMreport.pdf/$File/RepairsVFMreport.pdf).

Many Panels whose AHGs are members of HouseMark, have been issued with passwords so that they can carry out their own benchmarking on line. Quite a few Panels use this facility very successfully and effectively in completing reviews about a whole range of topics and/or services.

b. Research and good practice

The Panel will want to find out about good practices in relation to the service they are reviewing. This will help to provide ideas that help to form your recommendations for action/change.

- **Benchmarking**

As mentioned above, the majority of housing organisations in England and Wales participate in benchmarking arrangements either through HouseMark and/or local benchmark Panels. HouseMark and local Panels allow housing organisations to compare their performance and costs across a whole range of services. In addition, the HouseMark arrangements provide an annual report that benchmark AHG with similar companies and ranks them according to performance.

The ranking arrangements help tenants to pick out other AHGs who they may want to visit, to find out how they deliver services, etc.

HouseMark and local benchmark clubs also provide opportunities to ask/post questions about good practices. In addition, HouseMark do produce good practice reports on specific services/topics e.g. ASB, gas servicing – check these out on their website www.housemark.co.uk

- **Internet searches**

It's good to think outside the box! Housing does not have a monopoly on good practices. In my experience, using internet searches will help to identify good practices in the housing sector and outside of housing that may be useful. For example, if you want to know who is best in terms of customer service or handling complaints, enter "award winning customer service" or for something more specific to housing, "housing association good practice in gas servicing" or similar terms, in the service engine facility on Google, etc., and it will reveal other organisations who are recognised for good practices/excellent service.

- **Award winners**

Housing has a wide range of awards recognising positive practices. Awards are made by a number of different bodies for good practices and good services. E.g. UK Housing Awards; Housing Excellence; Housing Heroes; National Federation of ALMOs annual awards (An ALMO is an Arm's Length Management Organisation that manages local authority housing on behalf of the council. The company is owned by the Council). In addition, the National Federation of ALMOs also produces an annual report of best practices – see Awards tab on their website <http://www.almos.org.uk/>

Visit the websites of these award making bodies and see who won awards in the last 2 years – then either look on their websites or give them a call!

To find out more about these awards, have a look at the following website addresses:

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/regulation/uk-housing-award-2012-winners-named/6522510.article>

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/events/awards/sustainable-housing-awards/>

<http://www.housingexcellence.co.uk/search/node/Awards>

c. Interview questions

The questions for interviews will flow directly from all of the evidence gathering activities that have taken place. The main purpose of the questions is to:

- Clear up any conflicts in the evidence you have gathered
- Check for consistency e.g. does everyone in the service have the same understanding of a policy or procedure?

- Fill in any gaps

Once Panels have completed all of their evidence gathering, or during the course of the review, it's a good idea to reflect on what questions need answers that can only be gained through interviews with officers and where applicable, contractors.

Once the list of questions has been compiled, then it should be decided which questions will be posed to which officers. It is perfectly acceptable to ask some questions to more than one person...or to everyone. One question I always suggest that panels ask is "what would you change about the service" – make this the last question as interviewees are in full flow usually by then!

It's a good idea to use a simple form for each interview, setting out the questions you are going to ask, and leaving a space for responses. Please see a worked example of a set of questions asked of a voids manager by one panel I trained:

Interviews for Voids and Lettings Review

Interviewers: X and Y

Interviewees: Lettings Manager

Date:

Questions	Responses
1. Can you please tell us a bit about your role in relation to voids and lettings?	
2. Should improvement work be done as part of relet works? If yes, who decides which properties will benefit from improvement work?	
3. What percentage/number of offers were refused because of the condition of the property? a. Can we please have a breakdown of offer refusals by reason?	
4. Do you know which properties have been adapted? a. What happens with adapted properties when they become void? b. Do you try to let the property to someone who requires adaptations? c. If you cannot find someone who needs the property, do you remove the adaptations or not?	
5. If it takes 4 to 11 days on average to do relet works, why does it take more than 20 days to let a property?	

