

Recruiting Board Members

An Approach

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Board Recruitment & Governance

Themes that emerge in Governance Codes, Charters and Studies include:

- Board Appraisal
- Board Review
- Board Skill Matrices
- Board Renewal
- Board Member Recruitment



Governance Review Findings

Evidence that in some housing organisations :

- A rigorous recruitment approach strengthens governance
- Board appraisal, renewal, & succession planning not in place
- Barriers exist to recruiting key skills & addressing diversity
- Anxiety about recruiting has led to a reluctance to let go of long-standing Members (skills, experience and knowledge)
- Almost half of associations had no maximum terms for Board Members
- 12% of all Board Members have served on their Board for 11 years or more



Sector Risks

The Sector Governance study raised issues that emerged in the paper “Sector Risks Facing HAs” including:

Developing with the sector a package to improve governance including, for example:

- **fixed terms for board members,**
- **greater diversity on boards,**
- **particularly in relation to achieving gender equality of board membership**
- **associations being able to pay board members.**

Carl Sergeant, Minister for Housing & Regeneration Dec-13



CHC's Charter & Guidance

An extract:

As a member of CHC, “ABC Homes HA” commits to achieving the highest standards of governance, specifically to:

- f) be clear about the roles and responsibilities of the board, the audit committee, any subcommittees, boards of any subsidiaries of group structures where relevant, and the chief executive and document these
- g) **support board members through provision of a job description, information, training and appraisal**
- h) **have in place mechanisms for regular board review and recruitment**



The Seren Group



Charter & Seren Living



Charter provides:

- Homes across Gwent at affordable rents.
- Extensive Community Regeneration Programmes to:
 - Support the sustainability of tenancies
 - Support wider community benefit

Seren Living provides a range of sales and rental opportunities helping people take their first steps on the property ladder by owning a share of their home; housing options include:

- Intermediate rental
- Shared ownership homes at affordable levels



Reach Supporting People

Reach provide support for people in their own homes to live the life they want to live.

Support is person centred giving people as much control over their lives as Reach can provide.

Support can be 24/7/365 or a few hours a day

Reach has experience in supporting:

- older people,
- people with learning disabilities, autism and what other people call “challenging behaviour”.



Solas

Solas aim is to help people live healthier lives where alcohol and drugs no longer feature. Solas provide:

- Housing and support for homeless young people, adults and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Solas support people who have or may be developing alcohol or drug problems.
- Solas do this by supporting them to:
 - build skills,
 - confidence and
 - self-belief



Seren Corporate Services

- Provide new housing ensuring homes are built on time and to budget
- Help the Group to grow its support services
- Are a host for Care & Repair
- Provide all central services which enable other Group members to make a real difference to people's lives. We are a team with expertise in:
 - Human Resources,
 - ICT
 - Finance,
 - Audit, business risk management, assurance and governance
 - Communications & marketing
 - All the other things that make us tick.



Seren: Some Facts and Figures

✓ created
Solas

1 July 2004

by Charter and

✓ turnover

£44 million

✓ profit

£2.4 million

✓ assets

£346 million

✓ borrowings
Housing

£118 million
Support

✓ Circa 6,000 homes

✓ services in England and Wales

✓ 200+ homes on the way

✓ supporting thousands of people with
their lives

✓ £20m a year invested in new homes

✓ services for older people

✓ £7m a year invested in existing
homes

✓ employment and training

✓ financial inclusion





Seren – Our Purpose

Seren Group provides housing and support
which makes a real difference to people's lives

We provide homes for people.

Well maintained homes in communities where people want to live and rents which are affordable to them.

Our tenants are at the heart of everything that we do.



Our Values

Our Values live in the hearts of our people and shine through in everything that we do – they guide our behaviour.

- ✓ **Fairness**
- ✓ **Ambition**
- ✓ **Integrity**
- ✓ **Respect**
- ✓ **Responsibility**
- ✓ **Openness**



our plan for 2013-15



- ✓ keeps us focused on our priorities
- ✓ lets others know what to expect from us
- ✓ we know how we can make a real difference



The Role of Board Members

Board Members key obligations include:

- Determine strategic direction,
- Responsibility for risk
- Drive the business
- Uphold the principles of good governance
- Act in the best interests of the Group, its tenants, and other customers
- Uphold Our Values and the Code of Conduct

Seren provide written Board Member profiles (JD & PS) as we do for all other colleagues in the Group.



Board Composition

We have 4 Boards – soon to be 5 with Derwen

- Our 4 Boards have a total of 38 Members

Why is it important to get the Board composition right?

- Early slides makes the links to Governance, Sector Risks, and Regulation,

What Is The Right Composition?

