



Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) & Board Members



Connect housing

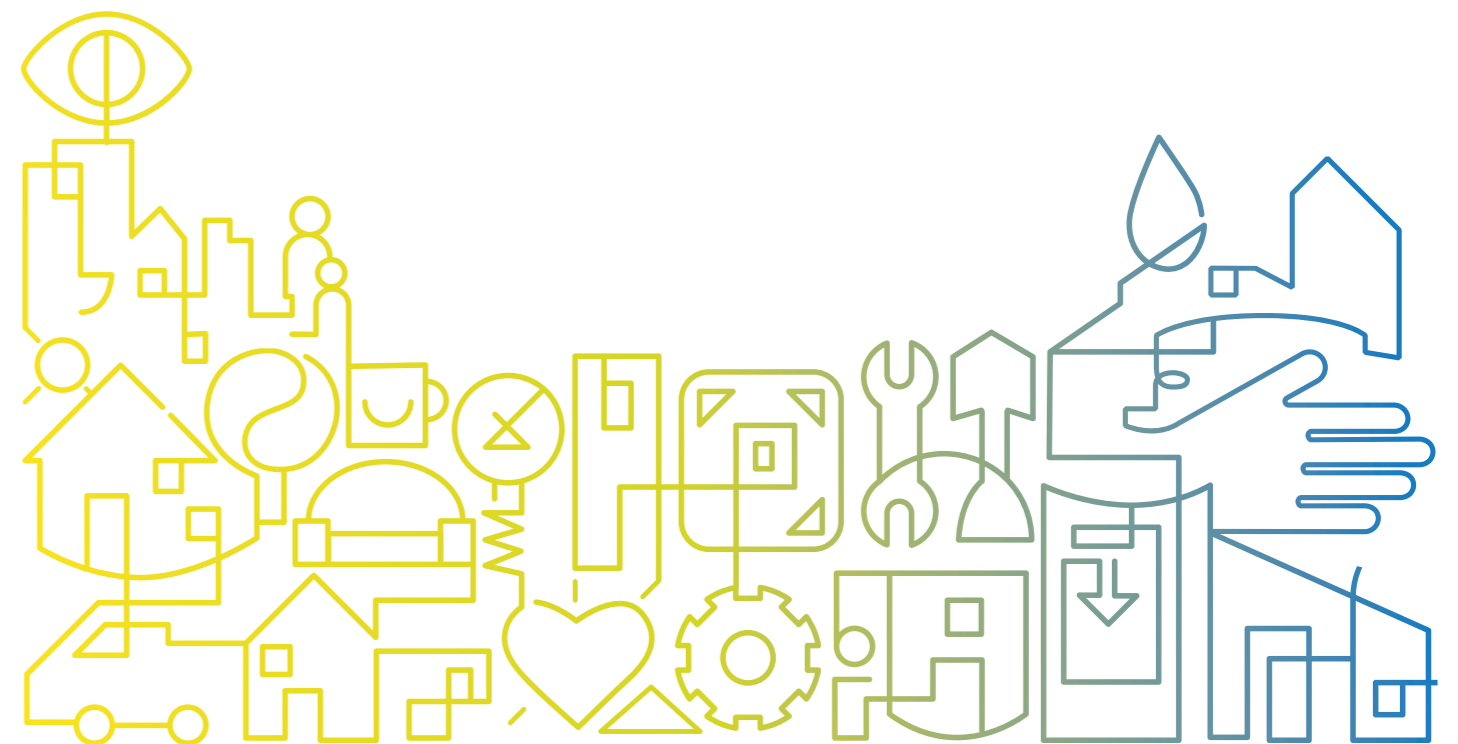


Recruitment pack | Spring 2024



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Your application



Thank you very much for your interest in the advertised posts. On the following pages, you will find details of the roles and the selection process to assist you in completing and tailoring your application. In order to apply, you should submit:

- An up-to-date CV which shows your full career history and any relevant board experience – we recommend that this is no longer than three pages.
- A supporting statement explaining why you are interested in your chosen role(s), detailing how you are a good candidate for the post and how you fulfil the person specification – we recommend that this is no longer than three pages.

