



Fairoak

Providing the Keys
to Happy Healthy Homes

Board Member Information Pack

www.fairoakhousing.co.uk

Our vision:

We want to help create a world where everyone has a safe and happy home where they can flourish and be part of their community.

Our mission:

We provide safe, comfortable homes where autistic people and people with a learning disability can live happy, healthy lives.



Sarah Parr
Chair of the Fairoak Board

Thinking of joining our board?

We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for your interest in Fairoak Housing Association.

We are a small, friendly supported housing provider based in Kendal, Cumbria.

For over 20 years, we have provided safe, comfortable homes for people with learning disabilities and autism.

Behind the scenes is a passionate team and a committed Board who care deeply about helping people live happy, healthy and independent lives.

We are a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status, serving communities across the North of England - from the South Lakes and West Cumbria to North Lancashire and the North East.

Our homes vary widely, reflecting the unique needs of those who live in them - from shared supported living to independent flats and shared ownership.

At the heart of Fairoak is a simple belief: everyone deserves a safe, happy home where they feel part of a community.

Why Join Us?

Right now is an exciting time at Fairoak. We have big plans to grow and create more homes, but to do this well, we need the right people on our Board.

We are looking for new Board Members who care about what we do and want to help shape the future of supported housing. You don't need previous Board experience or a background in housing - what matters most is that you share our values and bring your own skills, insight, or lived experience.

You might be a great fit if you:

- Have worked in a school, care service, or supported housing
- Are a parent, carer, or supporter of someone with a learning disability or autism
- Simply want to use your voice to help others live well

We are especially keen to hear from people with lived experience - whether through family, work, or community.

Our Promise to You

Joining our Board means being part of something meaningful. You will help guide our work, support our growth and ensure we always put our tenants first. Along the way, you'll learn new things, meet great people and make a real difference.

If you're curious, we'd love to have a friendly, no-pressure conversation to see if this role is right for you.

Together, we can help more people feel safe, supported and at home.



What makes **Fairoak special?**



More than just bricks and mortar.

We know a home is more than a roof over your head. Many of our tenants face loneliness, so we created Friends of Fairoak, a group that helps people connect, learn skills, explore hobbies and build local friendships.



Having a voice and being heard.

Everyone deserves a say in their home. We have signed up to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants charter and appointed a Customer Engagement Officer to make sure tenants' voices reach the Board.



Small but mighty.

We may be small, but we provide a personal, flexible service. We know our tenants by name, not number. Our team is professional, experienced and deeply committed to what matters most – people.



Commitment to quality.

Our homes are well-maintained and high quality and tenant satisfaction shows it. But we never stop looking for ways to improve and innovate because our tenants deserve the best.



What could you bring to Fairoak?

We are especially keen to hear from individuals who:

Bring lived experience of learning disability or autism

Whether through personal experience or as a family member or carer, your insight is invaluable in shaping services that truly meet people's needs.

Have worked directly with people with learning disabilities or autism

Experience in education, support services, health, social care, or advocacy roles gives you a grounded understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing this community.

Understand the barriers people with learning disabilities or autism may face

Awareness of issues such as accessibility, inclusion and rights-based support is essential to making meaningful change at a governance level.

Can champion the voices of people with learning disabilities or autism

We need board members who are committed to ensuring that the perspectives of people with learning disabilities or autism are central to our decision-making.

Previous board experience is a plus but not essential.

If you're passionate and willing to learn, we want to hear from you.

We value diversity

We are not just saying that – we strongly believe diversity of thought and experience makes us stronger. If you think you can bring a fresh perspective, we want to hear from you.

Why join us?

In the words of one of our current Board Members:

"We're big enough to make a real difference to a lot of people's lives, but small enough to make a real personal connection with our tenants, which is a really enriching experience."

Want to know more?

Please visit our website at **www.fairoakhousing.co.uk** for more information.

Or, if you'd rather have a chat, please get in touch with our **Chief Executive, Lisa Chant**.

Call us in Kendal on **01539 720082**

Or email Lisa directly at **lisa.chant@fairoakhousing.co.uk**

We'd love to hear from you – even if you're just curious.

Board Member Role Description

Key Responsibilities of Board Members

Purpose of the role

As a Board Member, your main role is to work together with other members of the Board to guide and oversee the work of Fairoak. This means helping to set the overall direction, agree on important policies and make sure the organisation stays true to its goals. The day-to-day running of Fairoak is carried out by our paid staff, who put the Board's decisions into action.

1. Strategic Leadership

Contribute to setting Fairoak's long-term strategy, including its mission, vision and core values.

2. Policy and Planning Oversight

Approve key policies and plans that support strategic objectives, ensuring compliance with all legal, regulatory and best practice requirements. This includes signing off on the annual budget and financial accounts.

