



Board Member Recruitment

November 2023





Welcome letter from our Chair:

Thank you for your interest in Keniston. We are a smaller housing provider, with a base in SE London but operating across seven local authorities in South and North London, and West Sussex. Although small, we aim to make a big impact on the communities we work in and to 'punch above our weight'. Our ambitions include bringing forward two significant growth projects in our heartland of Bromley.

Good governance is critically important and we aim to plan for succession and renewal of our board membership in a timely way. Two of our longstanding board members are stepping down from the board later this year at the end of their terms, together with a third person in 2024. The successful candidates will have the experience and interpersonal skills along with the passion and commitment to work effectively with the board and executive team to deliver our vision.

At Keniston, we have many strengths. We deliver quality services that are recognised by our residents and our partners. With a headline tenant satisfaction rating of 89% from our last tenant survey we are the envy of many. We are proud that 90% of our residents were satisfied with our response to the Covid pandemic, showing our organisation's resilience and adaptability, and a focus on what matters to our residents. We have an experienced and capable staff team, a healthy financial position and strong asset base. We also have a Board that has the vision and courage to grow and innovate so that we continue to make a real difference to our residents and their local communities.

Our core purpose has always been clear – to meet housing needs by providing well-managed affordable homes and good quality services to our residents. We have grown and progressed, but we have not strayed far from that resolution, and we strongly believe that our purpose is still as relevant. Our continued independence as an organisation is important, but not because we are afraid of change. Locally focused housing providers like Keniston have a crucial contribution to make to the social housing landscape.

The world around us is changing in many ways, and Keniston aims to remain agile in our approach to change. We are developing our approach to achieving net zero carbon and are currently updating our overarching Strategic Plan. Work continues to refresh our approach to the key topic of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and as part of this we particularly welcome applications from all diverse backgrounds.

Our existing Board members are committed individuals with a wealth of skills and experience. They are motivated to make that important difference and are attuned to our core values of respect, openness, accountability, honesty and excellence. We work in a fast changing and demanding environment. The Board recognises the commitment required from members by paying a modest remuneration.

The information that follows in this pack will provide you with a feel for what Keniston is about. I hope that the contents will help you decide whether this is the right opportunity for you. If it is, Keniston looks forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please contact Tony Clark at our consultants, The Housing Executive, in the first instance. He can also arrange an informal chat with me, or with Jonathan Card, the Chief Executive, if that would be helpful.

I wish you well in the process.

Emma Keegan, Chair

November 2023



RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE & PROCESS:

Closing Date:	Monday 27 th November 2023
Initial Interviews (online):	Monday 4 th and/ or Wednesday 6 th December
Final Interview (in person):	Monday 11 th December

To Apply: Please provide a CV (no more than 3 sides A4) together with a supporting statement (no more than 3 sides) and complete the confidential Monitoring form. You can download a Monitoring form by clicking [HERE](#)

The **supporting statement** should demonstrate why you want to join Keniston, your suitability for this key role and specifically address the key elements of the person specification enclosed in this pack. Please ensure you provide evidence, with examples, of your experience. Send your application (CV/Statement/Monitoring Form) by

9.00 am Monday 27th November 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 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 Keniston.

KENISTON

Better Homes, Better Services and Better Neighbourhoods.



INTRODUCTION

Keniston Housing Association is a registered provider of housing, with homes in Bromley, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, Bexley, Croydon and Crawley. Our office and largest estate of 369 homes is situated in Farnborough, Kent and we are also easily reached from London, Surrey and Sussex. We have a mix of general needs, sheltered housing for older people and leasehold properties. The large majority of our homes are let at social rent levels.

Keniston's mission is to provide better homes, better services and better neighbourhoods and our high satisfaction levels have been reached through the hard work of our staff in delivering the vision of a strong and focused Board. The organisation is in excellent shape and this recruitment provides a fantastic opportunity to join a successful, independent and financially sound association in a governance role.

Keniston is proud of our achievements in the 50+ years since we started. We are ambitious about the future with opportunities for development in the pipeline, and will continue to invest in our current stock of more than 800 properties.

OUR VALUES

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| Respect: | We will be courteous and considerate, treat everyone as individuals and value diversity. |
| Openness: | We will listen, be accessible and communicate clearly. |
| Accountability: | We will take responsibility for our actions and decisions. |
| Honesty: | We will say what we mean, accept our mistakes and learn from them. |
| Excellence: | We take pride in what we do and go beyond what is expected. |



OPERATIONS

Keniston has an annual turnover of some £6M, more than 800 properties and we employ 37 staff. The staff team are led by Jonathan Card, Chief Executive; Sue McDonnell, Operations Director; Tony Coward, Property Services Director; and Andrew Shiatis, Finance & Resources Director.