- The declaration form, noting that completion of the equalities section is not mandatory, this is requested for monitoring purposes in line with our commitment to equality and diversity.
- Please indicate on the declaration form if you cannot attend the interview date

Please note that applications can only be considered if all the documentation is complete. Please submit your completed application documents using the online form, which is accessible via our jobs page: www.campbelltickell.com/jobs/

Applications must be received by Tuesday 28 May 2024 (9am).

Please ensure we receive your application in good time. If you do not see an onscreen confirmation message after submitting your application using the online form, please call us on 020 3434 0990.

Do call me if you wish to have an informal discussion about the role and organisation, or if you have any other questions to help you decide whether to apply.

Kind regards
Kelly Shaw

Senior Associate Consultant
07900 363 803





Welcome Letter from the Chair



Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Board of Connect Housing and for those of you interested in becoming Chair of our Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC).

Having been involved with Connect since 2021, I can assure you that, by applying for one of these roles, you could find yourself joining a great group of people and a wonderful organisation which has a strong social purpose. I hope you get a sense of that from the language we use in our vision which is "to be a trusted, well-connected landlord working to build a sustainable and just society where good homes, neighbourhoods and opportunities help people enjoy happy, healthy lives".

To take on a role at Connect, you will need to relish working with creative, solution-focussed colleagues taking meaningful action to address current societal challenges such as the climate emergency and cost of living crisis. You will be motivated by improving others'

life opportunities, value equality and inclusion and demonstrate an interest in, or close association with, our Yorkshire footprint. We will particularly welcome colleagues who represent the diversity of our local communities and those with lived experience in our geography or in social housing.

These are challenging times for our customers and our sector, with many competing demands. Connect's Board and employees are ambitious in tackling some of the toughest issues of the day, for example, we still have impactful (albeit low margin) support services because these are in line with our values and social purpose. Not having the scale of some of our Housing Association colleagues calls for innovation in focusing our capacity and technology to fulfil our ambitions. We believe in the value of local connectedness and like to think we 'punch above our weight'. Our governance has a G1, V1 rating which, for those of you new to the sector, is the highest rating that our Regulator awards.

The Board and the Leadership Team have a strong partnership, based on mutual respect and constructive challenge. We value authentic relationships based on honesty and transparency - we do what we say or explain why we didn't. We draw on all the talents to navigate our way through a constantly changing environment with our values anchoring our decision-making.

You will have gathered that it's important to Connect that you share

our values as the Board are the guardians of those values. It's also important that you're ambitious for Connect, which is an organisation that doesn't stand still and strives to improve as we know that we don't get everything right in meeting the priorities of our residents.

We are currently at the end of a business transformation programme which has focussed on making our services more technology and data enabled, as well as transferring power and influence to communities. We have also just agreed a new Corporate Strategy focussed on turning that transformational activity into tangible benefits.

Our Chair of ARMC is retiring and so we are looking for someone experienced in Finance and/or Risk Management to replace him. With regards to the other board vacancies, we would welcome a breadth of skills but are particularly keen to add skills and experience in terms of finance, treasury, asset management, communications and all aspects of data. We want to reflect our communities and are always keen to welcome people who add to our diversity and can help shape our local strategies.

This is a great time to join Connect and help to tackle some of the big issues of our time as they apply to the communities in West Yorkshire.

Diane French
Chair of Connect Housing

About Connect

Everything is connected

Our very name, Connect, is our way of showing that we believe everything in life is connected. Homes, people, places, wellbeing and the environment all play vital parts in us enjoying happy and healthy lives. The purpose of our work, and the partnerships we've built over time, span these elements to help us build a better society.

Our strategic objectives

We are keeping things simple by working to be:

Fairer

Which means offering:

- A positive experience for all customers and colleagues.
- Safe, quality homes.
- Our contribution to the building blocks for stable lives.

Greener

Which means:

- Prioritising the environment in our thinking and actions.
- Greening our homes.

Smarter

Which requires:

- A customer-curious culture.
- Converting data into intelligence and change.
- Being well-equipped for the future.

Our values:

We put people first.

We want people to feel valued, respected and included.

We love making a difference.

For example, the climate emergency can seem overwhelming but we are determined to work with others to take practical action to maximise our positive impact.

We actively listen and learn.

In a fast-paced world it is important to us that we keep things human so we are using technology to free up the time for us to really listen to people and learn how what is important is changing.

We collaborate creatively.

Our public institutions are under immense pressure which adds to the challenges our customers, communities and we face. Now more than ever our commitment to build solutions with others, especially customers, is coming to the fore.

