



Resident Recruitment Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy sets out how we'll select members of the resident governance structure. This includes resident governance panels, Specialist Advisory Network, forums, and Resident Ambassadors.
- 1.2 This Policy does not apply to any other aspect of resident recruitment, such as co-creation projects, local neighbourhood involvement, or other activities outside of the resident governance structure.
- 1.3 'Resident governance panels' refers to:
 - Resident Strategy Group
 - Resident Scrutiny Panel
 - Regional Residents' Panels
 - Service Panels (Complaints Panel, Resident Policy Panel, Procurement Panel and Resident Design Forum).
- 1.4 'Specialist Advisory Network' refers to:
 - Homeowners Forum
 - Inclusion Network
 - Older People Network
 - Wellbeing Network
 - Supporting Independence and Care Network.
- 1.5 The Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement is responsible for this Policy and providing administrative support to the resident governance groups and panels.
- 1.6 The terms 'we', 'our' and 'us' mean Southern Housing.

2.0 Recruitment principles

- 2.1 Recruitment to vacancies will be governed by the following principles:
 - Residents will be involved in making recruitment decisions
 - Selection will be skills-based
 - Decisions will be objective
 - Pro-active steps will be taken to attract and recruit applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds

- Induction, support and training will be made available to all successful applicants.

3.0 Eligibility criteria for members

- 3.1 Local councillors nominated by the local authorities specified later in this Policy are eligible to be members of the Regional Residents' Panels covering Kent and Sussex. All other members of the resident governance structure will be residents.
- 3.2 To be eligible for membership, residents must:
 - Be a Southern Housing resident living in general needs, supported housing, independent living, care home, shared ownership, or a leasehold property
 - Be aged 18 years or older
 - Be named on a Southern Housing tenancy or lease
 - Not be an employee of Southern Housing.
- 3.3 In addition, each Regional Residents' Panel may have up to three members who are household members but not named on a tenancy or lease. These residents must have lived in a Southern Housing home for at least a year and be named on the electoral roll for that property.
- 3.4 Residents may not serve on more than two panels.
- 3.5 The chair of Resident Strategy Group, independent members of Resident Strategy Group, and Resident Scrutiny Panel members will not be eligible to be a member of any other group in the resident governance structure.
- 3.6 All resident governance member appointments will be subject to tenancy checks, to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Terms of Reference for that group. Previous service in the resident governance structure will also be taken into account, where relevant. This includes compliance with the [Probity Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).
- 3.7 All resident governance members are bound by Southern Housing's [Probity Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

4.0 Resident Strategy Group (RSG)

- 4.1 Vacancies for the Chair and independent members of Resident Strategy Group will be filled by open recruitment and advertised to all residents.
- 4.2 Appointments to the Chair and independent member positions will be made by an interview panel. The panel will comprise: board or committee member, the Director of External Affairs and Resident Involvement, and a resident from resident governance structure.
- 4.3 The Resident Strategy Group will elect a vice-chair from among its membership.

- 4.4 All other members of the Resident Strategy Group (RSG) will be nominees from resident panels, as set out in the Terms of Reference for RSG.

5.0 Resident Governance Panels (other than RSG)

- 5.1 Vacancies for resident governance panels will be filled by open recruitment and advertised to all residents, subject to the eligibility criteria for panels set out in Terms of Reference.
- 5.2 Appointments to panels will be made by the Resident Scrutiny Manager following informal interviews. All appointments must be approved by the Director of External Affairs and Resident Involvement.
- 5.3 Where specified by their Terms of Reference, resident governance panels will elect a chair and vice-chair from among their membership.
- 5.4 Rules for chairs and vice-chairs of resident governance panels:
- a) Chairs and vice-chairs will be elected annually by members of the relevant panel
 - b) A chair or vice chair will serve for a maximum three-year term in that role
 - c) Where there is a clear business need for a chair or vice-chair's term to be extended, it may be extended annually for a further three years, subject to approval by the Director of External Affairs and Resident Involvement
 - d) A member can only be a chair or vice-chair of one group in the resident governance structure at a time
 - e) After serving their term, a chair is unable to stand for the positions of chair or vice-chair for the same panel until there has been a break of three years.
- 5.5 The following panels will elect annually a Resident Strategy Group representative: Regional Residents' Panels, Complaints Panel, Resident Policy Panel.

