



## **COMMITTEE INDUCTION POLICY**

**Date Approved: September 2021**

**Next Review Date: September 2024**

## **Committee Induction Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

It can be daunting for new Committee members when they join the Management Committee. In order for those members to fully contribute to the work of the Management Committee and not be overwhelmed by the amount there is to learn about the association, it is important that new members are welcomed, supported, provided with relevant information and have comprehensive induction training.

### **2. Background**

**2.1** New Committee members join the Committee following election, appointment or co-option. Prior to joining they are likely to have some understanding of the association and its activities, of its Management Committee and/or aspects of its governance. However, new members are likely to be unfamiliar with the detail, complexity and expectations of being a Management Committee member. They may well be uncertain and apprehensive and have questions about the association, their role and responsibilities. The Association is committed to supporting its new members in order that they can contribute effectively, meet the expectations of being a Committee member and bring value to the work of the association.

**2.2** New Committee members need time to settle in to the Committee, get familiar with procedures and better understand the governance and activities of the association. It is important that new members are supported through this process and the association recognises everyone learns in different ways and at different speeds, depending on their previous experience and strengths. The association will ensure that induction is phased over a period of up to a year after becoming a Committee member; the induction will then be complete. Reviews will take place over the induction period to ensure that Committee members feel supported, that training needs have been identified, that they have benefited from training opportunities and are able to contribute at the level required.

### **3. Induction process**

#### **3.1 The induction process will help ensure new Committee members:**

- Become familiar with their new role and responsibilities
- Learn how the association operates and the different roles and responsibilities of staff and committee
- Get to know their colleagues on the committee as well as the senior staff
- Develop an understanding of the operating environment
- Understand the main challenges facing the association and its strategic objectives

- Become familiar with the key organisations that are there to support Associations.

The induction process for new Committee members will involve:

### **3.2 Initial meeting with Chairperson and Director**

Following their election / appointment / co-option, new members will be invited to a meeting with the Chairperson, Director and/or supporting member of staff. This meeting will take place before the new member attends their first Committee meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to welcome the new Committee member. The Induction process will be discussed and the first part of the Induction Pack (see Appendix 1 for contents) will be provided and briefly explained, including talking about the association and its activities; the Management Committee and its role; the role and responsibility of Committee members; the role of staff, particularly senior staff. It will also introduce the new member to the standards expected of the association and its Committee members. The Code of Conduct will be explained and the new member will be required to sign it. Any interests that could overlap or conflict with those of the Housing Association will be identified and recorded in the formal Register. The new Committee member will be introduced to the concept of mentoring and offered the support of an experienced member as mentor.

### **3.3 Papers for the first Management Committee meeting**

The new Committee member will be offered the opportunity to talk through the papers for their first Committee meeting with the Director and/or supporting member of staff in order that they understand what's in them and identify any initial questions.

### **3.4 Attending the first Management Committee meeting**

When attending their first Committee meeting the new member will be formally welcomed by the Chairperson and will be introduced to other members of the Committee and staff in attendance. During the meeting the Chairperson and Director will ensure that background is proved and terminology explained and new Committee members will be given the opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting the Chairperson will ask the new member for any feedback on the meeting and on the papers and answer any questions they may have.

### **3.5 Support and Mentoring**

New Committee members will be offered the support of an experienced Committee member to act as a mentor who will help the new member settle in and support them through their first year. The Committee member acting as mentor, who will have been provided with clear guidelines to help them in that role, will meet regularly with the new Committee member to provide support, advice, guidance and information on aspects of the association's work. (See Appendix 2)

### **3.6 Review meeting – 1**

After their first Management Committee meeting, the new Committee member will meet with the Chairperson, the Director and the supporting member (if appropriate). The focus of that meeting is to ensure the new Committee member understands the information contained in the first part of the Induction Pack and to deal with any questions they may have on the Pack or the first Committee meeting. The new Committee member will be provided with the second part of the Induction Pack which will be explained and discussed (see Appendix 1 for contents).

### **3.7 Skills audit and Individual Learning Statement**

After attending their second Management Committee meeting, the new Committee member will be given a learning & development self-assessment form as used at appraisals to complete, this will be based on the skills etc. required by the association as described in the recruitment pack. This will form the basis of discussion at a meeting with the Director and / or Chairperson / Corporate Governance Officer. The meeting will discuss the Committee member's experience, skills and other qualities they bring to the association and identify any training and/or development they may require. This will be used to inform the preparation of an Individual Learning Statement for the new Committee member, setting out the training and development priorities for the following year. This will take the same form as the Individual Learning Statements prepared for every Committee member as part of the Committee member's Development Plan, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### **3.8 Introductory training & development**

Within six months of joining the Committee, the new member will be expected to undertake training on the Roles & Responsibilities of being a Committee member and introductory sessions on housing associations, finance, housing management & maintenance. These may be run in-house, by an external organisation or through e-learning.

### **3.9 Committee member Development Plan**

The new member will be expected to take part in any training identified in the Development Plan. This will be for the whole Committee and is designed to develop knowledge and understanding and the effectiveness of the Committee. The new member will be invited to participate in any Committee review and planning events which take place during the year.

### **3.10 Review meeting – 2**

After six months there will be a second review meeting with the new Committee member, the Chairperson, the Director and the supporting member (if appropriate). The focus of this meeting is to provide support, deal with any concerns, answer any questions arising from the second part of the Induction Pack, to make sure the new member understands their role as a Committee member and to discuss any training the new member has been on.

At this point the third part of the Induction Pack will be provided and explained (see Appendix 1 for contents).