We earn trust through our actions.

We know that this is easy to say and hard to do which is why we adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Conduct 2022 and spend time with colleagues discussing the expectations within it.

Our services

With around 3,700 homes across West Yorkshire, we provide general needs and specialist housing as well as offering shared ownership opportunities. In regulatory terms we are a G1:V1 association with a sound financial track record, investing everything we earn back into services and homes. We are a developing association aiming to deliver 50 new homes per annum.

We also provide a number of support services, including a women's refuge, supported accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness, a Money Matters advice service and visiting housing support services.

We are keen collaborators and seek out partnerships that mean we can achieve better outcomes. In Leeds we work with Riverside, Gipsil and Barca in the Engage consortium, delivering services to 4,500 people a year; our specialism is dementia and services for older people. We also enable the provision of a wider range of support services - such as learning disabilities supported living schemes - through our work with a number of third sector support providers.

You can access further information at the end of this pack and from our website.



Our people

We have over 200 employees including our own in-house maintenance team, and a significant support services team.

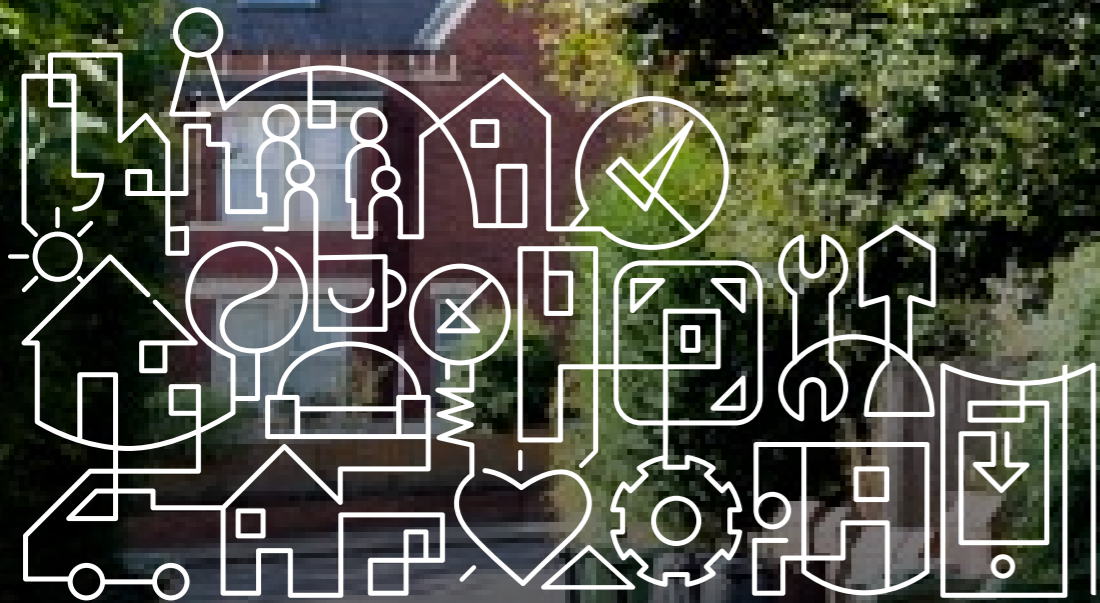
Our colleagues tell us that Connect is a great place to work, with the evident commitment to our values and social purpose being at the heart of that. We don't have a stuffy style and endeavour to be candid about our performance. Coaching staff to become more resourceful and take the initiative to make positive changes - whether to services, to procedures or to themselves - is part and parcel of the culture we are trying to build in order to deliver our vision.

We are also on a journey to becoming a more agile organisation, with a greater degree of self-management and autonomy in the way we do our work. Hybrid working is now embedded in our offer and we are exploring with colleagues how that affects our culture.

West Yorkshire Housing Partnership

We are active in the region. Our Chief Executive was, until recently, the first Chair of the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership (which brings together all of the active housing associations working in the region, as well as the two stock-owning Local Authorities, Homes England and West Yorkshire Combined Authority). She now chairs the Mayor's Dementia-ready Housing Taskforce whilst our Director of Home leads on the Climate Emergency workstream for the partnership. This partnership is growing from strength to strength and has enabled joint regional projects to be delivered.