On 31 March 2023, we owned and managed:

- 629 homes for general needs;
- 219 sheltered housing flats for older people;
- 33 leasehold properties.

We are trying to move forward on our plans to build 26 new homes at Darrick Wood, near Orpington.

Last year, we carried out 2,467 repairs to homes and communal areas. Resident satisfaction with our repairs service stood at 93%.

We maintained our income management, with a 100% collection rate. Our rent arrears were 2.3% of the total collectable, an impressive achievement in the current climate. As a smaller housing association, we benefit from knowing our residents well. Our Rent Income Officers contact people early to help them to maximize their income and reduce their debts.

Residents can view their rent accounts and view their repairs history online.



Residents:

Our last independent Resident Survey Report by Acuity shows that our results – although as with other providers our ratings have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic – have overall held up well. We are pleased that residents of our most recently acquired properties on the Bickley estate recognise the impact we have made since becoming their landlord, with over 90% saying we are easy to deal with and two thirds stating that their estate has improved on our watch, with few dissenting.

We actively encourage residents to get involved in our work and to take an active part in community life at our schemes and estates. Our Resident Panel is an important voice and currently has 26 members, from across a number of our housing schemes.

Sustainability and climate change:

A major priority for Keniston over the coming years as for others is the huge challenge of the journey towards becoming net zero carbon. We know that many of our homes are not as well insulated as they will need to be, and this will require careful planning and significant investment. Most of our homes currently rely on gas central heating and in time this will need to change. Managing the transition to a low carbon future within our available resources while maintaining affordable warmth for our residents will not be easy, but we are committed to the challenge.

Value for Money:

We annually compare our Value for Money performance with others across a range of cost and performance measures, including those identified by the Regulator for Social Housing, setting forward targets as appropriate. In summary, in 2022-23 Keniston compared to our peers had:

- Above average satisfaction;
- Below average overall per unit operating costs compared to other London based providers;
- Above average performance on income collection and lettings, together with below average costs for housing management;

- Repair costs above the average, while completing repairs faster than the average;
- Below average complaints.

Further details are set out in our Financial Statements.



GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

Keniston is accountable to the Regulator for Social Housing. In legal terms we are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Co-operative and Community Benefit Society. We are also a member of the National Housing Federation representing the social housing sector, and as such subscribe to their latest Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.

The Board is responsible for the work of the Association. Members bring a wide range of skills and experience. The Board develops overall strategy and policy and monitors the Association's performance to see that its goals are being achieved. There are currently nine Board members, with a range of backgrounds and length of service. The Board meets five times a year (some online, some in person) and comprises not less than 7 and not more than 12 members. There are also one or more Awaydays every year, which give the opportunity to take a broader strategic overview of the Association's activities and future objectives. Keniston carries out regular Board appraisal and skills audit exercises.

Keniston has an annual turnover of £6.06M. Our finances are strong and last year the association had a surplus of £319K. We have £46M assets and reserves of £20M. We are well regarded externally and currently have a revolving £6M loan facility from Clydesdale Bank.

The Board looks to use the financial strength of the Association to continue to improve existing properties as well as looking at opportunities for development.

The Board's goals within its current strategic plan are to:

- Keep our homes safe, well maintained, and neighbourhoods healthy, now and into the future;

- Deliver good quality, cost-effective services and always put residents at the heart of what we do;
- Invest in our existing stock and provide more homes in the areas where we work;
- Achieve excellent standards of governance, and value, support and develop staff.

Further information, including annual reports, financial reports and statements regarding value for money is available at: <https://www.kenistonha.co.uk/about-us/publications/>



KENISTON BOARD

Emma Keegan – Housing Professional (Chair and member of the Development & Growth Committee)



Emma has more than 25 years' experience working in the housing sector, currently as Chief Executive of Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association. She is an experienced board member who joined Keniston as Chair in 2019. She holds Post Graduate Diplomas in housing, management studies, and systems thinking and practice. Emma is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Shehla Husain – Deputy Director, Home Office (Co-Vice Chair)



Shehla works for the Home Office on public protection. Prior to this Shehla worked for the Department for Communities and Local Government for 10 years. During her time there Shehla took the Housing and Regeneration Bill through Parliament to Royal Assent in 2008; set up the Homes and Communities Agency; and delivered the Supporting People Programme. Previously, Shehla worked for two other Government Departments; the Housing Corporation; and charities. Shehla became Co-Vice Chair at Keniston in 2015 and is stepping down in December 2023.