Questions	Responses
<p>5. Are there usually any works outstanding when you offer a property and/or when the tenancy starts? If yes, does this happen very often?</p> <p>a. If there are any outstanding repairs at the start of the tenancy, what arrangements are made to sort these out?</p> <p>b. And which budget is used to cover the cost of these repairs?</p>	
<p>6. We hear that you are thinking of introducing rolling choice based lettings adverts – how will this work?</p>	
<p>7. Do you enforce the 4 week notice period? What percentage give you 4 weeks? What happens if you don't get 4 weeks notice?</p>	
<p>8. How long does an applicant get to decide? Is it the same length of time for everyone?</p>	
<p>9. Can you please clarify your policy on decorations?</p>	
<p>10. If you could change anything to improve the service, what would that be? (can make more than one suggestion)</p>	

d. Interview programmes

Who to interview?

Every housing organisation I have worked with has slightly different staff structures and different names for similar posts, you would not believe how many different job titles I have come across for someone who manages a 'patch' or area of properties! e.g. Neighbourhood Officer, Estate Management Officer, Housing Officer, etc.

So when panels are thinking about whom they want to interview, here are a few hints and tips:

- Ask for a staff structure chart and a brief description 'who does what'
- If you cannot make head nor tail of the structure chart provided, simply make a list of the type of officers you want to interview e.g. the person who has overall responsibility for managing the service, the team leader, the person who allocates properties, the person who post inspects repairs, etc.

- Typically, interviewees will include:

-  The Director or Assistant Director for the service
-  The service manager
-  The team leader
-  A pair or small Panel (s) of front line staff e.g. surveyors, housing officers
-  A member of the performance team – or the person who pulls together performance reports if there is no performance team
-  The contractor's manager and a small Panel of operatives – if all or part of the service is provided by an external contractor

Some services cut across teams, so be prepared to interview more than one manager, team leader, focus Panel of staff. This is the case with the likes of voids, where repairs and lettings staff work together to deliver the service

Timings

- Allow at about an hour for each interview and/or focus Panel
- Give yourself a break in between interviews e.g. 10 minutes to recap on what has been said
- Programme no more than 4 interviews per day
- Build in time at the start and end of each day to compare notes with other panel members who are interviewing

Advance notice

- It is really important to give the AHG plenty of notice about the timings of interviews, as there are a few really important practical considerations, mostly importantly making appointments for interviewees to be available when the panel wants to conduct the interviews! Also, booking private rooms for interviews can be a pain! So I would advise giving at least a couple of weeks' notice...longer if possible, but without it going on forever!

Never be afraid to...

- Ask one of the officers to bring you evidence to support something they are saying or to give you a copy of a report or other document to illustrate what they are saying
- Ask to re-interview an officer or contact them via your contact officer if you want additional information or further clarification

e. Interview hints and tips

Breathe and relax...

- Some Panel members get a bit nervous, but please think of this...some of the people you are interviewing will be nervous of speaking to you! The top tips for overcoming any nervousness on the interviewers part are as follows:
 - Be prepared! Have your list of questions, in your own words
 - Interview in pairs so that you can take turns asking questions and noting down responses – it's good to share the work

Trust me, I'm a Scrutiny Panel Member!

There is a story about when a Scrutineer was conducting a mock inspection at a housing association. One of the interviewees was a young housing officer. When he came into the meeting room, he sat as far away from me as he could and hugged his files close to his chest. He looked so frightened. The Scrutineer spent the first 10 minutes of the interview just chatting with him about how long he had worked for the organisation, was this his first job in housing, etc. Eventually, he got over his nervousness and he gave the best interview the Scrutineer had ever had the pleasure of listening to!

So if your interviewee looks nervous be gentle and do your best to put them at ease.

Here is an example of a script you may want to use or adapt using your own words, to guide you through an interview.

Introduction & statement of confidentiality (Do feel free to put this in your own words)

Thank you for coming to see us today. We hope to take no more than an hour of your time.

We are carrying out a review of xxxxx (name of the service, e.g. repairs, gas servicing, complaints)

We want to assure you that we want to work in partnership with staff to improve services and we are looking at services from a customer perspective in terms of service delivery and outcomes for customers. **We know staff will have good ideas for improving services, which can help us.**

We have signed a code of conduct to work in partnership with AHG and a confidentiality agreement. We will be taking notes, but these notes are just for us to remind ourselves what we heard.

