

# Putting residents at the heart of what we do

Hexagon

Residents' Annual  
Report 2017/18



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Cover: Rwanda Rukwira – Hexagon resident, employed as Support Officer at Kirkwood Road Care Home

# Welcome from the Chair

## A year to reflect

The fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 has been a tragedy of epic proportions and has rightfully caused us to pause and reflect. Lessons are there to be learnt. We are ensuring that we are listening to our residents, and responding to your concerns.

As one would expect fire safety is a key feature in this year's Annual Report, discussing the steps we are taking to ensure our residents are safe. Alongside this the report explores how we involve our residents to improve services. This is work we will be building on into the future.

Safety isn't just about our buildings and this year's report touches on work we have done around domestic abuse and how we can better support our residents through this. The key message is that if you are suffering domestic abuse Hexagon is there to support you.

The environment and fuel costs are very much in the news. I am delighted that Hexagon has retained its GOLD shift award for sustainability. We also received a special SHIFT award for the 'most improved landlord ever.' This reflects the great effort that residents and staff have put into the thoughtful use of resources and energy.

Given the housing crisis I am delighted that Hexagon continues to build new homes at affordable rents. This year saw the conclusion of our 2015/18 programme. We now move forward to an ambitious plan for 2018/21 where we are aiming to deliver 91 new homes to rent.

We would like to extend our thanks to all the residents that get involved, in whatever way you choose, to help us improve services. I would like to give my special thanks to residents on the Annual Report Group who have worked hard to produce this report.

**Roy Coulter, Chair**



# Resident satisfaction in repairs

## Keeping the focus

In general, Hexagon are pleased with the results of our resident satisfaction survey this year which shows that resident satisfaction with repairs has gone up from 80.9% in 2016/17 to 87.4% in 2017/18.

We are aware that there is still some way to go, and our main focus moving forward is on appointments being kept and fixing repairs on the first visit.

We have been able to evaluate the repairs service based on feedback from residents. This feedback is collected in two ways – via telephone surveys, provided by an external independent company, and via handheld PDAs used by operatives. It's the latter that we believe has aided the increase in resident satisfaction. Residents are surveyed by the operative, on completion of the work, meaning operatives are more focussed on customer service, as they will receive immediate feedback on the service they've given.

As our contractors are set certain performance targets, and we have not been able to gather data on these performance targets, it is not clear how our contractors have performed against these targets in

**Did you know?** Up to 10% of appointments are 'No Access' which means a wasted journey by the contractor and a £25 charge to Hexagon. You can cancel or rearrange an appointment by calling the contractor up to 24 hours in advance. Please always call if you need to cancel, even if it's on the day of the appointment.

2017/18. It's frustrating that the IT interface we invested in, enabling our computers to talk to our contractors, has not worked efficiently during the last year. Gathering accurate data is in everyone's interest, and ultimately improves the service our contractors give and in turn the service Hexagon gives to our residents.

In 2017/18 we worked with three contractors: KNK working across housing in the west side and P&R looking after properties in the east. Laker BMS work across all of Hexagon's stock, providing communal repairs and working on our void properties where more extensive work is needed.

In 2017/18, due to IT issues, we were unable to gather the performance data that is so vital to monitor the performance of our contractors. This means we haven't been able to efficiently assess the performance of our contractors, or assess where improvements are needed.

12,992 Number of repairs raised per year

3.43 Average number of repairs per property

3,746 Number of gas service visits per year

3,606 Number of boiler breakdown calls per year

### You can report a repair in the following ways:

Freephone: 0800 393 338

Landline: 020 8778 6699

Email: Repairs\_reporting@hexagon.org.uk

Website: www.hexagon.org.uk

If you wish to report an emergency repair, please do not email or write into us. Always make sure you phone us to report an emergency repair.

# Fire safety

## for residents



The disastrous fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 was a tragedy of epic proportion and has caused the Housing sector to rightfully reflect and take action on the health and safety for our residents.

