



Family Housing Association

Board Member Recruitment Pack

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Introduction from the Chair

Dear Board Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in joining the Board of Family Housing Association. We are a small community based Housing Association, owning and managing just over 400 homes in Wirral. We are a financially strong organisation, reinvesting surpluses we generate into maintaining and improving our existing properties , together with acquiring new ones to assist those in housing need.

Board Members play a vital role in Housing Associations such as ours, providing clear guidance and direction for officers and in ensuring good governance is achieved. We are always planning for the future and have identified that we would particularly benefit from having additional Board Members with experience and skills in finance, HR, property maintenance and repairs, although these are not essential. You do not need to have been part of a Board before and will receive support from officers and Board Members.

If you would like to be considered to join the Board of Family Housing Association, then please consider all the information contained in the Recruitment Pack and then return your application form to the office.

Best wishes

Stephen Morris
Chair

History of Family Housing Association

The origins of Family Housing Association can be traced back over sixty years to 1963, when a group of local people first met to consider how they could address poor housing conditions in Wirral. These volunteers went on to form the Birkenhead Catholic Housing Aid Society, one of many Catholic Housing Aid Societies across the country. They met each week to provide free housing and financial advice to the whole of the local community on a non-denominational basis.

After a couple of years, the Society purchased its first properties. They were let as temporary homes, requiring tenants to pay a small amount of rent and also to pay into a savings scheme so they could save up a deposit to buy a home.

Nationally, the Housing Corporation was founded in 1964, with the purpose of distributing loans to enable housing societies to build properties for rent. This was the catalyst for the growth of the modern Housing Association movement. At a meeting of representatives of the Catholic Housing Aid Societies from across the country, it was suggested each one should set up as a Housing Association, as this would make them better placed to access Housing Corporation loans. So, in 1968, Family Housing Association (Birkenhead & Wirral) Ltd was created, becoming what is now known as a Registered Provider (RP).

Initially, the Association owned only a handful of properties. Board Members would collect the rent and manage the repairs in their spare time. Office accommodation was rented in Hamilton Square for the Board Members to meet and operate the Association. During the 1970s, the Association began to expand more quickly, often buying homes in poor condition before renovating them and letting them out. By 1978, the number of properties had grown to a level where the volunteer Board Members were struggling with the workload and so Smith & Sons, local Estate Agents, were appointed to collect the rent. In 1982 the Association purchased its own office in Woodchurch Road and in 1985 appointed its first full time member of staff.

Family Housing Association remained in Woodchurch Road until 2007, when it moved to its current Marcus House office in Marcus Street, Birkenhead. It continued to grow throughout this time, sometimes buying existing homes on the open market and also by building new homes when opportunities arose to do so. Whilst in the early years many functions were outsourced to consultants, over the last 20 years all the core functions have been brought in-house and are provided by a dedicated team of staff. By 2025, Family Housing Association had nine members of staff. It owns 401 homes including houses, flats and sheltered flats throughout Wirral, and provides the full range of housing services. It remains a charitable organisation, providing homes at the lowest possible Social Housing rents to assist those in housing need, with Board Members who remain volunteers, carrying on the work of those that founded the organisation 60 years earlier.

About us – Mission, Aims and Objectives

Mission

‘To provide high quality homes and excellent services, at genuinely affordable rents to those in housing need in Wirral’

Aims

In order to target resources appropriately, Family Housing Association’s Board has agreed the following aims:

- To provide homes, at reasonable below market rents, to help those on low incomes who are in housing need in Wirral.
- To maintain its properties to a good standard.
- To carefully manage risk to protect the Association’s Assets.
- To provide excellent services to our tenants.
- To achieve steady growth, proportionate to our size and when it is financially prudent to do so, to help more people in housing need.