The detail of who said what will remain with us and will not be discussed outside this interview with any other staff, managers or tenants. Only the panel will be able to see these notes. So, you can be open with us on your thoughts on the service.

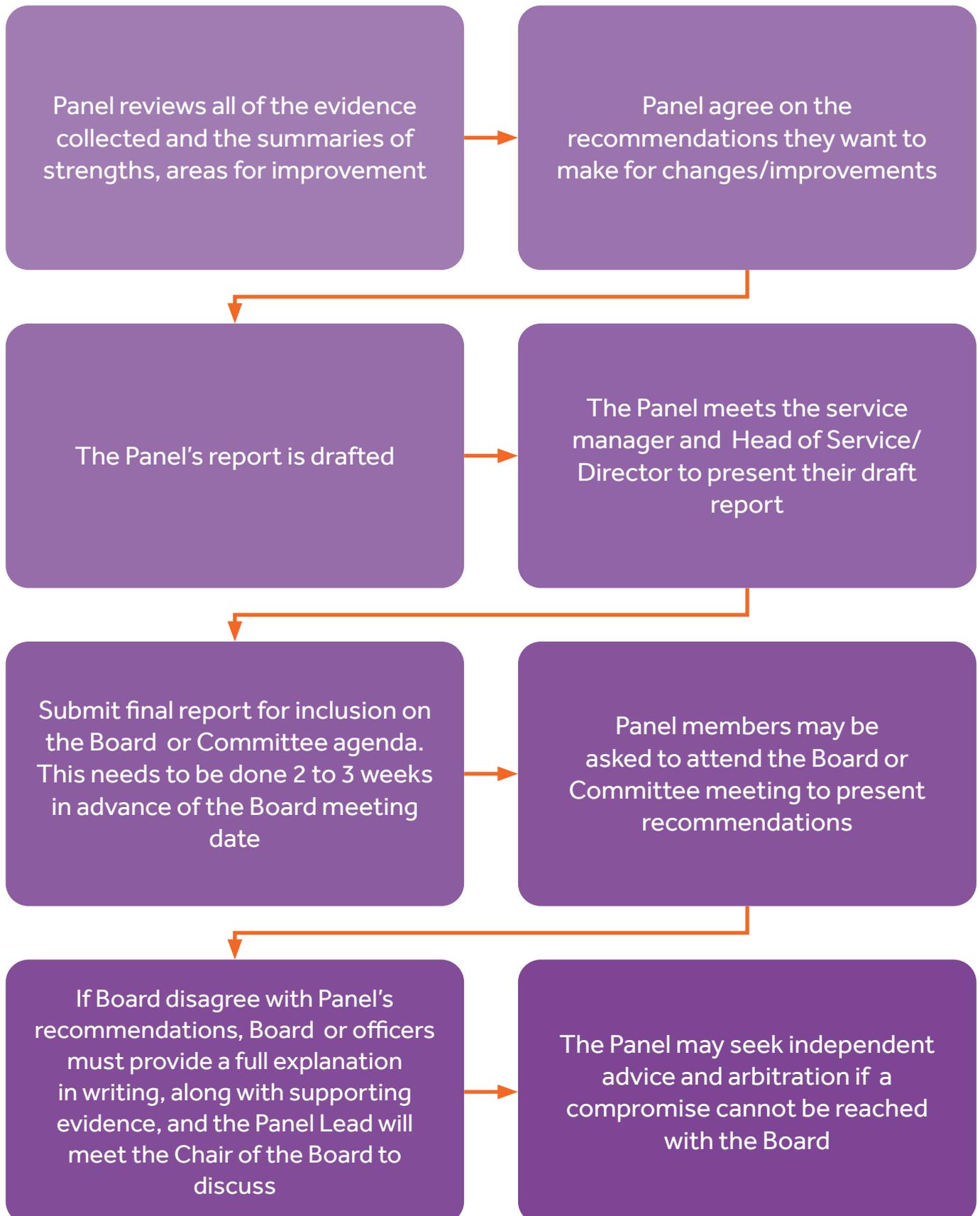
We have prepared some questions for you based on what we believe your job entails, but if you cannot answer, don't worry, please point us in the right direction and we will ask that person.