Peter Voisey – Solicitor (Co-Vice Chair)



Peter is a qualified solicitor of over 28 years' standing and has been practising as a partner in a large City law firm for many years, specialising in capital markets and finance. His practice includes advising on bond issues and related finance transactions for housing associations. Peter became Co-Vice Chair at Keniston in 2015 and is stepping down in December 2023.

Sally Rice – Independent Housing Consultant (Chair of Development and Growth Committee)



Sally currently works as an independent housing consultant. She previously worked for Moat, a leading South East Housing Association, in various senior positions and for the last 9 years as Director of Development. During this time she was responsible for the delivery of substantial new affordable housing programmes and estate regeneration projects. She has also worked for a major national developer in land acquisition and in Local Government. She is a qualified planner and is also a member of the CIH.

Simone Bailey – Director of Train Service Provider



Simone is a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and has worked at Abellio Greater Anglia Ltd (a train operating company) as Asset Management Director since 2012. As Asset Management Director she has full responsibility for improving customer satisfaction and driving value from 132 stations across East Anglia. Prior to that she worked at Network Rail Property as Retail Director and then Commercial Director.

Lucy Worrall – Head of Corporate Strategy and Change, Sovereign HA



Lucy recently joined Sovereign housing association as their Head of Corporate Strategy and Change. Prior to this she worked at Peabody housing association for five years, most recently as their Head of Strategy, Research and Insight. Lucy has also worked as a Consultant at Altair where she supported on a number of service, strategy and governance reviews.

Stephen Hoad – Chartered Surveyor, Private Practice



Stephen is a Fellow of both the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Chartered Institute of Building, and works in private practice. With over 20 years experience within the property industry, Stephen has successfully delivered projects from inception through to completion. Stephen has extensive experience working with Housing Associations, Local Authorities and Charity Organisations with particular focus on asset management and strategy, building safety, planned maintenance and development. Stephen has a passion for delivering excellent customer engagement, value for money and statutory compliance.

Liz Emmanuel – Chartered Management Consultant



Liz is a Keniston resident and Chartered Management Consultant who has been working with small businesses for over 15 years to optimise and transform their businesses digitally. A UK registered nurse, working in the NHS for the past 20 years and now supporting the NHS Integrated Care board ICB to assess the continued health care provision across England. Liz joined the Keniston Board in 2023.

Ian Pinches FCCA FRSA – semi-retired portfolio Non-Executive Director (Chair of Audit & Risk Committee)



Ian has worked in the wider public sector in a Non-Executive capacity for almost 20 years (Housing, NHS – both Provider & Commissioner and the Emergency Services) and brings a depth of relevant experience to his role at Keniston. Prior to taking semi-retirement Ian worked in Housing and served as Deputy Chief Executive & Finance Director at a London based provider of Housing, Care & Support services and subsequently started and ran a multi-award winning small business in the Hospitality sector for a decade.

ROLE PROFILE

Board Member

Working alongside the Chair and Chief Executive, the board leads the organisation through changes in both the sector and the wider environment.

A Board Member's role is to provide strategic direction and maintain excellence in the organisation's governance, accountability, financial stewardship and working relationship with the executive. To achieve this, the Board focuses on strategic issues, is effective in both debate and decision-making processes, holds the executive to account and protects the integrity and probity of the organisation. The Board (along with the Chair and Chief Executive) is a driving force in shaping the organisation's culture, mission, aims, values and policies and presenting these to stakeholders and to the media.

Skill and Competency profile

Competence	Description
Strategic Thinking	The ability to scan the environment and communicate messages and priorities that are consistent with the mission and strategy of the organisation
Communication and people skills	<p>Puts views across confidently and clearly and listens and respects the views of others.</p> <p>Communicates the success of the organisation to Keniston staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>Has the personal credibility and people skills to represent Keniston and engage effectively with stakeholders.</p> <p>Demonstrates practical application of equalities and diversity issues.</p>
Working with others	<p>The ability to collaborate with the Chief Executive, the Chair and other members of the Board to drive the business forward in a positive way.</p> <p>Develops trusting and effective working relationships with the Chair, the executive team and members of the board.</p>
Corporate Citizenship	<p>Demonstrates the highest standards of ethics, integrity and probity.</p> <p>Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>
Seeking, analysing and using information	Critically appraises data and information presented, identifying gaps, and keeping a strategic view.

