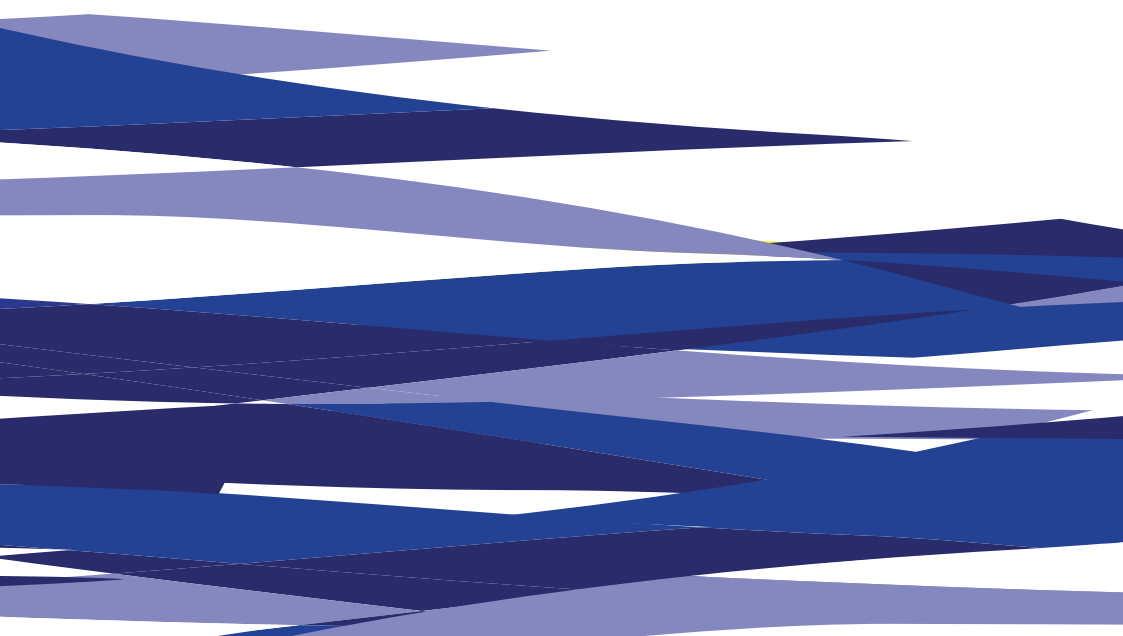


swan



Resident Scrutiny Framework

Residents in the Driving Seat



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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out Swan's approach to resident led scrutiny, putting residents in the driving seat to challenge our performance and to work with us to achieve our vision 'to create homes and communities that people want to live in'.

We are committed to actively involving residents in the management and maintenance of all our homes.

We also seek to empower residents to have a real impact in holding us to account to improve our services and performance. We recognise that the best way to achieve this is in partnership with our residents.

As an organisation our aim is to assist the communities we serve to develop and maximise their potential and we strive to place all our residents at the centre of all we do.

Our Resident Involvement and Community Development services offer a range of opportunities for developing resident participation

and for capturing residents views, priorities and experiences.

In order for residents to be truly empowered and for resident involvement to really make a difference we believe that clear and robust routes to influence need to be in place.

To support our aim of residents being firmly in the driving seat it is important to provide a framework for all partners to work to.

This document outlines the principles we are committed to and the mechanisms we have put in place to enable and empower our residents to work with us to deliver self-regulation and service improvement.



Creating homes and communities
people want to live in

2.0 Background and context

2.1 Local context

Swan prides itself on its values, which are:

- **Imaginative**
We create solutions, break down barriers, achieve against the odds - make things happen.
- **Insistent**
We go the extra mile for our residents, we put energy into what we do because we believe in it.
- **In touch**
We listen and respond to our residents and involve them in decision-making. We are aware of the latest developments in housing.

During the summer of 2007 Swan consulted its residents on the review of its governance structure. Our priority was to offer an enhanced role for residents in the work of Swan. Previously, Swan operated a group structure. The group included the Parent Organisation (Swan Housing Association) and two subsidiaries - Swan London and Swan Essex.

Following the review Swan undertook a governance restructure, moving from a group to one single housing association. This saw the two Regional Boards replaced with two resident majority Regional Committees.

