



Board Member Recruitment Pack—November 2020



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Re: Board Member Recruitment for Providence Row Housing Association

Thank you for requesting more details in regards to joining the board of Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA). As consultants, The Housing Executive aim to provide you with comprehensive information to enable you to structure your application.

Recruitment Timetable & Process:

Closing Date:	9.00 am, Monday 7 th December 2020
First/Screening Interview:	w/c Monday 14th December 2020
Final Interview & presentation:	w/c Monday 11th January 2021

- The Housing Executive will conduct the initial screening interviews for those candidates successful in being shortlisted.
- The second stage will consist of a presentation and panel Interview with PRHA.
- All Interview stages are likely to take place via video conference using MS Teams/Zoom.
- Successful candidates will be invited to attend the board meeting on Thursday 28th January as observers, after which the board will confirm them into position.

To Apply:

Please provide a **CV** (no more than 3 sides A4) together with a **supporting statement** (also no more than 3 sides of A4) and complete the confidential **Monitoring form**. You can download a monitoring form by clicking [here](#).

The **supporting statement** should demonstrate your suitability for the role and address the key elements of the Experience and Personal skills section of the person specification, enclosed in this pack. Please ensure you provide evidence, with recent examples, of your experience.

Send your application (CV/Statement/Monitoring Form) by **9.00 am on Monday 7th December:**

By email to: rec@thehousingexecutive.com

ALL applications will be acknowledged by email or telephone within 24 hours.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this post or the process, in confidence, please call Tony Clark or Julie Kellaway, directors at The Housing Executive, on 020 7620 3048.

We look forward to receiving your application - do call if you have any queries. Thanks again for your interest in Providence Row Housing Association.

Letter from the Chair.

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a Board member of Providence Row Housing Association. We are approaching you recruiting at the most unusual time in living memory. Many of our staff have been working in 24 hour supported housing/hostels throughout lockdown to provide essential support to some of the most vulnerable members of our society. We are immensely proud of their dedication and contribution.

As a Board we recognise that our responsibility is to focus on the future, ensuring that this organisation remains steady in order to help generations of future residents.

Despite the uncertainty of the current economic, political and social environment we remain confident that we can remain independent, focusing on the social mission that has sustained us for 160 years. We regularly review our financial projections and key performance data to ensure that we can not only continue our work but improve the offer that we make to homeless people and our local communities.

It is this drive that has led us to look for new Board members at this time. While we have skilled committed members and a positive dynamic, we need to ensure there are new ideas and skills to help guide us forward.

The work we do as Board members is of great importance to Providence Row Housing Association. We are an organisation which has social objectives but which must be run as efficiently as any successful commercial concern. We reinvest a significant amount of our operating surplus in improving both the buildings that we own and the services that we provide.

Our responsibility is to ensure that we are open and accountable to our residents and to those who support our work. We need to continue to listen to their views and use this feedback to ensure our services are truly responsive to our residents' needs. The role of Board member is therefore a substantial one. Although we are volunteers, we have ultimate responsibility for the conduct and control of all aspects of the Association's business in accordance with the rules and relevant statutes.

Overall Purpose

The overall purpose of the Board is to:

- ensure that Providence Row Housing Association is managed efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the requirements of the law, regulation and best practice;
- uphold the good name of Providence Row Housing Association and the principles for which it stands.

Key strategic priorities for the year ahead

- Supporting staff and residents to remain safe during this pandemic through active risk management
- Maintaining viability and looking for ways to diversify the Association's income especially for social care /social mission activities
- Responding to the new Building safety regime and Zero carbon targets through review of our housing stock and building safety systems
- Engaging with the Together with Tenants agenda and finding ways of ensuring that resident feedback informs our decision making
- Ensuring that we exercise good governance

Although as Board members we are unpaid we do feel that we gain a lot in terms of the rewards of being able to make a difference. When we are able to visit the services the value of the work we do is evident. We hope that you feel that you could contribute to this.

Regards

John Giesen

John Giesen

Chair elect



Background information for prospective Board members November 2020

Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA) is both a social landlord and a provider of specialist homelessness services. We work predominantly in East London (Tower Hamlets, Hackney, the City and Southwark). Our central office is in Bethnal Green.

The past and the future

160 years ago the vision and work of Father Daniel Gilbert and the Sisters of Mercy founded Providence Row Charity to meet the needs of the homeless and dispossessed. He set up the first non-denominational homeless shelter in London.



In 1970 the Charity set up the Association to take the original work & vision forward through developing social housing and support services. The Association continues to work alongside the Charity (also still called Providence Row) and the Sisters to meet the needs of today's diverse communities.