The closing statement

Thank you for your time today, it is appreciated.

We intend to pull together all our findings by (date?) from our research and checks. Our report will be available once it has been to Board or Committee.

5. Step 3 Analysis and recommendations



a. Analysing evidence and making recommendations

If the Panel has been summarising their findings as they go along, it will make the final analysis and making recommendations so much easier.

Here are some key hints and tips for pulling together evidence in readiness for writing the final report:

- Take account of findings from different activities - examine the evidence in the round
- Summarise the main themes arising from the evidence e.g. customer care, value for money, length of time, quality of service, etc and Panel your findings under each heading....please see report template below to gain a clearer understanding
- List strengths and areas for improvement arising from each activity
- Be careful of **jumping to conclusions** on the strength of one piece of evidence...highlight it and ask officers to investigate further as part of your report
- Be clear and specific about **source** of evidence....if your evidence is from a particular document; state which document and which version
- When making recommendations, panels would be advised to highlight which recommendations are the highest priority from their point of view
- It's also a good idea to give an idea of the potential benefits the panel thinks will arise as a result of implementing each recommendation, e.g. improved customer satisfaction, better performance, less waste, etc.

b. Writing the report

Here is a template that Panel's can use to help panels write their reports; it can of course be adapted to suit.

Suggested template for report writing

1. Introduction (No more than two short paragraphs)

- Explain how you came to choose the topic/service that you scrutinised – what information you looked at and how you arrived at your decision
- Explain that you have a process for scrutiny that comprises four key steps – short explanation of each step (first report by scrutiny panel only)
- Explain how the customer tenant inspectors supported you in your review

2. Details of the activities we carried out (to give an overview of the type of activities carried out)

E.g.: During the course of our review, we carried out the following key activities:

- Contacted 50 customers who had used the service in the last six months and 20 tenants who had submitted complainants about the service in the last six months (you could list the questions and an analysis of the responses in an Appendix)
- Carried out mystery shopping by telephone and email and completed a series of reality checks including void property inspections, file review

- Compared performance information with that of other, similar AHGs
- Visited another housing association to find out how they deliver services
- Interviewed officers who are involved in managing and delivering the service
- **Our main findings** (This is the main part of your report...the part that Board and officers will be particularly interested in. They will want to see evidence...summarise it in the main body of the report and include details in appendices. Tables and graphs are always very useful – high impact)

a) Strengths

Simply list the positive findings in bullet point format. But make your points as specific and brief as possible. E.g. 80% of tenants we contacted said that they were satisfied with the service and said that there was nothing the AHG could do to improve it.

You may want to split the strengths up into topics such as customer care, diversity, value for money, performance, etc. And Panel your main points under each theme.

b) Areas for improvement (or weaknesses)

Again, you should list the findings as specifically and succinctly as possible and you may want to Panel the areas for improvement under key headings such as customer care, performance, value for money, etc.

3. Recommendations

Clearly set out the actions you want your AHG to take, based on your findings, and what benefits you think will arise as a result. This can be presented clearly in a table format as shown below:

Recommendation	Expected benefit
Example: 1. Provide a copy of the re-let standard when customers are offered a property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So that customers know what standard to expect from the AHG
2. Employ own cleaners to clean ready to let properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced costs • Improved standard of cleanliness • Improved customer care

Please note: it is perfectly acceptable for your recommendations to include an action for officers to investigate and report back on an issue. For example: a Panel found a very high number of no accesses in relation to repairs orders raised and the officers were unable to provide answers. So one of their recommendations was to ask officers to find out the reasons and report back and to state what they would do to remedy this problem.