The resident majority Regional Committees together with our Service Improvement Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee and our two Resident Consultative Committees (RCC) (Essex and London) are the foundation of our scrutiny framework. The creation of the new governance structure has provided more opportunities for residents to be key members of these influential committees.

In developing this new structure we were clear that enabling resident led challenge and monitoring was necessary to achieve our own vision and to respond to our residents' needs and aspirations.

2.2 The co-regulation framework

The vision to enhance resident scrutiny at Swan developed alongside the development of the new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England by the Tenant Services Authority. The Framework, which has been in place since April 2010 is built on the fundamental principles of co-regulation between residents and their landlord.

The Regulatory Framework sets out ten principles that underpin the approach to regulation. The first

principle and the key focus, which is relevant to Swan's own Resident Scrutiny Framework, is the principle of co-regulation. There is a strong emphasis on landlords involving their tenants to shape local delivery to local priorities and scrutinise performance.

In delivering the overarching principle of resident led scrutiny and co-regulation, landlords must meet the six standards which have been developed in consultation with tenants across England. The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) are clear that outcomes for

tenants are of the greatest importance, rather than the detail of the process for achieving them.

The six National Standards cover the full range of services provided by Swan. The standards are:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community
- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability

The Tenant Services Authority state:

“We have made it clear that our regulation can best support lasting service delivery improvement if both landlords and tenants have a sense of ownership in the regulatory framework. We have based our framework on creating a new expectation that landlords will involve their tenants and hold themselves open to scrutiny by them.”

They expand on this further with

“With greater freedom for providers comes greater responsibility to deliver a better deal for their tenants and be held accountable for achieving this by their own governing bodies and their tenants. Only when this fails to deliver a fair deal for tenants will we, as the regulator, step in.”

In relation to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Swan are required to deliver outcomes for:

- Providing tenants with a range of opportunities to influence how providers meet the TSA's standards, to scrutinise performance against all standards and to be involved in the development of the annual report
- Providing support to tenants to build their capacity to be more effectively involved

The specific requirements are for Swan to:

- Have arrangements in place for involvement and scrutiny
- Give residents the opportunity to scrutinise the effectiveness of our policies
- Consult residents at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of the housing management service

2.3 Positive practice

The Regulatory Framework is not prescriptive in how to achieve the desired outcomes. It is expected that Swan examines examples of positive practice to help us identify the best approach.

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) has published two reports providing excellent guidance and direction for developing resident led self-regulation:

- 'Resident-led self-regulation: Enhancing in-house scrutiny and performance' 2010
- 'Leading the way. Achieving resident-driven accountability and excellence' 2007

Research from the CIH suggests that resident-led self-regulation can be applied across the whole of a housing business.

There are three key characteristics required for genuine resident-led self-regulation:

- Independence from other governance and management structures
- Formality in operation
- Power for residents to challenge and effect change

3.0 Our objectives

The positive outcomes that we are seeking to deliver are:

- Residents taking ownership of the scrutiny framework and working with us in partnership to direct and influence service delivery
- A pool of residents who have developed the skills and capacity to effectively monitor performance
- Attracting more residents to play an active part in scrutiny now and in the future by proving it really can make a difference
- Residents feeling they have real opportunities to influence service delivery and change
- Meeting residents needs and expectations by placing them at the centre of everything we do
- Formalising the involvement of the Regional Committees, Service Improvement Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee and the Resident Consultative Committees into Swan's scrutiny framework

'Residents in the driving seat' outlines our framework for resident scrutiny. It compliments and supports our other corporate strategies and frameworks to assist us in achieving our goals, such as those set out in the:

- Swan Corporate Plan
- Value for Money Strategy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Housing Services Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Strategy