Board Member Profiles



DIANE FRENCH

Chair
Joined Connect's board in 2021

Diane started her career working in homelessness and mental health as a project worker and referrals officer for supported housing. She then moved into a variety of local policy and commissioning roles based in Public Health – gaining a Master's degree in Social Policy on route. Moving to national roles – she worked with the National Treatment Agency, the Healthcare Commission and the National Audit Office and got further involved in the NHS through NED roles with primary care and clinical commissioning groups.

She became a Director for a national mental health charity in 2010, and then joined a national learning disability charity as a Director in 2015. She completed her Master's degree in Executive Management with Ashridge Business School in 2017. She became CEO of Reside Housing

Association in 2018 and led them into a merger before semi-retiring in 2021 and moving to North Yorkshire. Diane is passionate about issues around equality and person-centred, quality services and so was delighted to join Connect as Chair in 2021. Diane also works as an NED for Sanctuary Care and Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust.

You can read [full profiles of our Executive team here.](#)



ALICIA RIDOUT

Deputy Chair/ Senior Ind Director
Joined Connect's board in 2019

Alicia is a UK registered occupational therapist who works in digital health safety, innovation and research. She is Director/ founder of Involve Me Digital Health Ltd and works as a digital patient safety consultant as well as studying part time for a doctorate at York St John University, studying the use of Artificial Intelligence in occupational therapy practice with older people.

Previously, she was Deputy Programme Lead in a Cancer Alliance Personalised Care team and the Deputy Director of mHabitat, an innovative NHS digital service. Alicia is a master's graduate with over 30 years of experience across industry, NHS (mental health and commissioning), private healthcare, higher education/ research and the third sector, and with significant experience delivering transformation programmes.



SHAEEN AZAM

Joined Connect's board in 2020

Shaeen is an experienced finance director with over 14 years of experience in the housing sector.

She is a qualified accountant and a member of the Associate Members of Corporate Treasurers. She has a wealth of experience in financial strategy, business planning and treasury management. She also has experience of being Chair/Director of a Joint Venture and Commercial Subsidiary company.

Shaeen holds a Non Executive Director position at Sheffield Children's Hospital Trust.



CLAIRE MCMANUS

Joined Connect's Board in 2023

Claire has spent most of her career working in the financial services sector between the UK & US, and until recently acted as the UK Head of Employee Relations at HSBC. She now consults on matters of professional standards, regulation and policy in roles for the accountancy regulator (ICAEW), Greater Manchester Police's Ethics Committee and for Leeds City Council Standards and Conduct Committee. Claire has worked in West Yorkshire for over 8 years. She fully believes that having a secure home is the key to enabling individuals and families to flourish.



KAREN RATCLIFFE

(Retiring September 2024)
Joined Connect's board in 2017

Karen is Assistant Director for Strategic Housing at Doncaster Council. Her work ranges from the design and delivery of the council's ambitious Council House Build Programme to homelessness prevention, partnership working with St Leger Homes and other housing association partners, supporting better conditions in the private rented sector and home energy.

Karen is a member of Northern Housing Consortium Board and qualified as a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing in 1994. In a long-spanning career within local authorities, Karen has also worked extensively on sub-region and city region work in South and West Yorkshire.



DAVID WILMHURST

(Retiring September 2024)
Joined Connect's Board in 2017

David is retired, but as well as being a board member of Connect he is an elected governor of the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. David had a varied management career in different sectors: food manufacturing, financial services and health. His last role was as head of corporate assurance at the Health and Social Care Information Centre.

He was responsible for providing risk-based assurance to the Department of Health, senior management team and Board Assurance and Risk Committee. David has a BA (Honours) degree and a master's degree in business administration.



JOEL OWEN

Joined Connect's Board in 2019

Joel has significant experience working in the social housing sector and is currently the Director of Development at First Choice Homes, Oldham as well as holding previous senior roles at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Housing Trust as well as Yorkshire Housing. He has a successful track record in managing complex development and asset teams, but is also passionate about volunteering, as a Non-Exec Director of St Georges Crypt CIC, a homelessness charity based in Leeds along with being a Trustee of Abbeyfield York Society.

His development portfolio includes general needs housing, supported housing (care and extra care), large-scale regeneration and exemplar developments such as the nationally renowned Derwenthorpe in York.