In the wake of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower the government asked social landlords to check the cladding of the tower blocks that they own. A tower block is defined as a building of six storeys or more, and Hexagon owns six buildings which fall under this definition and thankfully none of these contain the sorts of panels installed at Grenfell Tower. Nevertheless, shortly after the fire, we wrote to all residents in blocks where we carry out Fire Risk Assessments to remind them of some key messages about fire safety. We have a robust programme of assessments, reporting and actions to ensure safety is at the forefront of our service to residents, but we are working ever harder to ensure this remains a key priority.

As an organisation, we try incredibly hard to listen to residents' feedback, particularly where health and safety is concerned, but there is always more to be done and we have doubled our efforts to ensure that a strong residents' voice continues to influence the way that Hexagon works.

## Fire Risk Assessments

There is likely to be a tightening up of the legal requirements relating to Fire Safety as a response to the Grenfell tragedy, but Hexagon are ahead of the curve, already doing much to ensure the safety of our residents is paramount.

Hexagon has been accelerating the Fire Risk Assessments that are carried out, and have updated procedures in response to the tragedy. We will update procedures again if deemed necessary once the Grenfell Tower Inquiry comes to a conclusion.

### Key advice we give to residents includes:

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**Keep** communal areas clear

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**Make** sure that fire exits are kept clear

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**Ensure** rubbish is disposed of correctly

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**Report** any concerns to Hexagon

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**Tell** us if you notice anything that doesn't look right

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**Know** whether there is a "stay put" or "evacuate" policy in their building in the event of a fire

In June 2017, we communicated these plans to every Hexagon property, and we have a programme of communication if the advice changes following expert guidance.



# Gold

## for sustainability

In 2017, SHIFT (Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow) celebrated its 10 year anniversary. For this milestone year they awarded Hexagon a special honour for the “most improved landlord ever” – what an accolade! This award shows that we’ve made continuous improvement to our approach to our sustainability plans over many years.

SHIFT is the sustainability standard for the housing sector. It involves an independent assessment and accreditation scheme that demonstrates organisations are delivering against challenging environmental targets. The SHIFT assessment measures organisations against more than 50 environmental criteria, such as energy efficiency, water use and waste management. Hexagon has held our GOLD award over the last four years, putting us amongst an elite group of Housing Associations.

Hexagon’s focus on sustainability brings clear benefits for our residents. With more energy efficient homes, residents can enjoy lower fuel bills as well as a reduced carbon footprint. We’ve engaged positively with residents, giving advice on things such as switching energy provider and reducing the temperature on the thermostat, to save energy and money on bills.

Looking forward, we will continue delivering improvement works to existing properties, continue building new energy efficient homes and continue to ensure that our offices remain environmentally green. This should ensure we retain our existing GOLD award in the future.

# Safe at Home

## A new Hexagon policy

With the support of experts from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, Hexagon agreed an updated Domestic Abuse policy in October 2017. It sets out our approach to identifying residents who may be experiencing domestic abuse, and how Hexagon will react to reports from residents who suspect domestic abuse might be happening.

### Domestic Abuse – what is it?

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn’t just physical violence – domestic abuse can also be:

- Emotional
- Financial
- Sexual
- Psychological

### What has it got to do with Hexagon?

Housing providers are in a unique position to identify domestic abuse and be able to access residents who need help: through their presence on estates and in individual properties. Housing staff can build relationships with their residents, and become trusted and accessible sources of information and support.

### Training

In autumn 2017, Hexagon worked with Safe at Home (a European Union funded partnership) to provide domestic abuse training for frontline staff across the organisation. We have been continuing to roll this training out to other staff members over the year and will extend the training to our contractors in the future.

# Handling your calls

*Pictured: Hanneke,  
Volunteer Customer Service  
Representative*

Good customer service and active listening is a continuous focus for Hexagon, and we've not taken our eye off delivering improvements during 2017/18.

## Service Level

This is a measure which is widely used in customer contact environments and is linked to the promise we have made to all of our customers, that we strive to answer 80% of resident calls within 30 seconds. For 2017/18 we achieved a service level of 82%, exceeding the target by 2%.

## Abandoned calls rates

Between 9am–5pm there are some periods when we receive an influx of calls, known as 'call spikes', which causes some of our customers to wait for longer than usual for their call to be connected. With busy lives, customers can't always wait for an extended period and so they put the phone down. We refer to these as being 'abandoned calls', because through no fault of the customer, our team were too busy when the call was made and we were not able to get to that call.

