



Housing. Support. Recovery.



Board Member Recruitment Pack March 2025





020 7620 3048

rec@thehousingexecutive.com

www.thehousingexecutive.com

Re: Board Member Recruitment for Providence Row Housing Association

Thank you for considering 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 28th April 2025

First/Screening Interview: commencing Tuesday 6th May 2025

Final Interview: week commencing Monday 12th May 2025

- The Housing Executive will conduct the initial screening interviews for those candidates successful in being shortlisted.
- The second stage will consist of a panel Interview with PRHA.
- Successful candidates will be invited to attend the board meeting on Thursday 22nd May 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 28th April:**

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 at a time when there are significant challenges to our sector – not just in terms of social housing but also in relation to the pressures that support services are experiencing. We are immensely proud of the dedication and contribution of our staff teams in providing safe, good quality homes and complex support services to our residents.

With ever increasing numbers of homeless people on our streets and an increase in the complexity of the support needs they are experiencing, the need for PRHA's services is as great as ever. 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 a new Board member 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

- Continuing to shape the culture of the organisation in line with our values: compassion, respect, inclusion, empowerment and justice.
- Maintaining viability and looking for ways to diversify the Association's income especially for social care /social mission activities.
- Supporting staff and residents to thrive and remain safe through active risk management.
- Responding to the ever increasing requirements on social landlords around the Building Safety regime and Zero Carbon targets through ongoing review of our housing stock and building safety systems.

- Taking forward our resident engagement strategy and finding ways of ensuring that resident feedback informs our decision making.
- Ensuring that our commitment to diversity and inclusion is taken forward through the LGBTQ+ pledge and the Social Housing Against Racism Pledge (SHARP).
- Ensuring that we exercise good governance and meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

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

Helen New

Helen New

Chair elect

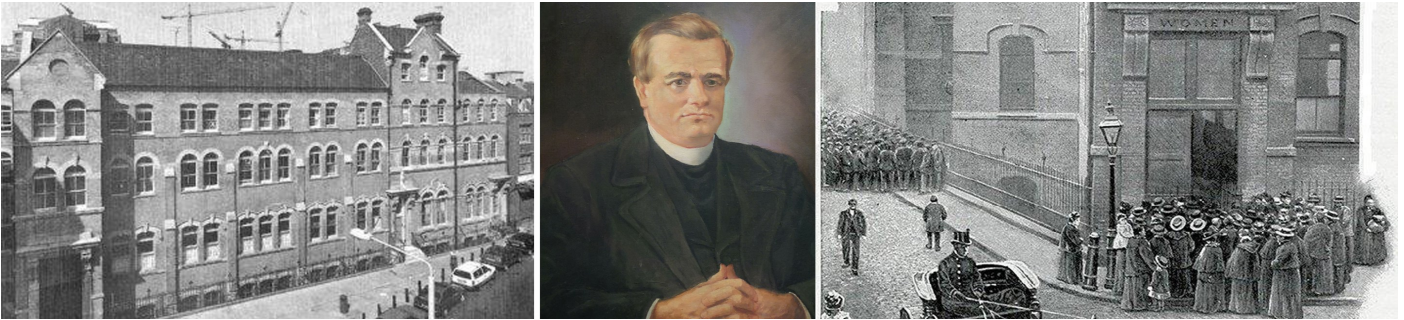


About PRHA: Background information for prospective Board members

Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA) is both a registered 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, before the advent of the NHS or the welfare state, 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.

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 2025-2030 is currently being developed. It envisages our continuing to provide both housing and support in our local communities. It also 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. We also provide life changing support services for c.400 of those residents who are housed in our supported accommodation. Approximately half of these are living 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 people with severe mental health conditions and young homeless people.

PRHA believes in the potential for all people to change their lives given the right help. Our staff build trusting relationships that enable residents to make challenging changes to their lives that will lead to sustaining lasting tenancies in the future. Their support enables residents to make positive transformations by helping them to engage with necessary 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 also employ some 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 3rd time in 2022. Only 3% of Housing Associations have achieved this standard.

IIP report extract:

The strength of the organisation's ethos toward its clients is very apparent and is for many people the *key reason* they value working with PRHA. The strongest theme emerging from both the survey and the 1-2-1 discussions is the extent to which people identify with the values and ethos of the organisation, how important this is to them, and how the organisation really does *live* those values

The Association employs c.120 staff and usually has about 20 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.

Diversity and inclusion are incredibly important to us. 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. 22% of Board members, 33% of the senior leadership team and over 60% of our staff and residents are from ethnic minority communities.



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 was set up & 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 20 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 financial 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. Through this collaboration we have successfully bid for Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant for a pilot project due to commence in 2025.