6.0 Regional Residents' Panels

- 6.1 In addition to resident members, the Regional Residents' Panels covering Kent and Sussex will have local authority representatives as part of their membership.
- 6.2 As a result of historical large scale voluntary transfers, the following local authorities will nominate representatives on local Regional Residents' Panels:

Local authority	Local regional
Swale Borough Council	Kent
Rother District Council	Sussex
Hastings Borough Council	

7.0 Regional Residents' Panels

- 7.1 Membership of Specialist Advisory Network is open to residents living in certain tenures (for example shared owners for the Homeowners Panel) or residents

identifying as a member of a particular group (for example BAME, LGBT+ for the inclusion group).

- 7.2 The Specialist Advisory Network are not subject to formal recruitment rules as they do not have any decision-making power.
- 7.3 Membership will be approved by the Resident Scrutiny Manager following expression of interest from a resident.

8.0 Resident Ambassadors

- 8.1 Resident governance members leaving governance groups after three or more years' service will be eligible to become a Resident Ambassador. This will be discussed at exit interviews with members.
- 8.2 Appointment of Resident Ambassadors is subject to approval by the Resident Strategy Group.
- 8.3 Resident Ambassadors will hold the role for three years. Following this, an ambassador's involvement will be reviewed annually.

9.0 DBS checks

- 10.0 Resident governance members will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks if required.

11.0 Leaving the resident governance structure

- 11.1 A resident governance member can resign at any time. Ideally, they should give notice in writing to the relevant panel chair or staff member.
- 11.2 If there's a suspected or proven breach of the [Probity Policy](#) (which includes the [Code of Conduct](#)), a member may be suspended or dismissed in line with the [Probity Policy](#) and breach procedure.
- 11.3 If a resident is taking legal action against the organisation, they will be barred from the resident governance structure for the period of the legal action. They can re-apply in future, if the legal action is resolved and the outcome isn't a breach of the [Probity Policy](#) or [Code of Conduct](#).
- 11.4 A resident cannot apply to be part of the resident governance structure if they are taking legal action against the organisation.
- 11.5 A member may be asked to stand down, if deemed to be more suited to another form of involvement.
- 11.6 Exit interviews will be offered to residents leaving the structure and reasons for leaving recorded by the Resident Involvement department.

12.0 Equality and diversity

- 12.1 The diversity of resident governance members should be representative of Southern Housing's residents.
- 12.2 Clear, pro-active steps should be taken to ensure residents involved in the resident governance structure are representative of the wider resident population.
- 12.3 The key principles are:
1. The Resident Strategy Group should receive reports on the diversity of residents across the organisation's involvement work each quarter and how this compares to residents currently involved. Recognising the differing local contexts, this should also include a comparison of the membership of regional panels and the diversity of the region they serve.
 2. A summary comparison of the diversity of Southern Housing's residents and the diversity of involved residents should be published each year.
 3. The responsibility to ensure diversity of involved residents should be a key priority in the terms of reference for all resident panels, forums, networks, and groups.
 4. For resident governance roles that include a formal recruitment process, at least one interview panel member should be a resident with a protected characteristic (as defined by the [Equality Act 2010](#)).

13.0 Review

- 13.1 We will review this Policy 12 months after merger.

Policy controls

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Approved by	Shadow Board
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Policy owner	Corporate Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement
Policy author	Sam Fagg, Resident Scrutiny Manager (Optivo)

Version history			
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1.0	27.09.22	New policy	Sam Fagg, Resident Scrutiny Manager (Optivo) Shadow Board