



A Social Business Investing in People and Communities

Board Chair Recruitment Pack



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Welcome from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in the Board Chair position at Black Country Housing Group.

We are proud to be a community-focussed social business operating across the Black Country and Birmingham. Over the last 50 years of our history, we have built an excellent reputation and we are trusted by our customers and partners. Our culture and values put people at the heart of who we are, and we are looking for a Board Chair who shares our outlook and the way we do things. At BCHG we are proud of the way we work together as one team through our inclusive and supportive culture.

We have a new Strategic Plan that sets out how we will deliver our services over what could be a challenging 3 years ahead for customers, communities and colleagues, setting high ambitions for our future while ensuring we continue to have a strong and sustainable business in an ever-changing operating environment.

We are using our financial capacity to invest in existing homes, services, colleagues, IT infrastructure and new homes. Our regulatory grading of G1/V1 reflects this investment and the effectiveness of our governance.

BCHG is looking for someone to join us who shares our commitment to providing high quality affordable homes and services combined with a strong role in placemaking, and who shares our passion and our drive to help people create a better future for themselves and their communities.

The Chair of the Board is a particularly important role and we are keen to attract applications from individuals with a strong background in leadership from within the social housing sector. You will bring Board experience and a track record in housing management, asset management or development. Recent and relevant financial experience at a strategic level and corporate governance best practice is expected.

As Chair and a Board Member, this senior and prestigious position will demand a high level of commitment, skill and independence of mind. I believe this role will offer the successful applicant the opportunity to contribute to a caring, growing and forward-thinking organisation.

Dr Abigail Robson

Chair of Black Country Housing Group Board



About Black Country Housing Group

Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) is a registered housing provider firmly rooted in and working closely with local communities in the Black Country and Birmingham. BCHG owns and manages around 2,200 homes across a range of tenures as well as providing support to residents in our local communities including:

- Affordable houses and apartments;
- Shared ownership and leasehold homes;
- Retirement Living;
- Supported Living;
- Homes and support for former rough sleepers and care leavers;
- Employability, financial and digital inclusion projects.



2, 200 homes

You will find full details about us, our history and past achievements as well as our future business plans through our website: <https://www.bchg.co.uk>

We currently operate a high-quality residential care home although we have been working with preferred providers in exiting this market and will transfer our last remaining home within the next few months.



BCHG employs around 250 colleagues. Through the services we provide we want to make a difference to the lives of people in our local areas, particularly in the challenging times we currently face, and we see our talented and engaged colleagues as core to achieving this. Our values are important to us, and we have recently refreshed them with the help of our colleagues; these reflect the **BCHG One Team** approach to all we do.

BCHG's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan sets high aspirations to provide our customers with the best possible service and provide homes of the highest quality, all within the context of trusted relationships. We are a well-run and financially sound business rated G1/V1 by our regulator and create a healthy surplus that supports our new development ambitions as well as providing us with the ability to have an investment programme for our existing housing stock. Working towards Net Zero is important to us and we are exploring opportunities to further decarbonise our properties.

Mission

Our mission is: **"A social business investing in people and communities"**.

We Make a Difference to People's Lives by

- Being a learning organisation
- Setting high aspirations and holding each other to account for what we do
- Being inclusive and supportive
- Doing our best for customers and colleagues through the positive relationships we build

Values



We not me



We do what we say we will



We care



We do the right thing



We love to learn

About the Role of the Board Chair

Dr Abigail Robson, who is BCHG's current Board Chair will step down in September 2024, having been Chair for the last 7 years.

BCHG is seeking a high calibre individual with strong leadership qualities and the experience to lead and grow an £18.3m turnover business. The Board comprises 8 Non-Executive Members and the Chief Executive.



Our Board

Role of the BCHG Board

In addition to matters set out in law and in the organisation's constitution, the essential functions of the Board include as a minimum:

- setting out and ensuring compliance with BCHG's values, vision, mission and strategic objectives, ensuring our long-term success;
- setting a positive culture, with strong customer focus;
- ensuring that BCHG operates effectively, efficiently and economically;
- providing oversight, direction and constructive challenge to BCHG's Chief Executive and Executive Directors;
- the appointment and, if necessary, the dismissal of the Chief Executive;
- satisfying itself as to the integrity of financial information, approving each year's budget, business plan and annual accounts prior to publication;
- establishing, overseeing and reviewing a framework of delegation and systems of internal control; and
- establishing and overseeing a risk management framework to safeguard BCHG's assets and reputation.

BCHG Board's Current Membership



Dr Abigail Robson
Chair

Abigail is an experienced governance expert, and was previously a senior manager in local government in housing policy, practice and development. Her professional background is as a quantity surveyor.