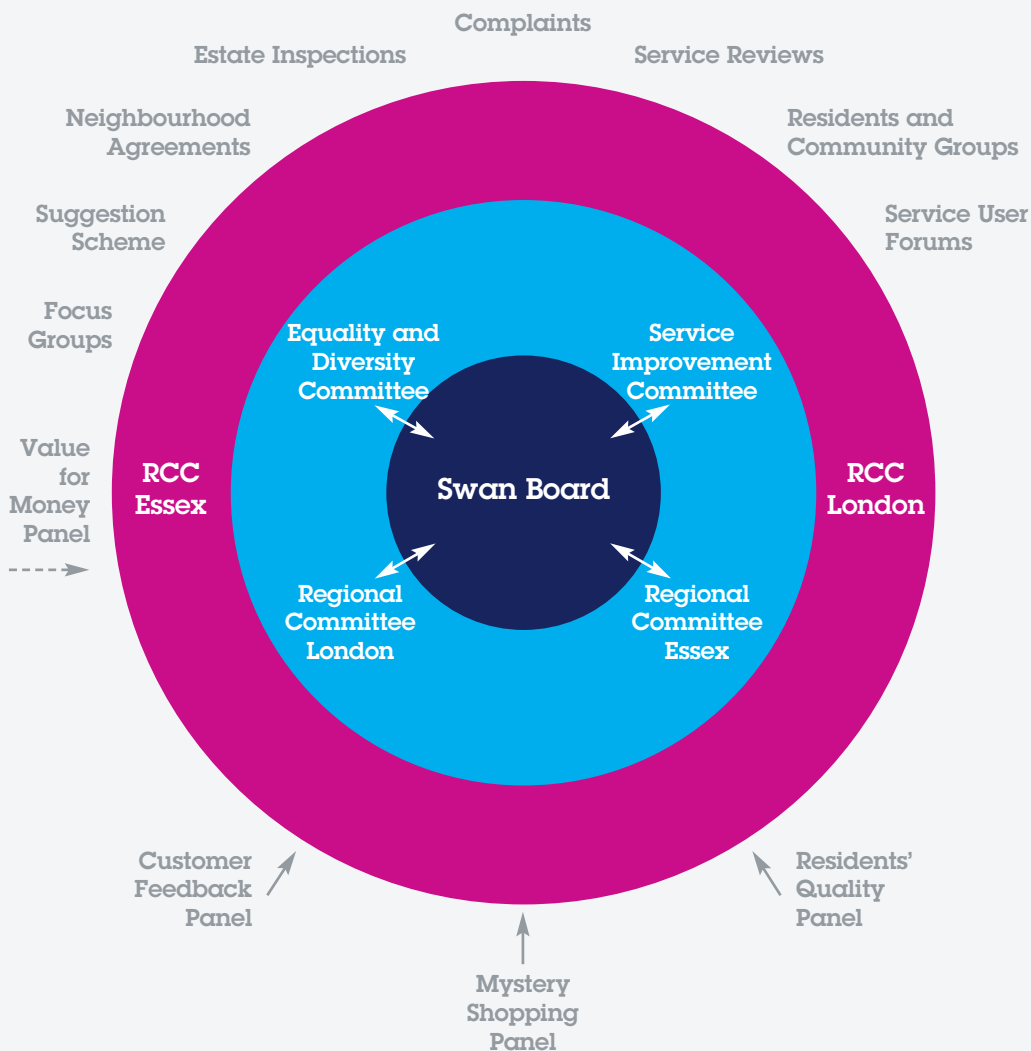
4.0 Our approach

See graph opposite

5.0 Menu of involvement

The framework is made up of a number of interlinked elements which channel the 'on the ground' resident experiences and views through to the heart of scrutiny and decision making. The diagram in section four shows our approach and how these elements fit together. On the following pages is a further explanation of the role that each element plays.

4.0 Our approach



5.1 Regional Committees

The Regional Committees are the cornerstones of the framework. Together with the RCCs in Essex and London they provide the primary resident scrutiny function.

The Regional Committees each have eight Resident Members and four Independent Members. They meet four times per year.

Their role is to challenge and monitor performance against Swan's standards and against regulatory standards.

The Regional Committees are responsible for:

- Overseeing all customer facing service delivery
- The implementation of housing policies and recommending any changes
- Scrutinising service delivery performance
- Monitoring development schemes and progress
- Overseeing resident involvement and training

The Regional Committees have delegated authority from the Board to allow them to carry out these duties. Both Committees are represented on the Board.

5.2 Service Improvement Committee

The Service Improvement Committee is a Sub Committee of the Board, has a minimum of two Resident Members and four Independent Members and meets bi-monthly.