## Key stats

**22,091 repairs calls**  
226 fewer than 2016–17

**18,419 tenancy calls**  
44 fewer than 2016–17

**204 defect calls**  
no results to make a comparison  
(see page 08 for more information on defects)

**22,022 switchboard calls**  
903 more than 2016–17

There are times when people pick up the phone and dial the wrong number, or call a company in error. This information can easily be seen from our reports, so these types of abandoned calls are not counted. Our target for abandoned calls is set at 7.5%. For 2017/18 we achieved 6.88%, thereby exceeding this target.

During the past year (April 2017 – March 2018), we received a total of **67,370 calls** (95 fewer than last year). Of these calls, we answered **62,736 calls** (286 fewer than last year).

For 2017/18 we achieved a service level of **82%** against our target of 80%.

We also achieved a service level of **100%** for repair emails dealing with all 5,585 (2,066 more than 2016–17) **within 1 working day** against our target of 3 working days.

# Inclusion for all

Hexagon have in place a number of initiatives to help all our residents to participate in everyday life. Financial inclusion and our Digital Champions are just a couple of these initiatives.

Many people struggle with finances at some point in their lives, and for those who need to reach out for help we have our Financial Inclusion Service. This service offers help with most money related issues and has assisted many residents to get back on track, like Susan\* in the case study.

Susan had her Housing Benefit stopped after experiencing difficulties with her mental health and a bereavement which meant that she struggled to maintain her benefit claim. She tried to sort this out herself, but was unable to get her benefit claim back up and running. Because of this, she was getting further and further into arrears and was at risk of losing her home.

Our Financial Inclusion Officer contacted Susan, and was able to get to the bottom of why the benefit claim had failed. This helped Susan to challenge the Housing Benefit decision, and asked the Council to reinstate the benefit for the period that it hadn't been paid. However, while the Council eventually restarted Housing Benefit

payments, they refused to reinstate the benefit for the period where this was not paid. This left Susan with arrears of over £8,000 and at serious risk of eviction.

The Financial Inclusion Officer assisted Susan in appealing the Councils decision to an independent Tribunal. The Tribunal agreed that Susan should have the Housing Benefit throughout the period that it was not paid and directed the Council to pay the "missing" amount. This resulted in a payment of around £7,500 being made to Susan's rent account, bringing her arrears down to less than £500. Susan is now paying off the remaining amount by instalments and is secure in her home.

Susan said that she was very grateful for the help she received, and doesn't know where she would be had this not been provided. She suggested that anyone who is struggling that they should ask for help, as it could make a huge difference to their position.

## Digital Champions

Year on year, digital inclusion becomes more and more important. From being able to communicate with the world around you to accessing learning and job opportunities, confidence in using digital communication is a vital skill for participating in the modern world.

At Hexagon we run the Digital Inclusion Programme which focuses on equipping residents with the skills and resources to get online, and then continues to support residents to stay online. We also check in on residents who have completed the course to see how they are getting on. Eleven residents received digital skills training in 2017/18, helping them to remain in touch with the digital, and extended, world around them.



89

residents accessed  
financial inclusion  
support in 2017/18.

(not including returners)

\*name changed to protect identity

# Resident Involvement

## Working together for improvement

Resident involvement covers a variety of initiatives whereby residents work with Hexagon to evaluate our service. The 2017/18 year was a great one for involvement; residents had many opportunities to show valuable input. Here we talk about a few of the different areas that residents get involved in to directly shape and improve the service Hexagon offers to residents.

## Performance Review Group

The Performance Review Group (often referred to as a scrutiny panel) is a group of residents who look at performance across a range of Hexagon's services. Meeting four times a year, they assess the repairs service, voids, rent arrears, customer service, complaints handling and gas safety checks, looking at all key performance indicators and making suggestions of where and how Hexagon could perform better.

This has helped Hexagon to be more focussed on particular aspects of service levels such as our voids performance. Voids are the time a property is empty between the previous occupant moving out and a new resident moving in. The length of time can vary due to the work that is sometimes needed to bring the property back to a lettable standard. Delays with contractors and issues around communication have meant this service has faced some issues in the past, and the Performance Review Group provided helpful insight on where improvements need to be made, which in turn has helped feed into the restructure of the Housing Services team.