Lorna Wallace-Davis
Senior Independent
Director & Chair of
Remuneration,
Nominations & People
Committee

Lorna began her career as a social worker and currently runs her own company providing culture change, facilitation, training and executive coaching in the public, housing and independent sectors.



Nick Simkins
Chair of Group Audit
Committee

Nick is a retired audit partner and qualified accountant with an expertise in corporate governance and risk management. Nick also has commercial and business knowledge experience.



Amanda Tomlinson
CEO and Executive
Director

Amanda has been Chief Executive of Black Country Housing Group since 2013 and has a professional background in Finance. Amanda is Executive Board Member and holds a number of Non-Executive roles in other organisations.



Nigel Wright
Non-Executive
Director

Nigel is a multi-sector independent Non-Executive Director, business owner and social entrepreneur. He brings broad commercial and digital expertise to the Board.



Gareth Price
Non-Executive
Director

Gareth currently works for Trident Group, responsible for leading on property development, asset investment and delivery of the sustainable homes programme.



Susan Brooksbank-Taylor
Non-Executive Director

Sue has 30 years' experience in the social housing, homelessness, wellbeing and recovery sectors, including CEO, Chair and Board Director roles.



Kevin Davis
Non-Executive
Director

Kevin is a social entrepreneur and Group Chief Executive of the Vine Trust. Kevin is an experienced Board Member in the health and education sectors, and social mobility champion.

Role Profile

Job Title:	Chair of the Board
Remuneration:	£13,000 p.a.
Term of Office:	Up to two three-year terms, subject to annual appraisal
Time Commitment:	Approximately 40 days per year

Purpose of the Role

To provide leadership to the BCHG Board in working with all Members to fulfil the Board's responsibility for setting the strategic vision and direction of the Group in accordance with the Strategic Plan objectives and any legal and regulatory requirements.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership:

- Setting and ensuring compliance with the mission, values and strategic aims of the organisation, ensuring its long term success.
- Setting a positive culture with a strong customer focus.
- Ensuring that the organisation operates effectively, efficiently and economically.
- Providing oversight, direction and constructive challenge to the organisation's Chief Executive and Executive Directors.
- Building constructive and effective relationships with fellow Non-Executive Directors.
- The appointment and, if necessary, dismissal of the Chief Executive.
- Establishing and maintaining effective partnerships and stakeholder relationships.
- Represent BCHG as appropriate at meetings and events, including liaison with stakeholders, acting at all times as an ambassador for BCHG.

Working with the Chief Executive:

- To develop a constructive and effective working relationship with, provide support to and act as a critical friend for the Chief Executive.
- To ensure that proper arrangements are in place to hold an annual appraisal with the Chief Executive to discuss their performance and agree an annual personal development plan.



Role Profile Continued

Effective Governance:

- Drive organisational change, ensuring implementation of BCHG's values, objectives and policies.
- Promote continuous improvement, setting challenging targets for improving services.
- Chair meetings effectively, encouraging all Board Members to make appropriate contributions and work as a team, whilst maintaining appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour in line with the Board and Committee Member Code of Conduct. Oversee any actions to address breaches of the Code of Conduct by any Member of the Board.
- Ensure that Board and Committee are provided with relevant, timely and accurate information.
- Ensure that the views of Board Members are sought before decisions are taken.
- Ensure that the Board delegates sufficient authority to the Chief Executive and to enable BCHG's business to be carried out effectively between Board meetings.
- Ensure that the Board receives professional advice when needed.
- Establish a constructive working relationship with, and provide support for, the Chief Executive, including carrying out one-to-one review meetings, briefing meetings and an annual appraisal of performance.
- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place to determine the remuneration of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors.
- In the event of the Chief Executive's departure, ensure that they are replaced in a timely and orderly fashion.
- Be the Member responsible for complaints.
- Be involved in the recruitment and selection of new Board and Committee Members when required, ensuring that the Board comprises suitably skilled, experienced and diverse Members who understand their role and responsibilities. Lead on the appointment of Chairs of Committees.
- Ensure that proper and appropriate arrangements are in place for collective Board appraisal and that of individual Board Members, including the Chair's own appraisal, and ensure that action is taken on the results.
- Be an authorised signatory for contracts and other legal documentation as required.

Adding Value:

- Represent the organisation, as required, acting as an ambassador and upholding BCHG's reputation with all stakeholders, residents, and regulators.
- Network and promote the achievements, purpose and benefits of BCHG.





Person Specification

Knowledge & Experience

You will have experience in one or more of the areas below.