The role of the Committee includes:

- Monitoring progress of the 'Striving for Excellence' programme
- Monitoring progress of service reviews for both landlord and for central overhead functions
- Overseeing compliance against local offers

The Chairs of the Essex and London Resident Consultative Committees are members of the Service Improvement Committee and there are also places for at least two Regional Committee Members.

5.3 Resident Consultative Committees

There are two Resident Consultative Committees (RCCs) one in Essex and one in London.

Their role is to:

- Monitor and challenge performance information at a regional level

- Provide a resident perspective for setting measures and targets
- Provide challenge and resident experience to assist policy review and development
- Provide feedback to Regional Committees
- Act as a valuable resource for the Committees to consult with
- Act as a channel for learning from complaints

They link to the Regional Committees and Service Improvement Committee specifically by:

- Monitoring and overseeing the progress of the ‘Striving for Excellence’ programme
- Providing a regional perspective on local offer delivery

The two RCCs receive reports, information and updates from the Residents’ Quality Panel, Mystery Shopping Panel and Customer Feedback Panel.

The two RCCs are made up of residents from local Resident Associations and groups in the relevant area as well as other nominated neighbourhood representatives.

5.4 Value for Money Panel

Central to the regulatory framework are the six standards that landlords must meet. Value for money is one of these standards. The required outcomes mean that Swan should consult, listen and respond to its residents and encourage involvement in all service areas including our decisions on budget allocation. This will include decisions such as how much should be spent on services that residents pay for through service charges.

Swan has developed a value for money strategy. Residents from the RCCs and Regional Committees were involved in setting priorities for further investigation.

The Value for Money Panel reports to the two RCCs and the Regional Committees. It provides resident scrutiny and challenge with a specific focus on value for money.

The role of the Panel is to:

- Work with Swan to further develop and review the value for money (VFM) strategy
- Monitor progress against the VFM strategy
- Help to promote the strategy and the value for money ethos
- Provide challenge and scrutiny to achieve greater efficiencies across all service areas
- Provide challenge to policy and operational procedures to increase efficiency and reduce waste
- To develop value for money measures that are meaningful for residents to show what difference the strategy is making

5.5 Monitoring and Inspection

Those closely involved in the scrutiny of Swan services have access to three main resident led monitoring and inspection teams:

- Mystery Shopping Panel
- Residents' Quality Panel
- Customer Feedback Panel

The Regional Committees and RCCs can use these monitoring and inspection teams to carry out research and inspection of service areas e.g. where performance has dropped/is

not improving or where satisfaction is static or decreasing.

These Panels also have annual programmes of activity designed to monitor and measure performance against Swan's standards and targets.

The outcomes will be reported to the two RCCs, Regional Committees and Service Improvement Committee as part of the regular performance information.

The Residents' Quality Panel and the Mystery Shopping Panel will produce an annual plan setting out their objectives for each financial year.

Mystery Shopping Panel

The Mystery Shopping Panel meets every quarter to carry out reality checks on the customer service and experience of Swan's services.

All departments can come within the scope of the mystery shoppers. To date they have included:

- Allocations and Lettings
- The Essex and London Rent Teams
- Axis Call Centre
- Essex and London Neighbourhood Teams
- Resident Involvement
- Estate Management
- Asset Management

The results from the mystery shopping exercise are presented to the RCCs and Committees and the actions identified from them are included in Swan's Service Improvement Plan. Improvements identified are reported back to all residents through our newsletter, "The Communicator".

Residents' Quality Panel

Swan has established a Residents' Quality Panel (RQP) to enhance the strategic partnership with our repairs and maintenance partner, Axis. This enables residents to engage and contribute to the monitoring of existing services as well as influence future improvements in the delivery of our repairs service.

The terms of reference of the RQP include developing an annual work programme with defined outputs as well as practical elements, such as carrying out inspections by telephone and visual checks on 10% of repairs each month (carried out by Swan's repairs partnering contractor - Axis). It also carries out research projects as requested by other bodies or identified by the Panel itself.

It is tasked with engaging with residents who have had repairs completed to investigate their satisfaction with the service.