4. Action plan (this should be no more than a short paragraph)

Give a deadline for AHG to provide an action plan to address your recommendations e.g. two weeks after the report has been presented to Board or Committee. Also state how often you will meet with officers to monitor implementation of the action plan (e.g. quarterly progress meetings until the plan is fully implemented) and how you intend to monitor the impact of the improvements made to the service (e.g. through quarterly performance, complaints and customer satisfaction monitoring meetings after the action plan has been implemented)

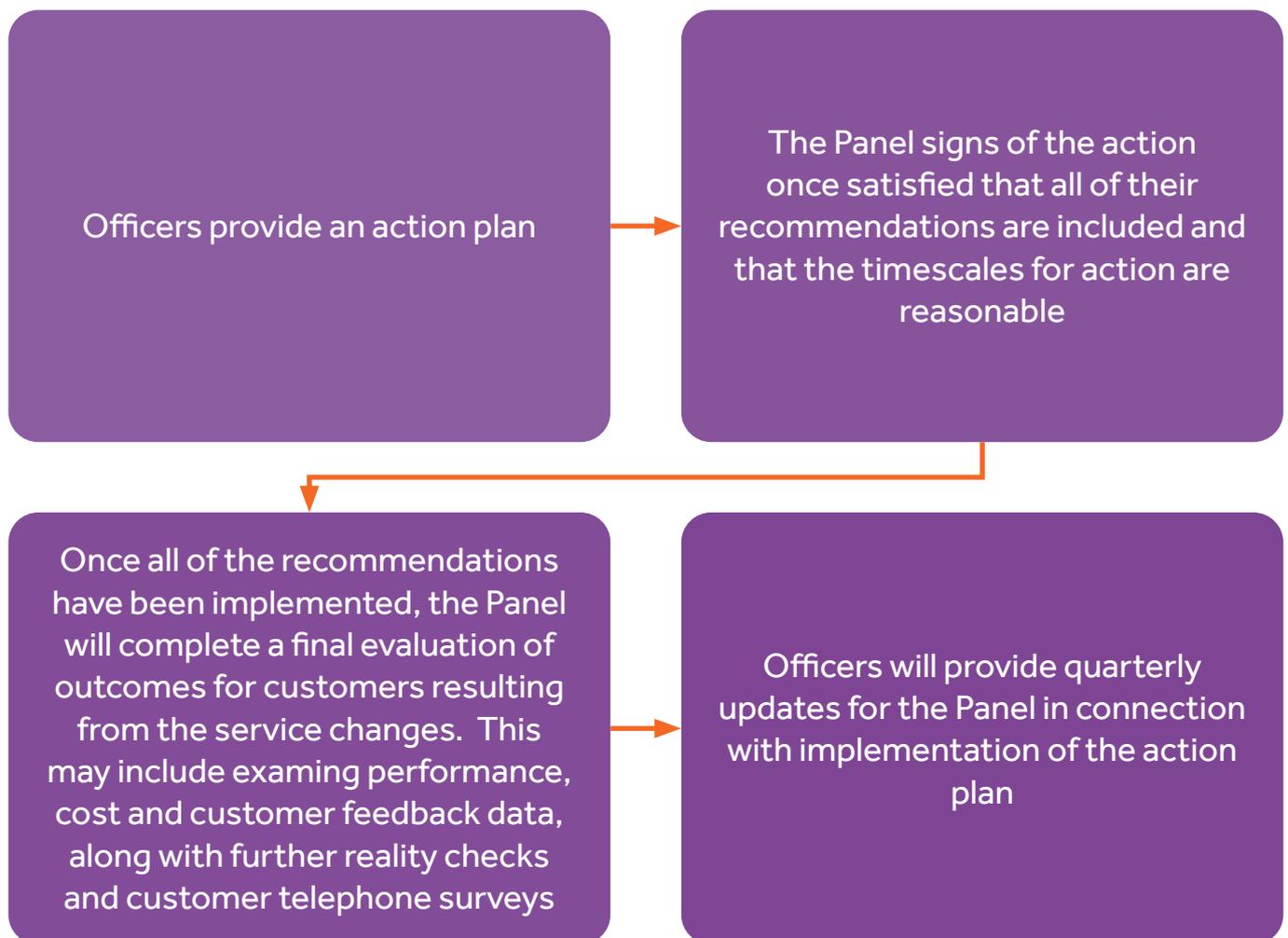
5. Concluding remarks and learning points (A couple of paragraphs will suffice)

Thank those involved and say what the panel and AHG could learn for future reviews. It is good practice to send a letter of thanks to all customers who participated in your review e.g. by giving their views as part of the telephone survey.

State how and when you will feedback your findings and action plan **to all customers**.