LEAH MONTIA-THOMAS

Joined Connect's Board in 2022

After completing her law degree, Leah began her career providing housing law advice and representation in the Derby Law Centre. The experience of representing tenants of social landlords inspired Leah to move into the social housing sector to try and address inequality and improve the experience of social housing tenants. Her social housing career started in income collection and she gained experience in ASB, housing management and management. Leah is currently regional Head of Operations for Anchor Housing.

Leah holds a Masters in Business Administration and completed the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) board development programme in 2022 whilst an associate board member with Connect.



JOE BRADLEY

Joined Connect's Board in 2020

Joe is a former Executive Director working in the IT industry. He is a Trustee of Ripon Community Link, which supports adults and young people with learning difficulties to maximise their independence and a Trustee with The Avalon Group, a major regional social care provider based in Harrogate. Joe is also the Chair of the local parish council.

He was a senior business leader with over 30 years experience leading organisations that delivered customer/operational services and software to the Public Sector. In his last 10 years, he was the Executive Director of Northgate Public Services. His passion for the Public Sector, in particular Social Housing, has been his driving force throughout his career. He has worked with many Social Housing providers, both here in the UK and also in Australia/New Zealand.



SHARON GILLOTT

Joined Connect's Board in 2020

Sharon is a recently retired Chartered Accountant with over 30 years' experience of working in professional practice and industry. Her work has mainly involved advising owner-managed businesses and she has extensive experience of providing strategic business and financial advice as well as acting as a trusted adviser to management during periods of change.

She has always undertaken volunteer roles alongside her professional life and these have included acting as a mentor to young people starting businesses and 4 years as a school Governor serving on the Finance and Governance subcommittee. She is currently a Trustee and non-executive Director of a national charity which provides educational advice to families and carers of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.



PATRICIA MITCHELL

Joined Connect's Board in 2023

Patricia worked for 25 years as a solicitor in a professional practice. She worked with major national and international clients in insurance, banking and financial fraud and was a Board member for many years shaping strategy, business development, people development and remuneration.

Following an MBA at Bath University she joined the third sector working for Alzheimer's Support, became CEO of Neurocare supporting people with brain tumours, and served as a Trustee of Age UK York and the Asda Foundation. Most recently she served as a Board Non Executive Director for eight years at Sheffield Children's Hospital and Chaired the Quality Committee and the People and Engagement Committee.

Patricia is committed to promoting inclusion in and equal access to a fair society for all.

Role Profiles

Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC)

Role Purpose

The Chair of the ARMC has a vital leadership, strategic and management role, responsible for ensuring that the ARMC operates effectively whilst also fulfilling the requirements of being a member of Connect's board.

Whilst the board retains overall responsibility for risk, internal control and business assurance, it delegates detailed scrutiny and evaluation of these matters to the ARMC which is responsible for the conduct and effective operation of Connect's external and internal audit arrangements, risk management strategy and for ensuring that Connect conducts its affairs to the highest standard possible. The Chair of ARMC is responsible for advising the board on whether there is an appropriate culture of control and business assurance throughout Connect so that the board can have confidence in the information it receives and that we are meeting relevant regulatory and legal requirements.

ARMC has a maximum membership of six members.

Specific Responsibilities and Accountabilities

To ensure that:

- ARMC's work plan is appropriate and agendas are forward

looking, business and strategy focused.

- Constructive discussion of complex issues is facilitated.
- Members receive accurate and timely information that enables ARMC to take sound decisions, including accessing specialist advice when needed to ensure appropriate levels of compliance.
- Decisions are clear and follow up actions are monitored.
- Best use is made of the skills, competencies and experience of members and that new members are supported and mentored.
- Constructive and supportive relationships are maintained with the Leadership team, especially the Director of Finance and Resources, which includes communicating outside of meetings.
- Key issues are promptly brought to the attention of the board.
- ARMC Terms of Reference can [be found here](#).

Person Specification

In addition to the requirements for being a board member, the Chair of ARMC will ideally have:

Experience

- Board membership experience

in a customer focused organisation (not necessarily within the affordable housing sector).

- Previous membership or regular attendance at an Audit Committee.

Knowledge

- Understanding of governance and regulated sectors (public or private).
- In depth of knowledge of risks, controls and assurance and an understanding of how audit fits into this framework.