Feedback from RQP members is produced monthly, with the results being integrated into the monthly quality inspection results for Axis. RQP feedback is measured separately along with both Axis and Asset Management performance information.

Customer Feedback Panel

The Swan Customer Feedback Panel is made up of residents who have expressed an interest in Swan's services. This Panel offers immediate and direct access to residents' views, experiences and opinions.

The Panel are invited to attend focus groups and steering groups on different subjects of Swan's business including:

- Policies and Procedures
- Allocations and Lettings
- Managing empty homes
- Supported Housing
- Equality and Diversity
- Neighbourhood Services
- Estate Walkabouts
- Resident Involvement
- Leasehold Services
- Repairs

The Panel are invited to respond to surveys and questionnaires and take part in focus groups and discussion activities.

The residents who expressed an interest in being part of the Editorial Panel are invited to comment on the newsletters produced before they are printed.

Mystery Shopping Panel Members can also be recruited from the Customer Feedback Panel.

Panel Members interact with Swan using the means of communication which suits them best e.g. by e-mail, post, telephone and face to face with staff.

Further ways to develop resident inspection and quality monitoring are also being introduced. For example resident estate inspectors are being trained up to complement the mechanisms already in place and offer an independent 'resident eye view'.

5.6 Service Specific Review

Service Reviews

Reviews are programmed as part of Swan's continuous improvement plan. Service review project teams will usually include resident representation.

The Service Improvement Committee takes the lead in agreeing the initial work plans for service reviews and signs off the reports and

recommendations before the action plans are incorporated into the Service Improvement Action Plan.

We will use our Resident Involvement and Community Development Toolkit to consult and engage with residents during a service review.

Service User Forums

We recognise that tailoring and shaping services to suit our diverse range of customers must be done in partnership with the users of our services. The emphasis in these forums is the quality of outcome and not just numbers of those involved.

Our Service User Forums give our more vulnerable residents the opportunity to influence and shape the services they receive from Swan.

The forums meet bi monthly and are open to all Supported Housing residents and Floating Support Service users. The forums are by necessity less formal bodies to encourage a more flexible approach to engaging.

The forums discuss all aspects of the supported housing service and are empowered to influence Swan's policies and strategies in relation to this service.

5.7 Local level involvement

“Putting residents in the driving seat” does not just mean involvement at strategic decision making level. We are also committed to enabling and empowering residents to influence change at a local neighbourhood level too.

We involve residents in a range of local opportunities such as:

- Estate inspections
- Neighbourhood agreements
- Residents’ groups and Associations
- Focus Groups
- Young People’s Forum
- BME residents’ surgeries
- Asian women’s group
- Fun days
- Roadshows
- Estate Resident Boards

All of these activities provide opportunities for residents to engage with our staff. In this way staff who are responsible for day to day delivery as well as policy and strategy get to hear first hand what works well, what does not work so well and what needs to change. Similarly, residents who scrutinise our performance attend many of these events to receive feedback directly from a wider pool of residents.

We have local neighbourhood agreements where residents work together with our staff teams and involved residents to agree plans and commitments to suit neighbourhood issues and their challenges.

Estate inspections involve residents from local areas. They help to monitor the performance of Swan’s Estate Services Team and to identify communal repairs and monitor their progress.

Feedback and outcomes from all of these local activities are reported to both RCCs and to residents in “The Communicator” as well as on our website.

5.8 Capturing feedback

Residents who do not wish to actively take part in our involvement and scrutiny opportunities still have valuable views and experiences. Swan wants to capture these and learn from them.

Complaints and compliments are encouraged and can be received by phone, in person, by e-mail and through the website.

Our Resident Suggestion Scheme welcomes ideas from our customers about the way we deliver our services and how we could improve.

We report back to residents, through our newsletters and annual report what we have learned and what we have agreed to do to change things, where change is needed.

This feedback is also included in regular performance reporting to the Regional Committees and the RCCs.

6.0 Commitment and support

We have committed to developing standard reporting formats with each group that is most meaningful for them. This will include the provision of quarterly performance report timescales.

Swan's Resident Involvement and Community Development Team are working cohesively with residents and all other Swan service teams to agree joint training needs and personal development plans for scrutiny group members.

Developing the capacity of residents to scrutinise effectively and challenge what we do is critical to achieving our vision.