Given our history and the specific nature of the services that we provide, the Board feels a strong sense of social purpose and commitment to our residents and local communities. Our strategic plan 2020- 2025 envisages our continuing to provide both housing and support in our local communities. It recognises the financial challenges of doing so. We are looking at how we might diversify our funding to support this.

What we do now

Today the Association accommodates over 500 people at any one time. Approximately 400 of these residents are housed in our supported accommodation, with just over half of these in 24-hour temporary (short/medium stay) accommodation. The majority are former rough sleepers who require intensive ongoing support in order to maintain their accommodation.

PRHA provides support & social care services to those residents with a range of needs and experiences including those with histories of Rough Sleeping, mental ill health, substance misuse & offending. Many of our residents have a combination of these experiences and as a result have "complex needs".

We also run services that house young homeless people.

PRHA believes in the potential for all people to change their lives given the right help. Our support enables residents to make positive transformations to their lives by helping them to engage with services, develop their self-esteem, find a purpose through volunteering, training or employment & reconnect with positive social networks.

PRHA has a strong commitment to tenant involvement (co-production) at all levels of the organisation from Board level to the day to day management of services. We employ approximately 20 staff with histories of homelessness or support needs as we believe that they are well placed to understand & respond to the needs of others.

We also house circa 100 households in general needs housing. This is a mixture of family and single person flats and referrals come through the Local Authority.



PRHA as an employer

PRHA was awarded the Investors In People Gold award for the 2nd time in 2019. Only 3% of Housing Associations have achieved this standard.

The Association employs over 150 staff and usually has up to 30 volunteers helping with a range of roles. The majority of our staff are front line workers in the 24 hour services. PRHA employs the highly skilled and committed staff who provide these support services.

PRHA operates in one of the most diverse areas of the country and aims to ensure that all of our services, residents, staff & Board reflect, & take account of, these diverse backgrounds & beliefs. Over 60% of our staff and residents are from BAME backgrounds



PRHA as a social enterprise and part of our local community

PRHA has also developed a range of social enterprise activities over the years, which aim to provide volunteering, employment and training opportunities for our residents and for people in our local communities who are distant from the labour market.

Our Grounded Ecotherapy group has a high public profile due to their work maintaining and developing the roof garden on the South Bank (Queen Elizabeth Hall) in partnership with the Eden Project. The group comprises & is run by people who have been homeless and those recovering from addiction and mental ill-health. We also run in-house cleaning and grounds maintenance services staffed predominantly by local people.

As part of our commitment to local communities and partnership working we have developed nursery premises run by a local voluntary organisation and have over the years supported them to expand their work by providing additional premises for free 2 year old places.

We intend to continue to look for opportunities to work in partnership with community organisations to develop more opportunities for local people, greater social cohesion and community resilience. We are also looking at different funding streams to enable us to expand this work.

Accommodation & development

Over the past 15 years we have refurbished and remodelled a number of our properties and developed c.130 new units. We do not currently have any firm plans to develop new properties because the Government grant rates are such that this requires significant cross-subsidy and therefore a high level of risk. However the Board continues to look for ways to develop in the future. We continue to be active members of the North River Alliance development consortium which has an ongoing capital funding programme from the Greater London Authority.

Our key concern for the past 3 years has been an extensive fire safety programme on our existing buildings (which is nearing completion), responding to new Government guidance and our own fire risk assessments. We are also starting to respond to the Government's new Building Safety requirements.

In 2021 we plan to commission a new stock condition survey that will inform our investment strategy in relation to Zero Carbon targets and fire/building safety as well as keeping our homes up to date. This will also allow us to review our reserves position and allocate funds between current stock improvements and new building development.

We have ongoing contracts with a number of contractors for responsive repairs, servicing and compliance. Our property services team also includes 2 directly employed maintenance operatives.

Regulation, Governance & Management

The Association is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing as a Registered Provider and is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

PRHA is governed by a Board of Management delegating day to day operations to the staff team via the Chief Executive and senior management team. There are also a number of Board scrutiny groups that are responsible for reviewing in more detail the areas of Finance & Audit, Risk, Human Resources & Operations. Each has a designated lead member.

Current Board

Chair elect: John Giesen: John is the current Chair of TPAS (the tenant participation advisory service) and former CEO of B3 Living.

Vice Chair- Jeff Baker : Until recently the Chair of PRHA, Jeff is retired from a long career in social housing at a senior executive level including with Guinness Trust and Sanctuary Housing.

Lead member Finance: Andrew Disley: Andrew is a qualified accountant and tax manager for Save the Children UK.