5. Step 4: Monitoring and evaluation



a. Monitoring and evaluating

There are two main considerations here:

- Monitoring implementation of the action plan produced by your AHG following a review
- Evaluation of outcomes for tenants as a result of your recommendations being implemented

Agreeing the action plan

Once officers provide an action plan to address your recommendations, the first thing you need to do is check the plan, paying particular attention to the following:

- The plan must be SMART: Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Realistic; Timely
- Check that all of your recommendations are covered in the plan
- Are you happy with the timescales included in the action plan?

Monitoring the action plan

Once you have an agreed action plan, you need to consider how you will monitor progress, especially as you will have moved onto your next scrutiny topic and as time goes by you could be monitoring multiple plans from different scrutiny reviews and continuing to review services.

There are many ways you could carry out monitoring activities; the following are a few prompts to help you decide the best way for you:

- Who will be involved in monitoring the plan? The whole Panel or a 'champion' from the Panel for the service area? If you choose to have 'champions', how will they keep the rest of the panel informed/up to date?
- What information will you need and in what format, to help you monitor the action plan? E.g. an updated action plan and progress report?
- How often will you carry out monitoring activities? And how will you fit it around your service scrutiny work? It is a good idea to agree dates for monitoring meetings with the officers responsible for implementing the action plan. I would suggest that you plan these meetings in to your diary as soon as your report has been to Board or Committee. I would suggest quarterly meetings with the officers and request that they provide an updated version of the action plan each time you meet, setting out comments on progress and giving reasons if there are any delays.

Evaluating outcomes

Once recommendations have been implemented, you will need to assess the resultant outcomes. This will help you and others to understand the impact of scrutiny. There are two key considerations in assessing outcomes/impact: what will you assess and how?

The table below provides an example of how you could assess outcomes of a gas servicing review.

Panel Recommendations	Measure	Method	When/how often?	By whom?
1. Improve the appointments system to improve value for money and increase customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of appointments made and kept • Level of cold calling • Level of no accesses and cost associated with these • Customer satisfaction levels • Overall performance in carrying out gas checks 	Report from officers	Quarterly	All Panel members
2. Improve customer information about gas servicing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction levels • Level of appointments 	As above. Reality checks – customer phone calls	Quarterly 3 to 6 months after the new information has been introduced?	Panel Tenant Inspectors (to report back to panel)
3. Enhance customer care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction 	Reality checks – customer phone calls	Quarterly	Customer Inspectors (reported back to panel)
4. Improve health and safety arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Number of homes that have stickers about gas safety and carbon monoxide monitors • Number of homes with carbon monoxide monitors 	Reality checks – customer phone calls	Quarterly	Customer Inspectors (reported back to panel)

Panel Recommendations	Measure	Method	When/how often?	By whom?
5. Improve methods for capturing customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of completed customer surveys • Level of informal complaints recorded 	Report from officers	Quarterly	Panel
6. Equality and diversity considerations that need to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of female gas engineers • Number of apprentices • Customer satisfaction levels 	Report from officers	Quarterly	Panel

NB: You will need performance levels for before and after your recommendations are implemented so that you can track progress and measure improvements/impact.

You may choose to evaluate performance six monthly or even to delegate the evaluation function to another Panel of customers – there are no hard and fast rules.

Officers should provide an updated version of the agreed action plan quarterly for the Panel to consider.

The plan should be accompanied by a short written report that sets out:

- **A summary of the actions completed** and description of what arrangements are in place to monitor the impact of the completed actions
- **A summary of progress being made** for actions that are yet to be completed and an indication of whether these will be completed on time.
- If any actions are not going to be completed 'on time', officers should provide **reasons and a revised completion date**
- **A summary of any customer involvement or consultation** that has taken place as part of the action plan (if any of the actions required customers' views to be taken into account). In particular, the Panel will need to know who was consulted, how and what tenants said.

b. Final evaluation

After the action plan has been delivered and outcomes for customers are being monitored, the Panel will meet with the relevant managers to consider:

- What the specific outcomes have been for customers as a result of changes made e.g. have standards of ready to let properties improved, are customers more satisfied, have savings been made?
- What would the panel and officers do again and what they would not, in relation to carrying out the review – this helps everyone to learn by the successes and mistakes of the review.