Person Specification

The Board Member will have an enthusiasm for the mission and Values of Keniston, working with the Chair, the Chief Executive and other board members to promote these both internally and externally within the sector.

They will have an understanding of the needs of Keniston's residents and the communities in which we work – this may be from their own experience – and a commitment to supporting the association to make a positive impact on our residents' lives.

The Board Member will support an effective working relationship between the executive and Board members, recognising the boundaries and being adept at giving direction and receiving guidance.

As a Board Member they will use excellent listening, communication, negotiating and influencing skills to promote effective debate and decision making by the Board. They will respect the diverse views of Board members and the executive and support their consideration within the Board's decision-making process.

Key qualities

- An inclusive approach and awareness of equality and diversity issues, with a strong commitment to equality
- Values driven, leads by example the conduct expected of the Board
- A commitment to Keniston's mission and Values
- A commitment to a strong teamwork ethos
- An understanding of the realities of working in a regulated sector
- Ability to perform an ambassadorial role raising the organisation's profile externally
- Ability to think strategically, focusing on the bigger picture. Strategic experience is welcome, but not essential.
- Ability to analyse complex information, demonstrate clear analytical intellect and guide rational decision making
- An ability and a willingness to – where appropriate – constructively and supportively challenge assumptions, conclusions and recommendations.
- Excellent communication skills and IT literacy, including the ability to work with online board papers, etc.
- Relevant experience from inside or outside social housing, including "lived experience".
- Ideally, experience in any of:
 - **Development/ Asset Management**
 - **Customer Service**
 - **Resident Engagement**
 - **Finance (especially audit, accounting and pensions).**



CONDITIONS OF SERVICE (Subject to contract)

Post:	Board Member
Term:	3 years (+3-year extension by agreement – to a max. 6 years)
Location:	Farnborough, Kent (note that some meetings are held remotely)
Commitment:	An indicative expectation of approx. 8 days p.a.
Remuneration:	£1,800 p.a.

The Board will normally meet in a formal capacity five times per year and, in any event, shall meet no less than three times a year. A quorum consists of four members of the Board. Members are expected to attend all meetings unless exceptional reasons prevent doing so.

In addition, the Board also meets at least annually as part of a Board ‘awayday’, normally a residential event focusing on strategy.

Members are expected to join at least one Committee whose work complements that of the board. We currently have an Audit & Risk Committee (meeting 3 times annually) and a Development & Growth Committee (up to 4 meetings per annum). Members may also be asked to participate in working groups for specific issues and may if required be asked to form a panel to hear resident complaints at the final stage of our complaints procedure.

Members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with Keniston’s estates and homes, as part of listening to the ‘resident voice’ in line with our Code of Governance and are invited to attend periodic Estate Walkabout scheme visits.

BOARD MEETING DATES - 2024

The following dates are proposed for Board and Committee meetings. Complaint Panel meetings will be convened as and when required.

Unless notified otherwise, meetings will start at 6:00 p.m. and will be held remotely other than those noted below where the meeting will be held in the **Conference Room at Keniston's Head Office, 13 Artington Close, Orpington, BR6 7UL.**

Thursday 25 January 2024	Board Meeting including quarterly reports
Jan/Feb	Strategy Away Day – to be confirmed
Thursday 22 February	Audit and Risk Committee, including 2024/25 internal audit plan (Internal Auditors attending)
Thursday 7 March	Development & Growth Committee
Thursday 21 March	Board Meeting, including 2024/25 budget for approval
Thursday 23 May	Board Meeting (at Keniston Offices), including quarterly Reports
Thursday 13 June	Development & Growth Committee
Thursday 4 July	Audit and Risk Committee, including draft financial statements (External Auditors attending)
Thursday 18 July	Board Meeting (at Keniston's Offices), including quarterly reports and financial statements for approval
Thursday 26 September	Development & Growth Committee
Thursday 17 October	Board Meeting, including quarterly reports
Thursday 7 November	Audit and Risk Committee, including risk framework review
Friday 15 & Sat 16 November	Board Awayday - to be confirmed
Thursday 5 December	Development & Growth Committee