Corporate Goals

- Providing caring and courteous services to all existing and potential residents that are customer focused and respond to our customers’ needs and aspirations
- Maintaining our properties to a good standard that exceeds the Decent Homes Standard
- Provide a good standard of housing which offers value for money to tenants.
- Embrace new initiatives that are in keeping with the tradition and skills of the Association.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity in the allocation of housing, employment of staff and appointment of Board Members.
- Plan and control all aspects of business activity to maintain the Association’s financial strength and viability.
- Retaining a well-motivated professional workforce.

Objectives

- To ensure the delivery of a high-quality service through professional well-motivated employees, which meet customers’ needs.
 - To maintain an ongoing asset management programme for repairs and improvements that accord with good practice and legislative requirements.
 - To explore appropriate opportunities for achieving steady and controlled growth through acquisitions or development of new properties in Wirral.
 - To achieve an operating surplus sufficient to enable effective re-investment to support the Association’s on-going activities.
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What is it like to be a Board member at Family Housing Association?

Board Members play a very important role in setting our future direction and ensuring that we keep delivering what we do best.

You would work closely with other Board Members and the Management Team of senior officers, setting the vision and priorities, then asking the right questions about performance and service delivery. You would be holding officers to account, whilst ensuring that our focus remains on putting our tenants first and our drive to continuously improve in everything we do.

We are looking for people who can think differently, challenge existing practices, bring lived experiences, have plenty of drive and passion, and work constructively and collectively as team players. You don't need to have Board or housing experience. Many of our existing members did not have previous Board experience and have really excelled in their roles.

Board Member Role

- **Responsible to** - Chair of the Board.
 - **Hours** – Board Meetings take place every other month, which typically last up to 2 hours. You would need to read reports and prepare to participate in the meetings. In the fullness of time, you could choose additional participation, such as by joining the Audit Committee.
 - There is an Annual Board Away Day, held locally, when Board Members and Officers review future priorities for the Association, including Business Planning and topical issues.
 - **Tenure** - Board Members are appointed for three years. Each year, the Chair will meet with you to check how you're doing and carry out an appraisal to help you understand if further training or development would be helpful and that the balance of skills and experience across all Board Members covers all necessary areas. Board Members typically serve for 6 years, although your tenure could be extended annually from 6 years up to a maximum of 9 years, depending upon whether the Association would benefit from retaining particular skills and experience on the Board.
 - **Remuneration** – Board members participate on a voluntary basis, with any reasonable expenses being paid, such as for travel.
 - **Location** - We have a hybrid approach to Board and Committee meetings. Most meetings are held at our office in Birkenhead, but some may be held virtually using software such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. We can help you to set this up if required.
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What Do Board Members Do?

You would work as part of a team, with other Board Members and liaise with officers, helping develop and steer the direction of the organisation to ensure we are delivering on our purpose. Board Members help shape and scrutinise the running of Family Housing Association to check we are operating effectively, efficiently and economically. A Board Members' role is strategic, ensuring Policies are in place for Officers to follow, setting budgets and determining the direction of the business. Board Members don't get involved in the day to day running of Family Housing Association, as Officers are tasked with this. Internal Auditors carry out audits of service areas to reassure Board Members that policies and procedures are being followed. External Auditors analyse our Annual Accounts and provide assurance to Board Members that they are an accurate reflection of the business.

What Can You Bring?

We want to encourage more applicants who bring skills, knowledge and experience from a wide perspective. We want our Board to have a diversity of opinions and backgrounds, reflecting the Wirral community in which we work.

With this in mind, our focus on recruitment is on these key areas and competencies:

- Has a passion for the work of Family Housing Association, with a focus on our tenants and local communities.
- Is self-aware, take responsibility for their learning, and actively participate in meetings and activities.
- Has sound judgement and common sense.
- Values a diverse board and organisation and is committed to Family Housing Association's vision and values.
- Be well-informed and able to contribute specialist knowledge, expertise and experience to the Board.