Board members:

Mo Ali: Freelance consultant working for social landlords on community development

Thomas Albohm: PRHA tenant and freelance graphic designer. Lead member Operations scrutiny group.

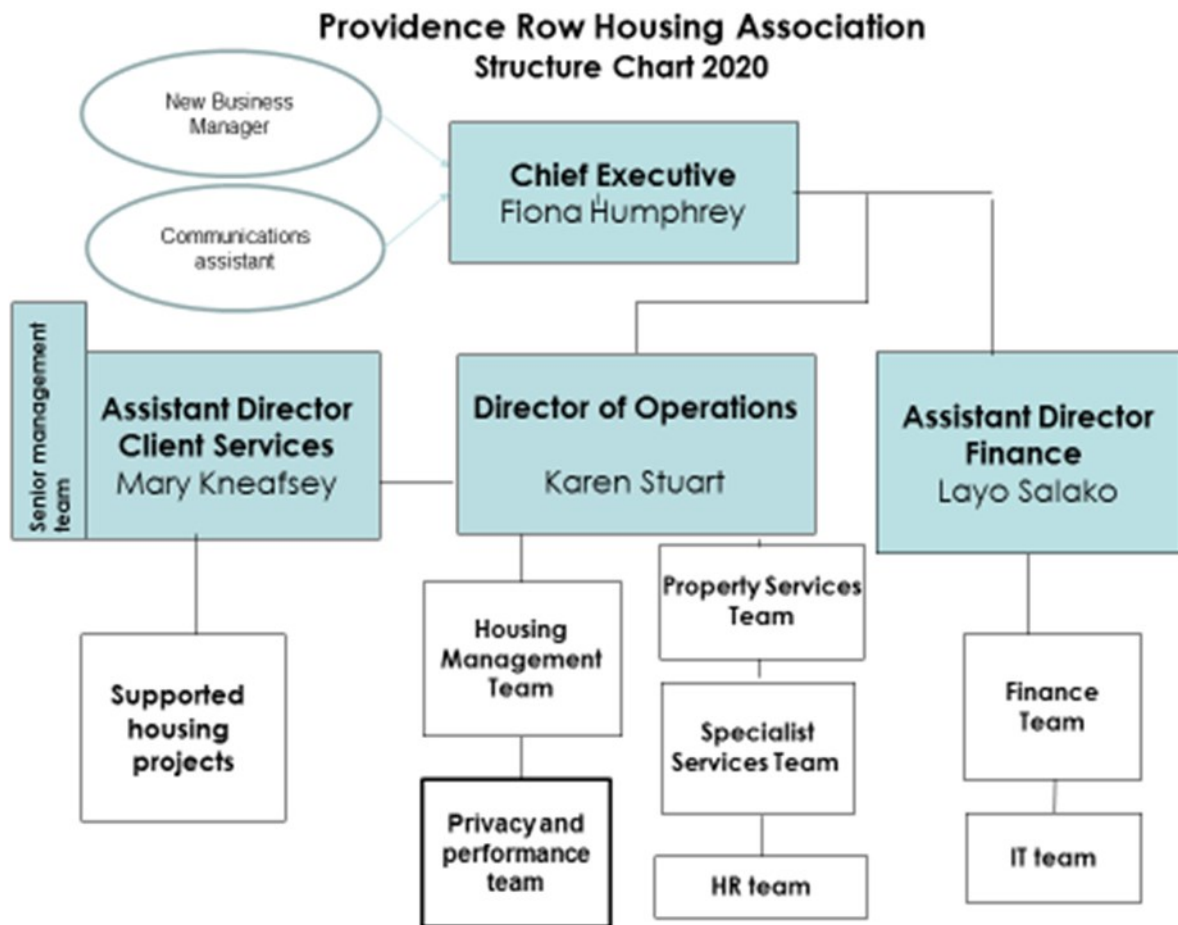
Helen New: Freelance communications consultant currently working for several social landlords.

Serena Braggiotti: Former senior analyst for financial services companies.

Sue Stevens: Senior HR consultant to banks, NGOs and businesses. Lead member HR scrutiny group.



The organisation has a stable Senior Management Team headed by our CEO, Fiona Humphrey. She has been with the Association for 17 years. She has over 40 years' experience working in Housing Associations and homelessness charities. See structure chart below.



Financial situation

In 2020 PRHA has projected turnover of over £9M. We have introduced a revised budget to account for the challenges presented by Covid such as extra PPE costs and staff costs due to increased sickness/self-isolation. We are currently on target to achieve a surplus this year and meet all of our loan covenants. We have good cash reserves and limited exposure to some of the larger risks as we currently have no development pipeline. The Board has also considered projections and worst case scenarios regularly and they are confident of our ongoing viability.