- Understand what is needed of the Board
- What the Board has available
- What is missing from the Board



Board Composition

Board Renewal

- Change is part of everyday life.
- Seren has evolved and is now very different from the Seren of 2004
- The skills, experience and knowledge required has changed as we have moved into new areas of business
- Board Member Turnover refreshes the Board and provides benefits e.g.
 - New innovative ideas
 - Challenge to existing practice



Board Composition

How do we know what is missing from the Board?

- Do individuals understand complex information, have they the necessary:
 - Skills,
 - Knowledge,
 - Experience.
- Do they demonstrate:
 - team working skills
 - the ability to challenge, support, trust, and scrutinise
 - **common sense**

How Do We Know?



Board Composition

Role of Appraisal – Fulfil Potential/Gaps

- Members are supported through induction and ongoing development opportunities.
- Board Members have an annual appraisal with the Chair and Group Chief Executive Officer
- Member development remains relevant to the business and the individual
- Proactive succession planning for both parties:
 - Aspire to wider experience through another Board
 - Heads up of other commitments



Attracting Potential Candidates

Our Aims

To be an inclusive organisation:

- A. Recruit the right person based on skills and aptitude
- B. Create a diverse Board with varied skills, knowledge & experience



Attracting Potential Candidates

How do we attract a diverse candidate base?

- Look at Board member role profiles to ensure they are EDI focused
- In planning meetings consider what is really needed to deliver the role
- Write adverts to ensure they attract a wide range of candidate
- Place the advertisement in varying media, with a diverse audience
- Allow candidates to apply in many ways (within reason)
- Proactive engagement with certain groups



Attracting Potential Candidates

Recruitment begins with getting the attention of the potential candidates.

We do not narrow the field, we have an open approach to contacting potential candidates. Typically we:

- Ensure our website is always open,
- Use social media, advertisements in newspapers, journals,
- Encourage through our networks, and
- Launch specific campaigns as required.
- **Make sure our message is inspiring**



Selling Seren and the Role

Our message is designed to inspire potential candidates
We look for a win/win scenario.

We understand there may be a number of reasons why
an individual wants to become a Board Member.

- Individual development opportunity
- Enhanced CV
- Networking opportunities
- Opportunity to put something back into the community!
- Technology – iPad, mobile phone



Selection Process

A deliberately structured approach to selection enables us to:

1. Say no to those people who do not fit our current requirements.
2. Identify those individuals who are most likely to:
 - add value to the skills mix required
 - Fit with the Seren and Board culture
 - Provide a balance of **harmony with challenge**

“there needs to be grit in an oyster to make a pearl”



Selection Process

- Stage 1: Interested candidates are offered an informal chat with the Group Chief Executive.
- Stage 2: Candidates are invited to submit an application for a position on a Board.
- Stage 3: Candidates who fit are invited to a screening interview with the Group Chief Executive.
- Stage 4: An interview with the Group's Chair and another Board Member.



Selection Process

- Stage 5: An opportunity to observe generally for 3 Board meetings.
- Stage 6: Leads into a 2 way decision:
 - Are they what we want or need?
 - Is the role what they thought?
 - Is it right for them?



Charter Tenant Selection Process

Our Tenant Panel administers Tenant Member recruitment

- Advertisements placed in the Tenant Contact magazine inform interested candidates to apply as potential Board Members.
- Our Tenant Panel selects candidates for a meeting with the Chair of the Board and the Corporate Director of Charter
- The process is designed to be neither onerous nor scary, but provides confidence that we select right people for an important role.



Retention

How do we ensure the Board Members we want to stay - do stay?

- We support new Board Members into their role as individuals:
 - A formal induction programme,
 - Ongoing familiarisation and a member development opportunities,
 - Mentoring or buddying by other experienced Board Members.
- When inducted their support process continues:
 - Annual appraisal of individual Board Members and the Boards
 - Periodic skills audits undertaken, to provide assurance and or understanding of additional skill requirements.
 - Opportunities on other Boards



Campbell Tickell Report & Seren

A key issue for Seren was:

Getting more young people involved on our Boards

What are we doing?

- **Part of a funded project “Young People on Boards”**
- The project matches participants with great mentors in organisations such as Solas and
 - Sport Wales,
 - Chwarae Teg,
 - The Wallich.



Key Issues – Your Experience

Break out group sessions

- ✓ Do you have Board appraisal?
- ✓ What skills are lacking on your Boards
- ✓ How do you attract interested individuals to your Boards
 - ✓ Where/How do you attract individuals?
 - ✓ What are the most successful routes?



I hope this was helpful