### **3.11 Meetings with staff**

In order to help the new Committee member understand the work and structure of the association, meetings with senior staff will be organised at the association's office. As well as providing the new member with information and the opportunity to ask questions, they will be given a tour of the office and introduced to staff in the various sections / departments.

### **3.12 Visits to the housing stock**

Ideally within the first month and certainly before the end of three months, new Committee members will be provided with the opportunity to visit the association's housing stock (this may be with other Committee members). This will help the new Committee member gain a better understanding of the stock, some of the issues faced by the association and of their responsibility in ensuring tenants and other service users receive quality services. Where possible the new members will be introduced to tenants and other service users to hear first-hand their experience of the area, their homes and of the association.

### **3.13 Review meeting – 3**

At the end of the first year, a third review meeting will take place with the Chairperson, Director, the supporting member (if appropriate) and the new Committee member. This will:

- Review the Induction process and the information provided
- Review the contribution of the new Committee member over the year at Committee and any other meetings
- Discuss the relationships between the new member, other Committee members and senior staff
- Review any training / development carried out over the year
- Review the Individual Learning Statement and roll it forward for the following year
- Review the support and mentoring arrangements
- Identify any further learning, development and training needs
- Answer any further questions.

This is likely to form part of the committee member's first annual individual appraisal and, at this point, the induction programme can be drawn to a close.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Induction Pack**

#### **Part 1**

- Committee member Role and Responsibilities
- Committee member Code of Conduct
- Remit of Management Committee and Sub-Committees
- Standing Orders
- Meeting Calendar
- Business Plan
- Annual Report
- Performance Information (Annual Report to Tenants; SHR Landlord Report)
- Staff Organisation Chart
- Policy on Committee member Induction
- Two most recent newsletters
- Minutes of previous two Committee meetings
- Jargon Busters (EVH)

#### **Part 2**

- Protocol for declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest
- Policy on Committee Member Expenses (and Forms)
- Policy on Committee Member Development and Support
- Policy on Entitlements Payments and Benefits
- The Association's Rules
- Policy on Association Membership
- Policy on Equalities and Diversity

#### **Part 3**

- Committee Handbook
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Privacy Policy
- Detection of Fraud and anti-bribery and corruption Policy
- Policy on Whistle Blowing

- Donations Policy
- Disaster Recovery Policy
- Policy on Risk Management
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## Appendix 2

### **Mentoring guidelines**

#### **Introduction**

The Management Committee has the responsibility of directing and controlling the affairs of the association. It is therefore crucial that the Committee has members with the right skills, knowledge, objectivity and experience. The association strives to have a balance of experience and continuity as well as the new ideas and fresh perspectives and aims for a reasonable turnover of Committee members over time.

The association recognises that it can be daunting for new Committee members when they join the Management Committee. While all new Committee members come with skills, knowledge and experience, that expertise may not be in the area of association governance or in the activities of housing associations. New members need time to learn the ropes, become familiar with the culture of the association and the Committee and gain awareness of the issues.

The association is therefore committed to supporting those new members in order that they can contribute effectively, meet the expectations of being a Committee member and bring value to the work of the association.

Upon their election / appointment / co-option, new Committee members will meet with the Chairperson and Director to be welcomed and introduced to the activities of the association. As part of their induction, new Committee member will be offered the support of an experienced member as mentor.

These guidelines provide information on the role of the mentor, what it involves, the form it can take, the responsibilities of both.

#### **The role of the mentor**

The experienced Committee member, acting as mentor, will support the new member through their first year, meeting regularly with them and providing advice, guidance and information on the activities and governance of the association.

#### **What is mentoring?**

In the context of a Committee, mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced Committee member – a mentor – who provides knowledge, advice and

support to a new Committee member – a mentee – who is seeking information and knowledge about the working of the association and the Committee.

It is based on trust and respect and enables ideas, problems, difficulties and concerns to be discussed and provides opportunity for constructive reflection in an open, honest and supportive way. Mentoring can take place face-to-face, via telephone and on-line over the maximum of a year.

### **Effective mentoring**

To be effective mentors need to be able to:

- Listen to what is said
- Question and challenge
- Summarise issues and reflect back
- Give constructive feedback
- Point out connections and contradictions
- Encourage problem-solving
- Recognise and acknowledge emotions and be understanding
- Be trusted and trusting
- Be open and honest
- Be a tough friend.

Being a mentor is an opportunity to develop and refine these skills and abilities.

### **Being a mentee**

In order to get the most out of being mentored, the Committee member who is the mentee should be:

- Motivated to learn
- Willing to seize opportunities
- Willing to listen
- Open to change
- Honest
- Willing to ask for help
- Able to undertake self-analysis
- Realistic/have a sense of proportion
- Committed to the work of the association.



## **Mentoring arrangements**

If the new Committee member takes up the offer of having an experienced Committee member act as mentor to them, the Chair will identify the appropriate Committee member and ascertain their willingness to take on the role and ask them to contact the new Committee member to arrange the first meeting.

The meeting will be arranged to take place at a mutually agreed time and place and the new Committee member will be encouraged to think about any issues that they want to discuss. At the first meeting the supporting Committee member will explain what mentoring is and what their role of mentor entails. An agenda and frequency and form of contact will be agreed. The supporting Committee member should stress that the discussions between the two are confidential although the mentor will report back to the Chair and Director in general terms about progress.

The Chair, Director and supporting staff member will have a number of review meetings with the new Committee member over the induction period and the supporting member may be asked to attend those meetings. At the last review meeting at the end of the induction period, the support and mentoring arrangements will be reviewed and mentoring arrangement will end.