We would like you to bring your own unique insight to Family Housing Association, helping us make a difference in our customers' lives. We would like you to tell us in your application how you think you can contribute to the work of Family Housing Association and how your skills and experience will benefit the organisation. Housing experience or having been on a Board before are not essential.

Board Member Support

We want to ensure that our Board Members get something out of their time with us. We want to support you in developing your skills and knowledge. You would be provided with support from Officers to help you understand and develop in the role. Officers are always available to discuss issues and provide additional explanations and guidance. There are regular training opportunities in addition

to Board Briefings where 30 minute presentations are provided prior to some meetings on relevant topics. There is also the opportunity to experience a guided tour around our housing stock and to meet annually with the Chair to discuss your thoughts or concerns as part of the appraisal process.

Current Board Members

The Board consists of upto 12 Board Members. The Board also has the following sub-committees:

- Audit Committee (Currently meets three times each year)
- Remuneration Committee (Typically meets once each year)

Stephen Morris (Chair)

Stephen is a Chartered Accountant who has worked with a Wirral based construction company as a Finance Manager and then moved to a Housing Association as a Financial Controller. In June 2020 he volunteered to join the Board and has until recently been Chair of the Audit and Remuneration Committees. He has a particular interest in ensuring that Family Housing Association provides high quality homes at value for money Social Rents which are significantly below market rents.

Andrew Davies (Vice Chair)

Andrew has worked in the trade union world and in legal and judicial occupations. He has served in various non-paid positions on educational and charity boards. Andrew considers the most important role of the FHA board member is to develop an understanding of the work of the organisation and be prepared to ask the right questions to ensure that we are doing our level best to help provide badly needed low cost homes in these difficult times.

Peter Carter (Chair of the Audit Committee)

Peter's career as a sales professional and business consultant saw him delivering business process change for greater efficiency and reducing costs. Process change in regulated industries also meant ensuring compliance. Working with organisations such as Policy in Practice, Peter understands the impact of the welfare reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit and the impacts these changes have on residents, local authorities, and housing associations.

Glen Hamilton (Chair of the Remuneration Committee)

Glen is a seasoned business leader with experience in both commercial and non-profit sectors. Glen is a member of the Institute of Directors and the Chartered Institute of Housing, he is passionate about community development, sustainable building practices and contributing to social impact initiatives.

Joy Hughes

Joy brings varied experience to the Board, with her background as a nurse, before working in a Job Centre and then becoming a Customer Service & Income Collection Manager for a local Housing Association. Since her retirement, Joy has a particular empathy for disability related issues and for ensuring tenants receive appropriate welfare benefits advice.

Brendan McWhinnie

Brendan has worked in social housing for over 30 years and is a fully qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Housing. His current role is that of Housing Manager with a North Wales based housing association. Brendan has managed specialist income and housing teams and has a special interest in developing anti-social behaviour support interventions and all aspects associated with income management .

Executive Team

Neil Moffatt, Chief Executive.

Neil is a fully qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Housing, joining Family Housing Association in 2019. He has many years' of varied experience of working in senior roles across the housing sector in the North West of England and in Wales.

Mark French, Deputy Chief Executive & Operations Director.

Mark joined Family Housing Association in 2005, from another local Housing Association and is responsible for overseeing our day to day activities, including the management of staff and overseeing our core business activities such as repairs, rent arrears, and anti-social behaviour. Mark is also a fully qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Lisa Milns, Finance Director.

Lisa is a fully qualified Chartered Accountant, joining Family Housing Association in 2021. Lisa previously worked for our external Accountant bringing the finance function in-house. Before joining us, Lisa had over 24 years of experience in finance which includes the charitable and not for profit sector.

Family Housing Association has a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by understanding the diverse views and needs of our tenants and the Wirral communities. We are keen to encourage applications from underrepresented groups to our Board. This includes young people, people from Black, Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds and people with a disability.

How to apply

All candidates must complete an application

All candidates are requested to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