A range of commitments is in place to enable the empowerment of our residents:

The Residents' Quality Panel

An individual development plan will be agreed with each resident member. Training for all will be provided in these specific areas:

- Basic training on Swan's IT systems and processes
- Understanding Swan's quality standards for repairs and voids
- Consideration of the formal Quality Assessor accreditation
- Familiarisation with Axis' call centre and processes
- Diversity awareness
- Value for money

The Mystery Shopping Panel

Training has been provided for the current team in the methods to be used and to give shoppers confidence to carry out their tasks. Further training will be identified and agreed with existing and any new shoppers as their programme of work progresses. This will include:

- Familiarisation with Swan processes
- New techniques in shopping
- Confidence in recording experiences

Formal Governance Structure

An annual programme of training and capacity building is in place for these involved residents. Annual self assessments are now a standard feature for developing Personal Development Plans (PDPs). These PDPs provide the basis for the content of the annual training programme for Swan residents.

Development areas in this year's plan include:

- Mentoring for groups and individuals
- Presentation skills, assertiveness and confidence building
- Effective scrutiny and performance management
- Influencing and negotiation skills
- Speed reading and understanding complex reports
- Risk management
- Time management

7.0 Evaluating the impact

The impact of the Resident Scrutiny Framework must be monitored in order to ensure it is effective.

On an annual basis we will include an assessment of the impact of each of the key scrutiny bodies in our Resident Involvement Impact Assessment.

During 2011 we will carry out an interim review with residents involved in the key groups such as:

- Regional Committees
- Resident Consultative Committees
- Service Improvement Committee
- Equality and Diversity Committee
- Residents' Quality Panel
- Mystery Shopping Panel
- Customer Feedback Panel

The purpose of this review will be to look at what has worked for them, what has not and what action could be taken to sharpen the scrutiny role.

Annual away-days for involved residents and the annual Residents' Conference provide further opportunities to assess impact and review the framework.

Swan involves residents in developing and agreeing the Swan Corporate Plan. This is reviewed every three years. In future this will include a review of this framework 'Residents in the Driving Seat', in line with the specific requirement of the tenant involvement and empowerment standard, to consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of their landlord's housing management service.



Basic training on Swan's IT systems and processes

We will be keeping a watchful eye on best practice as it emerges. Our resident scrutiny members will be provided with information on how other landlords are progressing with their approach to co-regulation and given the opportunity to explore this in training sessions and capacity building activities.

Regular benchmarking information will be provided to RCCs, Regional Committees and Service Improvement Committee Members. This will allow Committee Members to compare Swan's performance against other similar local and national organisations.

Staff from our Resident Involvement and Community Development Team will meet quarterly with staff from all other service areas to discuss common issues arising from service reviews, complaints and feedback and to look at the difference that scrutiny is making to these trends.

Our regular Management Team Service Improvement meetings will embed the feedback from the resident involvement and scrutiny networks into our improvement planning process.

Speaking your language

If you would like someone to explain anything in this document to you please call us on 0300 303 2500

Bengali

যদি চান যে কেউ এই ডকুমেন্টের যেকোন একটি দিক আপনাকে ব্যাখ্যা করে দিক তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে 0300 303 2500 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।

French

Si vous souhaitez obtenir des explications sur le contenu de ce document, veuillez nous appeler au 0300 303 2500.

Polish

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo skontaktować się z osobą, która pomoże wytłumaczyć treść dokumentu, proszę do nas zadzwonić pod numer 0300 303 2500.

Somali

Haddaad jeclaan lahayd inuu qof kuu sharax wax uun ku saabsan dokumintigan fadlan soo wac telefoonka ah 0300 303 2500.

Punjabi

ਨਾਲ ਦੱਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਵਿਰਧਾ ਵਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ 0300 303 2500 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ

Arabic

إذا كنت ترغب لشخص ما ان يفسر لك أي شيء من محتويات هذه الوثيقة فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على 0300 303 2500

Urdu

اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ کوئی اور اس دستاویز کے کسی حصے کی وضاحت آپ کو کرے تو براہ مہربانی ہم سے فون نمبر 0300 303 2500 پر رابطہ کریں۔