## Repairs Group

The work of the Repairs Group centres on the performance of contractors to ensure that repairs are being dealt with in a timely and efficient manner, and that the repairs service meets residents' expectations.

Unfortunately, the Repairs Group were not able to perform their role during 2017/18 as Hexagon faced IT interface issues (see page 03), meaning we were not able to generate the performance information needed for the Group to review. Hexagon has been working to resolve this issue so that the residents who volunteer their time for this important involvement activity are able to effectively carry out this role.

## Resident Inspections

Our Resident Inspectors focus on a different service area each year. In 2017/18 their focus was on the Defects service. Defects relate to new properties; once residents have moved in, they may notice items that are not up to standard or may be faulty. At the end of the first 12 months following the contractor's handover of a new build property, the same contractor will come out and make good any defects that have been identified.

The Residents Inspection team's report made 13 recommendations, such as updating the tenant manual (information given when residents first move into their property), improving the process of handling issues reported and the consistency of how reported issues were recorded and dealt with.

Hexagon built an action plan to respond to the recommendations and the direct result of this is that resident involvement is shaping improvements to our service.

## Estate Graders

The Estate Graders are a group of residents that visit our estates and award it a Gold, Silver or Bronze rating. They are trained in Hexagon's Estate Service Standards, and they look at all communal areas to assess that they meet the Standards. In 2017/18 they made spot-checks on 16 estates, throughout the boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham.

Their role is to highlight areas of improvement on these estates and report their findings back to Hexagon, so that any issues can be resolved. They found items for improvement such as:

- Communal lighting needing replacing
- Out of date information on communal notice boards
- Communal doors not working
- Fly tipping causing problems
- Communal windows broken
- Entry door systems broken
- Bin stores overflowing

Everything they find on their estate visits is pulled together into a report that Hexagon then turns into an action plan to make sure any problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

The Estate Graders also give the estates they visit a grading based against the Estate Services Standards. These are Bronze for needs a lot of improvement, Silver for doing well but some minor improvement needed, and Gold for brilliant. Of the 16 estates they visited in 2017/18, 10 were awarded Silver and 6 were awarded Gold.

Hexagon would like to extend our thanks to all the residents that are involved with shaping and improving the services we offer. Without them giving their time to make valuable input we wouldn't be achieving the fantastic results we are. We know there is still a way to go, and that improvement is a continuous process, and that the input from our residents will help ensure that improved services is something we always aim for.



Pictured: Estate Graders, Christine, Carol and Fatima awarding their grading scores.



**Croydon:** Jacksons Way, Oak Avenue and Princess Road.  
**Southwark:** Canal Grove, Patrick Court and Priory Court.



**Croydon:** Hewitt Close, Oakfield Road. **Lewisham:** Baring Road, Park Court.  
**Southwark:** Claude Monet Court, Emblem Court, Gordon Road/Coy Terrace, Haven Way, Mary Seacole Court and Solarium Court.

# A co-operative approach

Hexagon works with nine local organisations, most of whom are housing co-ops, who manage Hexagon owned homes on our behalf. These organisations are collectively known as “managing agents”.

The residents managed by these agents remain Hexagon residents – the big difference being that they don’t receive the majority of services direct from Hexagon. Instead, the housing services are provided by the managing agents themselves. Some 8% of Hexagon’s properties are managed in this way. The smallest consists of just 8 properties and the largest has 83 properties. Co-ops are run by general meetings, mostly monthly, where residents attend and have direct control and input into the running of the co-op and their policies. Other co-ops are run by a management committee, elected by the residents to run the day-to-day affairs of the co-op.

In order to engage directly with co-op managed residents, Hexagon holds a Co-op seminar annually; in May 2017 this seminar was held at Goldsmith University where new faces as well as familiar ones met, and was well attended with over 30 residents present.

The key point of this year’s seminar was communicating about planned maintenance (major works such as window replacement). There was also a discussion around tenancy succession rights which went down very well. Tenancy succession rights refer to who is legally entitled to take over a tenancy on the death of the tenant. Residents welcomed the opportunity to ask a range of questions of the managers who delivered the presentations, and at the end gave a very high satisfaction rating for the event.