In 2019/2020 PRHA had a turnover of £8m and an operating surplus of £580k with a total surplus of £171k after netting off interest charges.

We have c. £7.7m in loans, the majority of which are on fixed interest rates. These loans were taken out to finance previous development. The Board reviews PRHA's covenant compliance regularly.

Website

PRHA website is www.prha.net (please note that our sister charity is called Providence Row and also has a website!)



Board Member Role Profile

Purpose of role:

To further the aims of PRHA, making sure it operates within the law, and its' permitted objects as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

With other Board members to ensure strategic direction, management control, accountability & good conduct of the Association.

Core tasks and responsibilities

General

Each Board member must be prepared to:

- Uphold the values and objectives of the organisation.
- Uphold the organisation's core policies, including those for equality and diversity, standing orders & financial regulations;
- Contribute to and share responsibility for the Board's decisions including its duty to exercise reasonable care, skill & independent judgement
- Prepare for and attend meetings, training sessions and other events;
- Attend and participate in reviews linked to individual performance or that of the whole Board;
- Represent the organisation as appropriate;
- Declare any relevant interests;
- Ensure that they understand the constitutional and legislative framework as it applies to the organisation & act within its powers
- Respect confidentiality of information; and
- Uphold the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance (except where PRHA decisions superceded any of its contents)
- Uphold the National Housing Federation's Code of Conduct and the organisation's own Code of Conduct.

Board members must act in the interests of the Association in decision making & to protect its reputation. Each member must be meticulous about declaring conflicts of interest and must ensure that their private or personal interests do not influence their decisions.

Specific

With other Board members :

- To determine the values and objectives of the Association & agree the strategic plan & annual business plans to ensure the Association's objectives are met.
- To enable the achievement of those objectives through appropriate delegated authorities, operational procedures and the employment of staff with appropriate skills.
- To ensure that policies are established for the Association, covering all legal, regulatory and good practice requirements.
- To review the performance of the Association.
- To agree annual budgets, exercise sound financial planning & management and maintain financial viability whilst meeting the Association's objectives.
- To identify and manage financial and other risk and protect the funds invested in the Association.
- To ensure that the interest and needs of the Association's residents are considered in all matters.
- To ensure that the Association's properties are developed to a high standard and are kept in good repair.
- To review regularly the performance of the Board to ensure that, as a group, it has the capacity and commitment to understand and control the Association.

Payment

This position is unpaid and voluntary.

Time commitment

Board members are expected to attend 6 Board meetings a year & a full day Awayday. They are also expected to take part in a scrutiny group in accordance with their skills, interests & experience. Members should also make every effort to attend training & visits to services.

During the pandemic the Board has been meeting virtually. In between scheduled meetings it is receiving briefings on the current situation and the pandemic specific Business Continuity Plan.

Person specification

Core competencies

- Able to work with other Board members to reach decisions effectively & in the best interest of the Association.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to focus on key issues facing the organisation.
- Supports the values, ethos and social housing objectives of PRHA and has an empathy with the needs & aspirations of our residents & the communities that we operate within.

Knowledge and experience

The Board will aim to ensure that there is the right balance of skills, knowledge & experience to effectively manage the Association. It reviews this regularly and will seek members with specific experience accordingly.

- Understanding of the constitutional and legislative framework as it applies to the organisation (willingness to learn if not currently experienced)

Skills and abilities

- Able to evaluate information presented in Board reports & contribute to discussion and decision on these matters.

Personal behaviour and style

- Actively role models the professional conduct expected of Board members.
- Proactively demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and diversity.
- Committed to ensuring high quality services
- Committed to co-regulation: working alongside & responding to tenants & service users in decision making processes
- Has respect for the ecumenical faith-based origins of the organisation
- Open to learning and development, for self, staff, and the Board;
- Has the time and commitment effectively to discharge the responsibilities of a Board member.
- Individuals who are registered as undischarged bankrupts cannot apply for Board membership.

Lead members with Specific experience/responsibilities - RISK

Core tasks and responsibilities

To provide specific expertise to the Board in the discussion of risk management and to lead the annual risk review.

To attend the Finance and Audit scrutiny group meetings with the lead member for Finance (these meetings are currently held immediately prior to the main Board meeting.)

With other Board members:

- To oversee and guide the annual risk review considering a range of reports provided by the Executive including risk review, internal audit, internal controls assurance and Business Continuity Planning.
- To review the Association's risk assessment and management mechanisms and ensure that they provide appropriate assurance to the Board
- To ensure that the risk map and the Business Continuity Plan are reviewed whenever there are emerging risks.
- To review the internal audit programme and review internal audit reports.
- To review the performance of the Association in relation to risk matters.
- To champion a positive risk management culture.
- To ensure that the interest and needs of the Association's residents are considered in all matters.