Skills

- Leadership and the ability to run meetings effectively.
- Influencing skills – the ability to negotiate, broker and act as an ambassador.
- Able to promote open debate and discussion and to summarise conclusions

Personal qualities and circumstances

- Flexible, fair minded, self-confident, concise, decisive, assertive
- Able to devote at least 4 hours per month to ARMC business.



Board Member

Role Purpose

The Board must be effective in the strategic leadership and control of Connect, ensuring that it's viable, properly governed and properly managed. As such, each member must be an effective contributor to the overall vision, strategy, management, policy formulation and risk management of Connect and the achievement of its objectives.

Each board member has a duty to:

- act in the interests of Connect, committed to its purpose and core values.
- ensure that Connect observes its rules, legal and regulatory obligations.
- govern Connect with proper skill and care, abiding by and assuming collective responsibility for board decisions.

Specific Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Leadership

- Champion and act as the guardian of Connect's values (upholding them and ensuring they're translated into desired behaviours) particularly in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion; and maintain the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.
- Share accountability for the direction and control of

Connect within the agreed strategy, policy and planning framework.

- Ensure that obligations to stakeholders, particularly customers, are understood and reflected in strategy and implementation.
- Establish a strong and positive working relationship between the Board and Leadership team.
- Support the Chair in their role of providing strategic leadership and creating a positive board climate.

Strategy

- Set strategic objectives and determine the outcomes required to achieve Connect's purpose.
- Be accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the Business Plan in contributing to delivering long term sustainability for Connect.

Performance Monitoring

- Ensure agreed budgets for revenue and capital expenditure that deliver outcomes set in the Business Plan.
- Review and monitor Connect's performance and ensure that the management information provided to the Board is of the nature and quality required.

Risk

- Ensure there are systems in place to identify, manage

and report risk to safeguard Connect's operations.

- Agree policies and take decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to Connect.

Governance and Probity

- Uphold the Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that Connect complies with all statutory and regulatory obligations, complying with - and proactively contributing to - the implementation of policies such as Data Protection, Health and Safety, Financial Regulations, and Safeguarding.

Personal Development

- Be both well informed (undertake appropriate background reading, develop an appreciation of the key challenges faced by Connect) and contribute specialist knowledge, expertise and experience to the Board.

- Contribute to creating and sustaining the "learning Board" by participating in or leading Board induction and development activities.

Representation

- Promote the reputation and image of Connect by representing it as an ambassador at key events and interlaces with residents, stakeholders, staff etc - both internally and externally.

Person Specification

Experience

Whilst we're interested in receiving applications from people with a wide range of skills, we would welcome applicants with the following specific skills:

- Financial and treasury management.
- Asset management.
- Housing Strategy and customer insight.
- Communications.
- Data (management, analysis, governance etc).

Knowledge

A basic understanding of:

- The principles governing confidentiality.
- Issues involving conflicts of interest.
- Strategic management.
- The social, economic and/ or political context in which Connect operates.
- Regulatory and compliance frameworks (those applying to housing would be an advantage but not essential)

Skills

- Ability to understand complex issues, such as financial information.
- IT skills to handle electronic board papers.
- Good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to take an effective part in collective debate and decision-making through preparation and understanding.
- Good problem solving skills.
- An open minded and flexible approach to decision making.
- A good team player, acting and thinking corporately with a collaborative style that engages at all levels and promotes positive relationships throughout the organisation and its partners.

Personal style and behaviour

- Shares the vision and commitment of Connect for social justice.
- Placing customer service at the heart of decision making (with all that involves) within a framework of financial discipline and controls.
- Probity and integrity – committed to values of accountability, openness, transparency and equality of opportunity.
- An open, engaging and enthusing style.





Key dates and the selection process

Closing date: Tuesday 28 May 2024 (9am)

We will be in touch on 7th June to advise on the outcome of your application.

