

We're making  
some **changes**  
to our  
**Management  
Board**

# #FINDYOURHOMEINHOUSING

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Here at Monmouthshire Housing, we are working for the future and making some changes to our Management Board.

## Why?

It is very important that we have a Board fit for purpose so MHA can deliver homes of the highest quality and continue to deliver an excellent service to our tenants.

Our board members have responsibility for the highest level of decision making at MHA. We have conducted a full review, where we studied other organisations and sought expert advice, concluding that we needed to change the set-up of the MHA Board.

### **The main reasons for changing are:**

- To improve Board Member attendance at meetings so there are no hold ups in getting things done
- Manage the risks more effectively with experts in specific areas who can advise on the best course of action for the business
- Have greater challenge on important issues so we can be sure we are making the right decisions
- To add to the current skills around the table, as we explore new opportunities

## When & what will this look like?

Having the right people in the right positions is key. From November 2020, our Board will change from having voluntary members, to paid members with a range of specific, vital skills required to tackle issues that are relevant to a Housing Association.

## OLD STRUCTURE

**4 Tenants**

**2 Councillors**

**6 Independents**

## NEW STRUCTURE

### **10 Independent Professionals:**

- Accountants
- Property Management
  - New Build
- Construction/Repairs
  - IT/Digital
- Procurement/Projects
- Risk Management
  - Policy & Politics
- Housing Management

## How will this affect you?

You will not be negatively affected by these changes. In fact, there are many positives to look forward to...

### **Our pledge to you:**

- We will improve our scrutiny arrangements to make sure we can continue to provide brilliant services and fantastic homes
- We will expand the services we provide
- We will grow so we can provide better homes where people want to live, reinvesting for the future
- Tenants and services users will have more opportunities than ever to be at the heart of decision-making
- We will continue to be open and transparent in our communications
- We will do our utmost to look after the environment

### **Your community, your voice...**

We are losing our tenant and councillor board members but it is so important to ensure our communities remain at the heart of our decision making and we want Monmouthshire residents to have more opportunities than ever to be a part of this process. To ensure communities continue to have a direct link to the Board, we are setting up a new 'Community Voice' Committee.

This committee will consist of ten members from across our communities who will represent the views of residents. Amongst other things, the committee will make sure targets are being met, ensure MHA plans match those within local and regional government, demonstrate we are listening to our tenants and evidence the actions we are taking to improve services.

## Could you help shape your community?

## Are you passionate about providing excellent customer service?

## Do you know a member of the community who might be perfect for this role?

We need your help to raise the bar for MHA and help us deliver services more effectively and efficiently. See the MHA Website for more information and how you can apply to be a Community Voice Committee member.

We have also put some of the most Frequently Asked Questions on the MHA website but if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

Contact Kim Davies on **kim.davies@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk** or telephone **01495 745762** for more information.

Yours sincerely,



**Andy Jones**  
Chairperson

# Changes to MHA's Board

## Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some questions that have been raised about our new board...

### Board Recruitment

#### **How can you guarantee the quality of the new Board members?**

We will screen applicants through a recruitment process, as we would for any other post. We want the best candidates for the job – it's important that the right people and skills are applied in the right places to make the business as strong as it possibly can be.

#### **Will you advertise for 10 new members or use from the pool you already have?**

Both - Board members that have the required skills will transfer across. Where we have identified the skills needed, we will advertise for those specific skills.

#### **If a tenant has the required skills and is successful when applying to become a Board member, will they be paid?**

All Board members will be paid, yes.

#### **If current councillors or tenants have the required skills, will they have to apply?**

Yes, they will have to apply.

#### **Will you elect people onto the Board?**

We will recruit the new Board members but they will need to be approved by Shareholders at the EGM. There will not be ballot elections in future for Community Voice Committee members, but individuals will be appointed through a recruitment process before they take up a position.

#### **Will the new Board members be connected to Monmouthshire?**

No, not necessarily. We want to recruit the "best of the bunch" but it would be beneficial to have an understanding of the local area.

#### **Do Board and Committee members need training?**

Yes definitely, and this will be provided. We also expect members to keep up to date with relevant training required to maintain their area of expertise, e.g. accounting practice or Housing Law. The responsibility lies with the Board so members must be qualified and have in-depth knowledge. Also as part of their role, it is important that members can fully understand reports presented, such as audit, financial accounts etc. Expert knowledge is needed to make specialist decisions.

#### **What is the amount of time someone can stay a Board Member?**

The maximum amount of time someone can remain on the Board is 9 years. The new structure will introduce appraisals so if a Board member has been under-performing, we would be able to ask them to step down.

#### **Will there be enough time to recruit?**

Yes. We expect to have appointed new Board members by the summer.

### Board Remuneration

#### **Have other Stock Transfer Housing Associations changed to this structure?**

Yes, mostly.

#### **If you are successfully recruited as a Board member, would pensions or benefits be affected?**

Everybody's situation is different so we don't know how this would affect you personally. However, we can arrange for an expert to get in touch to discuss the implications of accepting a paid position on our Board.

## **Why should you have to pay someone when they have been volunteering to do a job they love?**

With any voluntary position, it is our experience that the likelihood of full attendance is low. Other commitments can often find a way of becoming more important. This can be very frustrating as in order to make decisions, we need a minimum number of members present at each meeting. By paying members, MHA aspires to 100% attendance and would expect members to also attend conferences and training.

## **Community Voice**

### **How will issues get to Board?**

The Chair of the CVC will be a Board member whose responsibilities will include reporting directly to Board on the key messages and recommendations from the Committee meetings. We consider this to be a strengthened process to what is currently in place and we look forward to developing a two way channel of information from the community to the Board and vice versa.

### **How will you capture the full voice of the community?**

The structure of the CVC will include tenants, leaseholders and councillors and we would aim to have a range of tenants from across the county. The Committee will also consider lots of feedback from surveys, discussions, satisfaction responses etc. that are carried out throughout the year.

### **How much responsibility does this group have?**

The CVC members will be empowered to improve services but will not have the same level of responsibilities as that of a full Group Board Member, who are ultimately responsible for the organisation. Therefore, this will be a voluntary position.

## **Will the CVC Chair not feel pressure to represent the community with only one voice at Board?**

As a Board member and Committee Chair, the individual will have a responsibility to put MHA first, regardless of any other capacity they have outside of MHA. The individual may have to make difficult decisions but they will have a duty to accurately represent the community voices from the CVC at Board.

## **Tenant Participation**

### **What will happen to tenant groups such as Forward Together and the Scrutiny Panel?**

We recognise the important work being carried out by our tenant groups such as the Service Testing Team, Scrutiny Panel and the Forward Together Group. In essence, nothing will change except that all tenant groups who currently report to the Operations Committee will report, after the restructure, to the Community Voice Committee. These groups will be fully supporting the CVC, carrying out the 'leg work', delving deeper into the issues and reporting back.

### **How will you inform tenants?**

We will raise awareness of vacancies to the CVC and the proposed changes via the website, tenant magazines and social media. All tenants will also receive a personal newsletter explaining this.

### **What will happen to the current tenant and councillor Board members?**

If tenants and councillors have the required skills, they are welcome to apply for Board membership but will compete with others for the vacant positions. They will also be offered the opportunity to join the Community Voice Committee or one of our tenant groups. Their experience will be valuable to us and we want to retain their expertise wherever we can.