Our key concern for the past 8 years has been completing an extensive fire safety programme on our existing buildings, responding to new Government guidance and our own fire risk assessments. We have also been responding to the Government's new Building Safety requirements.

We recently carried out a 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.

Financial situation

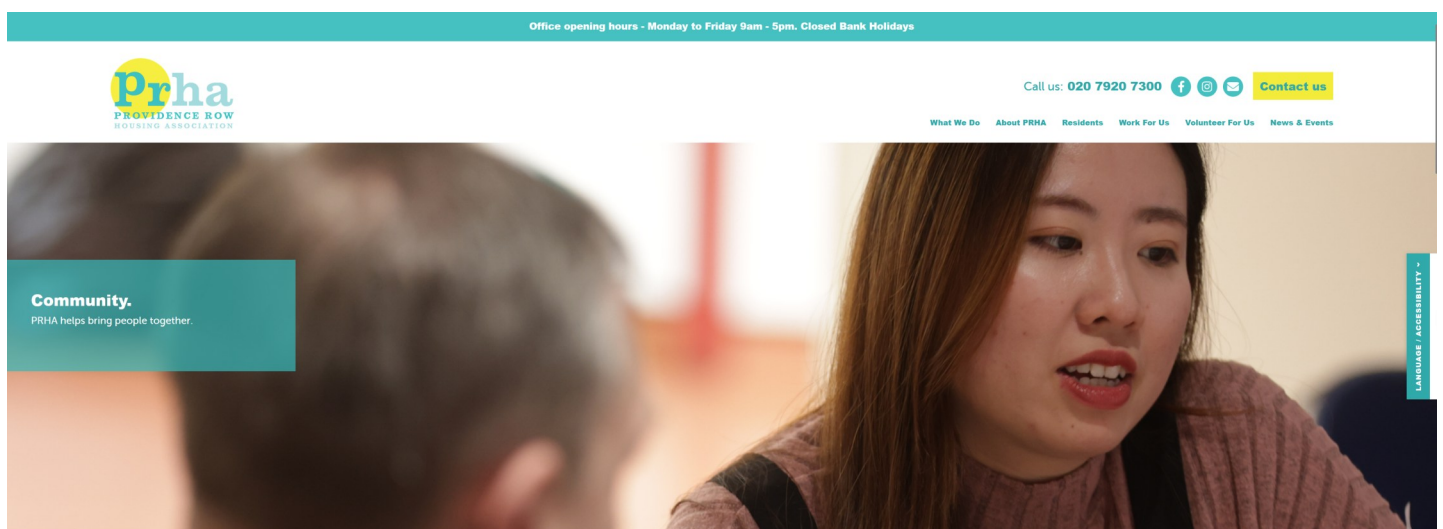
In 2024/5 PRHA has projected turnover of c.£8.7m. We are currently on target to achieve a surplus this year and meet all of our loan covenants. We have good cash reserves and limited exposure to some of the larger risks as we currently have no development pipeline. The Board has also considered projections and worst case scenarios regularly and they are confident of our ongoing viability.

We have c. £6.4m 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!)

The organisation has a stable Senior Leadership Team headed by our CEO, Fiona Humphrey. She has been with the Association for 20 years. She has over 40 years' experience working in Housing Associations and homelessness charities. See structure chart on the next page.



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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 leadership team. There are also a number of Board scrutiny groups that are responsible for reviewing in more detail the areas of Finance, Risk & Audit, Human Resources & Operations. Each has a designated lead member.

Current Board

There are currently 4 vacancies on the Board including 2 for residents/people with lived experience of support services.

Chair (to May 2025): John Giesen: John is the former CEO of B3 Living and former chair of TPAS (the tenant participation advisory service). He has served on a number of RP boards. He will be stepping down in May 2025 as he is nearing the end of his term.

Chair elect /current Vice Chair: Helen New: Helen is a freelance communications consultant who has worked for a number of social landlords during her career.

Board members:

Fahad Abdi: Fahad brings experience in social investment and sustainability to the Finance Scrutiny Group and Board. He has worked in the charity sector, housing associations and in the legal and investment management sector delivering social benefit for communities facing socio-economic challenges.

John Beadle: John provides Board oversight for the HR function at PRHA. He has extensive senior executive experience in a range of sectors and is currently Head of Performance and Reward for ABB. He holds a master's degree in HR from LSE and an FT Non-Executive Director qualification.

Babu Bhattacharjee: Babu brings over 30 years of experience of regeneration and community development to the Board. He is Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods for Poplar HARCA.

Pippa Fleetwood-Read: Pippa is PRHA's lead member for Risk and Audit. She is Managing Director of Operations 1 for Notting Hill Genesis, having worked for several large housing associations and has also worked in Policy and Research at the National Housing Federation.