Pictured: (Left) Housing Services Director Andrew Green with Co-op residents Mark and Ken. (Above) Residents attending the Hexagon Co-op Seminar.

# Reaching out to our residents

Our first Neighbourhood event was held in the Autumn of 2017 in Croydon. It was a fun day, held on a local estate, meaning all residents in the vicinity could attend. It was well rated, and well attended, with over 50% of residents from the local estate in attendance.

These family friendly events invite residents to come and meet with Hexagon, have fun and give feedback on how Hexagon serves the local area. There are opportunities for local residents to talk to Hexagon staff, senior managers and our Chief Executive. We are able

to hear first-hand the thoughts of residents, receiving lots of positive feedback and notes for improvement.

At the time of writing, another successful event has been held in June in West Thamesmead, with further events planned in Bexley, Southwark and Lewisham. These are advertised direct to residents living in the borough where the Neighbourhood Event is being held, as well as in our quarterly newsletter Home News, and on our Facebook page.



Pictured: One young resident enjoying the Neighbourhood Event at Goldfinch Road in Greenwich.

# Building new homes

Under Hexagon's 2015/18 development programme, we completed 206 homes, exceeding our target by 6 homes.

There is a strong demand for affordable homes and we have been successful in delivering shared ownership in recent years.

We now have a new target for our 2018/21 programme of completing 242 affordable homes. These include 151 for shared ownership and 91 for rent. We have been successful in securing £8.5 million of funding from the GLA (Greater London Authority) to help deliver the 2018/21 programme.



## Case Studies

### Lewisham Road (Lewisham)

This stunning development (pictured above) consists of 23 shared ownership homes and 5 rented homes, 4 of which are 3-bed family homes.

### Campbell Road (Croydon)

This exciting development of 15 homes, made up of 11 for rent (6 of which are 3-bed family homes) and 4 homes for shared ownership, was completed in November 2017 and fully occupied by April 2018.

Gordon (pictured left) and his partner Rebecca were living on a first floor flat with no lift access. Having now moved into a ground floor flat at Campbell Road, Gordon says:

**“This has made the whole world of difference, it’s been life changing, I have gained my independence back.”**



# Helping our residents into employment

In 2016, in partnership with 15 other Housing Associations, Hexagon secured funding from the European Social Fund to deliver the Love London Working (LLW) Employment and Skills Programme.

This programme enables us to further support our residents into, or back into, sustainable employment.

Our Employment and Skills team has continued to support unemployed residents on their journey towards employment. The team provide a wide range of dedicated support for residents every step of the way, including training, CV workshops, interview skills, confidence building and job search.

Lionne Whitfield, our Employment Support Adviser has supported 56 residents in 2017/18 on the path to successful employment.

## Key stats

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**45 residents** enrolled on the LLW programme.  
(49 in 2016/17)

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**56 residents** accessed employment support through the LLW programme.  
(70 in 2016/17)

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**15 residents** supported into employment.  
(1 25 in 2016/17)

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**2 apprenticeships** appointed through supply chain opportunities.  
(placed with Hexagon contractors BSW and Bell Group)

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Clarion, the lead partner have continued to view Hexagon as one of the **best performers, consistently achieving planned targets.**

*Pictured: Lionne Whitfield, Employment Support Adviser and her client Beverley.*



# Value for money

For Hexagon, Value for Money (VFM) is about making best use of our resources and achieving good quality results, not simply about cutting costs. We are still in a period where rents are decreasing by 1% per annum for the majority of our residents following Government announcements in 2015.

While we need to reduce our costs we are committed to finding ways of doing that that do not impact on quality, and we continue to invest in our front line services. With the help of our residents we have gone a long way to achieve this. During 2017/18 we had successes in achieving VFM by:

- Reducing the cost of the money we borrow to build new homes from 2.97% to 2.92% and met our target
- Secured grant funding to support the development of new homes, including generating a subsidy of £3.7million from outright sales
- Supported 91 residents to maximise their income, exceeding the target of 50, and supported our residents to claim £144,000 of benefits
- Exceeded our target for improving the thermal efficiency of our homes
- Improving resident satisfaction and VFM by improving the accuracy of repairs ordering
- Re-tendering internal office contracts to achieve improved VFM, including 27% savings on office cleaning
- Through our Love London Working project assisted 56 residents into employment

## Comparisons with other London Housing Associations\*

The comparisons in the table show how Hexagon is doing compared with other London Housing Associations using "Housemark" data.