Final interviews:

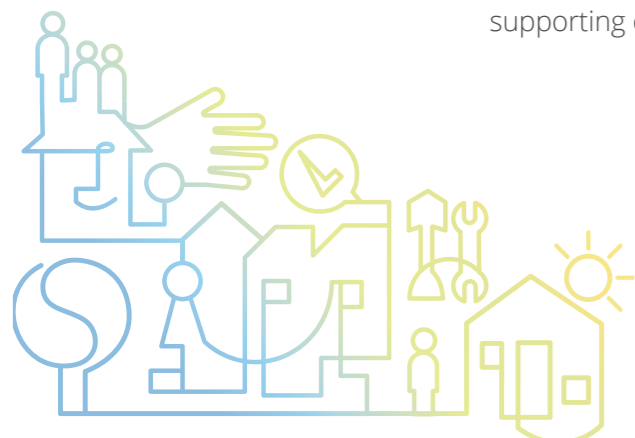
Tuesday 25 June 2024 & Wednesday 26 June 2024

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed at our Dewsbury office, or virtually over MS teams, by a panel comprising of:

- Diane French - Chair
- Sharon Gillott - Board member and Chair of Human Resources & Governance Committee

Helen Lennon, Connect's CEO, and Guy Millichamp, Director of Finance and Resources will be present in a supporting capacity.

If you are unavailable on the identified date for the interview, please do speak to Campbell Tickell before making an application.



Key terms and conditions

Chair of AMRC

Remuneration

£5500 per annum.

Time Commitment

You will be expected to attend all meetings of the ARMC. There are four meetings per annum. In addition, you will be expected to attend board meetings. There are usually five board meetings a year, plus two all-day seminars. We also ask all members to attend at least one Customer Centred Event or Committee per annum

You will need to be willing and able to devote adequate time for preparation for meetings, undertake some training activities, and to participate in performance reviews.

Time commitment averages out between 8 to 10 hours per month in total.

Board member

Remuneration

£3700 per annum.

Time Commitment

You will be expected to attend meetings of the Board and to serve on one sub-committee. There are usually five board meetings a year plus two all-day seminars. Depending on the committee, there could be a further two to four meetings a year. You will need to be willing and able to devote adequate time for preparation for meetings, undertake some training activities, and to participate in performance reviews. We also ask all members to attend at least one Customer Centred Event or Committee per annum.

Time commitment averages out between 6 to 8 hours per month.

Both roles

Terms of Office

The tenure for a Board member is currently two terms of three years. Terms are renewed subject to a satisfactory appraisal and the Board's requirements at the time.

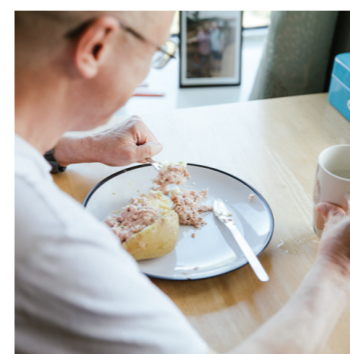
Expenses

We do not pay expenses for normal board duties. If members wish to attend conferences and events, we book accommodation and train travel directly.

Location

We have a blended approach to meetings (board and committees). Winter meetings tend to be held virtually, using Microsoft Teams, starting at 4pm and scheduled to finish by 6pm. The exception is the November all-day seminar which is in person.

From Spring to Autumn, we try to hold meetings in person at our offices which is two minutes' walk from Dewsbury train station (where there is also ample parking). To allow for travel, these meetings currently start at 6.00pm and end no later than 8.30pm. We do encourage personal attendance to support team building and the all-day events are only in-person.



Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee - £5,500 per annum

Two Board Members - £3,700 per annum

West Yorkshire

Connect Housing is ambitious and driven by our strong social purpose and values. As a community anchor, we provide 3,700 affordable homes and holistic support services across the West Yorkshire region. With some board members retiring and succession planning to consider, we are looking to attract new members who share our values and will help to build a board that is representative of our diverse customer base.

We are looking for a new Chair of our Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure there is an appropriate culture of control and business assurance throughout Connect. Experience of serving on

an ARMC and/or chairing a committee or board would be an advantage as would a background in Finance, although this is not essential.

For our board members we are interested in receiving applications from people with a wide range of skills, however we would also welcome applications with specific skills and expertise in either Finance, Treasury, Asset Management, Housing Strategy, Customer Insight, Communications and applying data to service improvement. This may be your first board member role.

For both roles, we welcome people who are outside the housing sector and bring diversity of thought as

long as you are willing to learn about our sector and have a real commitment to making a difference to our customers and communities.

We are also keen to attract a diverse range of applicants that reflect our communities. If you wish to join our open and inclusive board that celebrates different points of view, then please contact our retained consultant **Kelly Shaw** at **Campbell Tickell** at **kelly.shaw@campbelltickell.com**

Closing date: Tuesday 28 May 2024 (9am)



CAMPBELL TICKELL

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