Knowledge and experience

Relevant professional experience (finance, audit or relevant sector experience)

An understanding of effective risk management in a complex regulated organisation.

An ability to review the environment for new and emerging risks especially in relation to PRHA's roles as a social landlord and social care provider.

Ability to evaluate information on risk exposure and proposed mitigation in a wide range of strategic and operational risk areas

Ability to provide constructive challenge

Lead members with Specific experience/responsibilities-PROPERTY

Core tasks and responsibilities

To provide specific expertise to the Board in the discussion of property related issues, in particular the maintenance of our buildings and building safety.

With other Board members:

- To oversee the progress of the building safety and fire safety action plans.
- To review the Association's compliance reports for key areas of safety management
- To review the performance of the Association in relation to maintenance services and planned /cyclical maintenance programmes
- To contribute to the formation of the Association's Zero carbon strategy
- To be a "critical friend" on all property related matters and champion a positive building safety culture.
- To ensure that the interest and needs of the Association's residents are considered in all matters.

Knowledge and experience

Relevant professional experience (building construction, development or maintenance)

An understanding of the building safety environment

Ability to evaluate information on property related matters and contribute to the development of strategy.

Ability to provide constructive challenge

Lead members with Specific experience/responsibilities- SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Core tasks and responsibilities

To provide specific expertise to the Board in the discussion of social investment opportunities.

With other Board members:

- To agree a strategy for social investment to fund PRHA's activities
- To evaluate suitable projects with the Executive team and Board, identifying suitable potential sources of finance
- To lead on risk appraisal for potential funding applications
- To oversee the action plan & support the Executive team in ensuring that the Association has the organisational structure & systems in place to attract and manage social investment
- To ensure that the interest and needs of the Association's residents are considered in all matters.

Knowledge and experience

Relevant professional experience (e.g. social finance sector or developing/managing a trading business. This may be a social enterprise such as a Community Investment Company or Charitable Incorporated Organisation.)

An understanding of a wide range of social investment opportunities

Ability to evaluate information and contribute to the development of strategy.

Ability to provide constructive challenge



ADVERT

Board Members x 3

The first Providence Row Night Refuge opened on the 7th October 1860. Today, Providence Row Housing Association continues to work in East London in Tower Hamlets, Hackney and the City. With a team of highly trained staff and dedicated volunteers we now provide social housing along with intensive services that support those who are homeless.

PRHA was awarded the Investors In People Gold award for the 2nd time in 2019. Only 3% of Housing Associations have achieved this standard. The Association employs over 150 staff and usually has up to 30 volunteers helping with a range of roles. The majority of our staff are front line workers in the 24 hour services. PRHA employs the highly skilled and committed staff who provide these support services.

We operate in one of the most diverse areas of the country and aim to ensure that all of our services, residents, staff & Board reflect, & take account of, these diverse backgrounds & beliefs. Over 60% of our staff and residents are from BAME backgrounds. We are striving to reflect that diversity within our organisation at all levels.

Despite the uncertainty of the current economic, political and social environment we remain confident that we can remain independent, focusing on the social mission that has sustained us for 160 years. We regularly review our financial projections and key performance data to ensure that we can not only continue our work but improve the offer that we make to homeless people and our local communities. It is this drive that has led us to look for new Board members at this time. While we have skilled committed members and a positive dynamic, we need to ensure there are new ideas and skills to help guide us forward.

We are now looking for up to 3 new members. The key areas of experience we are interested in are:

- lead member for **risk**
- member with experience/knowledge of **building construction/surveying** (to help Board with the building safety/zero carbon agendas)
- member with experience of **social investment/social enterprise** (to help with our funding diversification strategy)

The work we do as Board members is of great importance to Providence Row Housing Association. We are an organisation which has social objectives, but which must be run as efficiently as any successful commercial concern. We reinvest a significant amount of our operating surplus in improving both the buildings that we own and the services that we provide.

Key strategic priorities for the year ahead

- Supporting staff and residents to remain safe during this pandemic through active risk management
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Although as Board members we are unpaid we do feel that we gain a lot in terms of the rewards of being able to make a difference. When we are able to visit the services the value of the work we do is evident. We hope that you feel that you could contribute to this.

For a full Recruitment Pack please contact our recruitment consultants, The Housing Executive on **020 7620 3048** or rec@thehousingexecutive.com

PRHA want to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve at all levels within our organisation, including the board, and actively encourage all applications.