- Extensive experience of operating at a senior level (either Executive or Non-Executive) within the social housing sector.
- Experience of operating as a Chair of a Board or a Non-Executive Director, with an understanding of good governance practice.
- Successful track record of motivating senior teams to deliver a clear strategic vision.
- Strategic experience in finance and risk.
- Understanding of strategic policy, the economic and operating environments within which BCHG operates.

Skills and Abilities

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to lead and inspire the Board, demonstrate authority and credibility, generate a strong team spirit, work collaboratively and build consensus.
- Strong strategic planning skills, able to develop strategic vision and encourage others to contribute.
- Able to assess risk and promote risk awareness, without being risk averse.
- Able to challenge appropriately and hold the Board and Executive to account.
- IT literate and comfortable with communicating by email and willing to support BCHG's aim of reducing the negative impact on the environment by using an electronic document storage system for Board papers and other documents.

Personal Behaviour and Style

- Actively leads by example, demonstrating the professional conduct expected of members of the Board of BCHG.
- Being an ambassador for BCHG.
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Listens to others and provides effective decision making when required.
- Demonstrates credibility and integrity.
- Models BCHG's values through our 'Board behaviours'.
- Shares the ethos and community objectives of BCHG.
- Open to learning and development for the Board and Committee Members and colleagues.
- Has the time and commitment to effectively discharge the responsibilities of the post of Board Chair, putting in the time required to fulfil the role.

Role Overview

Remuneration

- The remuneration for the role is: £13,000 per annum
- All reasonable expenses paid

What Members Can Expect from BCHG

- Tailored on-boarding and other ongoing specialist training, as appropriate, to enhance the skills of all Members.
- Support of the Senior Independent Director and Executive Team.
- Remuneration at levels set out in the Association's policy and reimbursement of incidental expenses, including travel, associated with attending meetings and other events.
- Tablet and access to the Board Software which contains the key documents of our business.
- Access to publications and literature relating to the social housing sector and Board membership.
- Attendance at conferences and other events as required.

Commitment Required

- The Board currently meets six times a year plus any additional special meetings, strategy days, and two away days, a comprehensive on-boarding programme, training events and ambassadorial duties.
- The Board Chair is a member of the Remuneration, Nominations and People Committee. The Board Chair usually attends Group Audit Committee annually ex-officio.
- The Board Chair also has regular meetings with the Chief Executive, Committee Chairs, regulatory meetings, board member appraisal reviews as well as any other meetings that require Chair involvement.
- The maximum term of appointment is six years, with the requirement for re-election after the initial three years. There is a probationary period of one year.
- Board meetings are usually held at BCHG's Head Office, 134 High Street, Blackheath, B65 0EE on a Thursday afternoon; Committee meetings are held virtually usually on a Tuesday morning (times may vary slightly). Some Committee meetings may be held in person.
- Sufficient time should also be set aside to prepare for meetings, undertake learning and development and miscellaneous representative engagements.

On-boarding

- The Board Chair is required to take part in a full programme of on-boarding and successful candidates should expect to commit to a minimum of 10 days for this.

Performance

- All Non-Executive Director appointments including the Chair are subject to a 12-month probation period and satisfactory annual appraisal.

Meeting Dates for 2024

BCHG Board	Group Audit Committee	Remuneration, Nominations & People Committee
Thursdays 2.00pm	Tuesdays 8.30am	Tuesdays 11.00 am
28 March 2024	23 April 2024	23 April 2024
30 May 2024		
25 July 2024	16 July 2024	16 July 2024
26 September 2024 (AGM)	22 October 2024	22 October 2024
28 November 2024		

Additional information

Additional information about BCHG is available on our website – <https://www.bchg.co.uk>.

How to Apply

You are asked to provide the following information in support of your application:

- A detailed CV, (no more than three A4 pages), including qualifications, employment history, relevant experience and details of any other current or recent Board memberships and key achievements, as well as any voluntary activity in the last 5 years.
- A supporting statement (no more than two A4 pages) addressing the person specification and competencies and summarising how you think that your knowledge and experience make you a suitable candidate for the role of Board Chair. Please also explain your motivation in applying and give examples of specific achievements in the last 5 years which demonstrate your competence for this role.
- Full contact details, (name, job title, organisation, phone and email), will be requested for two referees at the time of an offer being made.

Your application will be acknowledged and treated with strictest confidence.

Applications should be made through the link in the advert or through BCHG's Careers Portal by the closing date.

Should candidates wish to discuss the position with the Chair of the BCHG Board, please contact Dr Abigail Robson by email: Abigail.Robson@bchg.co.uk

All applications will be considered and assessed against the requirements of the Role Profile in order to select candidates. If you have been successful at this stage, we will contact you to invite you to interview.

Recruitment timetable

The closing date for applications is **28th March 2024**.

Interviews will be held on **29th April 2024**.