\*2016/17 – this is the most recent year where we have comparative figures.

Housemark is a membership organisation for the UK Housing sector providing data and analytical insight.

Cost Comparison		Quality Measure	
<b>Housing Management</b> (cost per home)		% of rent collected	
		Residents satisfied with the overall service	
Costs of estate services per home		Resident satisfaction with estate services	
<b>Repairs</b> – managing the service (cost per home)		Residents satisfied with repairs service	
Cost of repairs per home			
Cost of carrying out cyclical painting and gas safety work		Gas safety record during the year	
<b>Central costs</b> – IT, Finance and HR (per home)		Staff sickness	

 Best 25% of Housing Associations in London     Middle 50% of Housing Associations in London     Worst 25% of Housing Associations in London

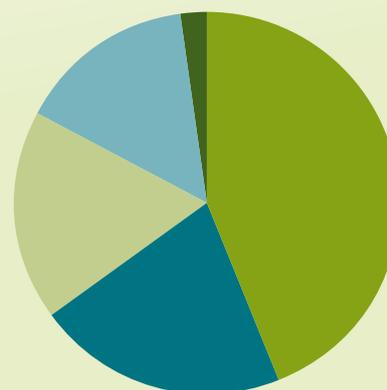
# Our finances

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

for the year ended 31st March 2018 (£000s)	2018	2017
Turnover	33,527	31,853
Cost of sales	(2,409)	(874)
Operating costs	(23,634)	(21,531)
Surplus on sale of properties	1,659	2,068
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>9,143</b>	<b>11,516</b>
Interest receivable	9	51
Interest payable and similar charges	(3,935)	(3,999)
Change in fair value of financial instrument	1,103	(594)
<b>Surplus for the year before tax</b>	<b>6,320</b>	<b>6,974</b>
Taxation	-	-
Change in fair value of hedged financial instrument	2,219	(948)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>8,539</b>	<b>6,026</b>

Full financial statements can be downloaded from our website:  
[www.hexagon.org.uk](http://www.hexagon.org.uk)

### How every £ of rent was spent



- **44%** Planned maintenance and home improvement programme
- **21%** Responsive repairs
- **18%** Interest on loans
- **15%** Housing management and tenant participation
- **2%** Community development

## Meet the Board

Name	Service	Employer	Occupation
Mark Allan <sup>3,4</sup>	1½ years	Chisel Housing	Co-ops & Tenants Officer
Debbie Bankole-Williams <sup>1</sup> , Vice Chair	6 years, 4 months	MCCH	Executive Director of Finance & IT
Carol Bernstein <sup>3</sup>	6 months	Self-employed	Chartered Accountant
Ruth Chambers <sup>1</sup>	3½ years	Self-employed	Campaign & Public Policy Consultant
Roy Coulter, Chair <sup>2</sup>	7½ years	N/A	Retired
Dermot Finn <sup>2,4</sup>	5½ years	Self-employed	Microsoft Web Application Developer
Jeanette Kenyon <sup>2</sup>	4½ years	Self-employed	Property Development Consultant
Martin Large <sup>1,2,3</sup>	3½ years	N/A	Retired
Ranna McArdle <sup>1,3,4</sup>	1½ years	Amnesty International	PA to Director of Corporate Resources
Tom McCormack	6½ years	Hexagon Housing Association	Chief Executive
Denise Senner <sup>4</sup>	6 months	Self-Employed	Horticulturalist
Ian Watts <sup>1,2,3</sup>	4½ years	PA Housing	Executive Director Operations

<sup>1</sup>Audit & Risk Committee | <sup>2</sup>Remuneration Committee | <sup>3</sup>Performance Management Committee | <sup>4</sup>Resident Board Member

# Hexagon

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