Denise Kent: Denise is PRHA's Board lead for building safety and for the Operations Scrutiny Group. She is an experienced chartered surveyor, Director & Housing professional having worked across the public, private and third sectors at a senior level. She is currently CEO of Basildon MIND.

Ed Knox: Ed is PRHA's Lead member for Finance. He has extensive experience as a Chief Operating Officer/ Operations Director for global businesses in a range of sectors. He is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

Lynn Vickery: Following a career in housing culminating in Director / CEO roles, Lynn focussed on education including as a Research Fellow and course director for housing studies at London South Bank University. She is a member of the Operations Scrutiny Group.



PRHA 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.

Key role relationships

External: To maintain and develop good relationships with residents & other stakeholders.

Internal: To maintain good relationships with other members of the Board, the shareholders, the Chief Executive and other key members of senior staff.

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 Rules or decisions supersede 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. In particular they must not use their position to obtain personal gain of any sort.

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.

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- 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 the activities of the Association from time to time and decide on changes if appropriate or advisable.
- 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. PRHA has agreed that the voluntary nature of the positions was consistent with the overriding ethos of the Association's values.

Time commitment

Board members are expected to attend 6 evening Board meetings a year (hybrid), one half day & one full day Awayday (in person). They are also expected to take part in scrutiny groups in accordance with their skills, interests & experience. Members should also make every effort to attend any relevant training (hybrid) & visits to services (in person).



Person specification

Core competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the constitutional and legislative framework as it applies to the organisation (willingness to learn if not currently experienced).
Skills and abilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to evaluate information presented in Board reports & contribute to discussion and decision on these matters.
Personal behaviour and style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 , listening to & responding to residents in decision making processes. • Has respect for the values of PRHA. • 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 an undischarged bankrupt cannot apply for Board membership.
Specific experience – supported housing/support services <p>PRHA is seeking Board members with specific experience of the operating environment for PRHA's support services. At the core of PRHA's work is our supported housing provision which is funded through Local Authority adult social care contracts and Housing Benefit. The majority of this has been purpose built or converted to provide high quality accommodation, most of which is short stay but we also have some longer term accommodation. We work predominantly with former Rough sleepers with very high complex support needs often including substance misuse and provide 24 hour support services for them. One of these is part CQC registered and currently holds an "Outstanding" rating. We also have a high support mental health service and a project for young people in scattered properties. We also provide a number of semi-independent homes for people with ongoing support needs that are only funded through Housing Benefit.</p> <p>We aim to provide the best possible opportunities for our residents during their stay with us. Our staff are trained and supported to provide comprehensive , complex services to meet their present needs and prepare them to move on to more independent accommodation.</p> <p>We are seeking Board members with an understanding of the funding and policy framework for supported housing who can help the Board to understand and navigate the challenges that the sector is facing.</p> <p>As part of the current strategic plan review, the Board also wishes to explore options to diversify and expand our support based activities. We are therefore also seeking Board members who could contribute to this discussion.</p>

ADVERT

Board Members

Supported housing/support services experience

Do you want to play a part in helping us to change lives?

Providence Row Housing Association has been providing support and accommodation to the homeless people of East London for over 160 years and aims to provide them with life changing opportunities to turn their lives around.

PRHA believes in the potential for all people to change their lives given the right support.

We accommodate over 500 people at any one time, providing support services for c.400 residents in the supported accommodation that we own. Many are former rough sleepers who require intensive ongoing support in order to maintain their accommodation. We also run services that house people with severe mental health conditions and young homeless people.

People are at our core, those we support and those we work with.

PRHA was awarded the Investors in People Gold award for the third time in 2022. Only 3% of Housing Associations have achieved this standard. The Association employs c.120 staff and usually has up to 20 volunteers helping with a range of roles.

We are proud to 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. We are striving to reflect that diversity within our organisation at all levels including our Board.

We have a dynamic, skilled and committed Board and when we recruit new members, we ensure that there are new ideas and skills to help guide us forward. We are looking for new members with **specific experience in supported housing/support services** who can help the Board to understand and navigate the challenges that the sector is facing

This could be senior experience of the operating environment for PRHA's support services or an understanding of the funding and policy framework for supported housing. We also wish to explore options to diversify and expand our support-based activities and are open to Board members who could contribute to this discussion.

Although Board members are unpaid, we do feel that they gain a lot in terms of being able to make a difference. We hope that you feel that you could contribute to this.

For an informal discussion or a full Recruitment Pack please contact Tony Clark at our consultants, The Housing Executive: **020 7620 3048** or rec@thehousingexecutive.com

Closing date: Monday 28th April 2025

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. We ensure that our commitment to diversity and inclusion is taken forward through towards the LGBTQ+ pledge and the Social Housing Against Racism Pledge (SHARP).