3. Governance and Delegation

Establish a clear framework for delegation and ensure that robust systems of internal control are in place and regularly monitored.

4. Performance Monitoring

Oversee Fairoak's performance against agreed plans, budgets and strategic objectives, ensuring decisions are being implemented effectively.

5. Risk Management

Make informed decisions on matters that may pose significant financial, operational, or reputational risks to Fairoak, seeking professional advice when appropriate.

6. Review and Adaptation

Regularly assess Fairoak's activities and be prepared to make changes to ensure it remains effective and fit for purpose.

7. Tenant Focus

Ensure that the needs and interests of tenants are at the heart of decision-making and policy development.

8. Chief Executive Oversight

Take part in the appointment, support, appraisal and, if necessary, removal of the Chief Executive.

9. Legal and Ethical Compliance

Ensure Fairoak operates within the law and adheres to high standards of conduct, performance, and integrity.

10. Representation and Engagement

Represent Fairoak at key events, meetings and functions, supporting its reputation and visibility.

11. Committee Participation

Actively contribute to Board committees or working groups where required, providing additional oversight and expertise.

12. Uphold Governance Standards

Abide by the NHF Code of Conduct (2022) and Code of Governance (2020), ensuring accountability and transparency.

13. Board Development and Appraisal

Engage in regular performance reviews and professional development to maintain strong, effective governance.





Board Member Person Specification

Personal qualities and commitment

We're looking for people who:

- **Believe in Fairoak's values and goals**, especially our commitment to providing safe, accessible and supportive homes for our tenants.
- **Are willing to give the time and energy** needed to be fully involved in the role
- **Work well with others**, value different perspectives and listen with respect.
- **Show integrity and fairness**, treating everyone equally and without judgement. We expect all Board members to promote an inclusive and respectful environment.

Key Skills and Strengths

We're interested in people who can bring, or are willing to develop, the following:

- **Seeing the bigger picture**
Able to look beyond day-to-day details to understand wider issues, future challenges and long-term goals.
- **Asking the right questions**
Curious and thoughtful – willing to seek out useful information, facts, or evidence before making decisions.

- **Helping shape the future**
Able to turn ideas and understanding into clear goals and actions that support Fairoak's direction and purpose.
- **Good judgement and managing risks**
Can break down complex issues, think through different options and understand possible risks and consequences before making decisions.
- **Awareness of others**
Understands how their actions affect others and uses this awareness to build good relationships and work well in a group.
- **Teamwork and collaboration**
Works well with others, shares ideas, supports group decisions and considers the needs of everyone involved – including tenants, staff and partners.
- **Confidence to speak up**
Comfortable sharing their views and able to stay objective, especially when there are different opinions.
- **Acting as a role model**
Shows a strong personal commitment to Fairoak's purpose and values and represents the organisation positively in all settings.

Board Member Person Specification

Experience and knowledge

We are looking for people who bring a mix of knowledge, experience and willingness to learn. You don't need to meet every point listed and we are committed to providing training to support your development. Ideally, you will:

- **Be comfortable reviewing financial information** and willing to help make financial decisions, even if you are not a finance expert.
- Understand the importance of **accurate, reliable data** when making decisions and be willing to ask questions to ensure the information provided is sound.
- Have an awareness of the **social and economic issues** that affect the people and communities FairOak supports.
- Have experience making decisions where **risk needs to be carefully considered** and be prepared to act in line with the Board's agreed approach to managing risk.
- Be able to **think strategically**, understand and weigh up complex issues, ask constructive questions and confidently share your views to support group decision-making.
- Offer **experience** that complements the existing strengths on our Board (e.g. finance, housing, health and social care, community engagement, regulation, HR, or governance).

Capacity

We ask that all Board Members:

- Have enough time to take part fully in Board activities, including meetings, preparation and training.
- Are flexible enough to occasionally respond to **unforeseen issues or urgent decisions**.
- Do not have any **conflicts of interest** that could affect their ability to act in the best interests of FairOak.

Eligibility

To join the Board, you must:

- Be **18 years or over**.
- Meet the **HMRC "fit and proper persons" test**, which applies to anyone involved in managing or overseeing a charity's finances and activities.
- Not have a **mental health condition** that legally prevents you from acting as a Board Member (as defined under the Mental Health Act 1983).
- Not have any significant **conflict of interest** that could stop you from making decisions in the best interest of FairOak.

Fairoak tenant, South Lakes



Terms and conditions

- This is a **non-executive, part-time voluntary role**.
- The Board typically meets **6 to 7 times per year**, with an additional **Board Strategy Day**.
- Meetings are usually held on **Wednesdays at 5.15pm** at our offices in **Kendal**.
- Two Board committees – **Audit & Assurance** and **Remuneration** – currently meet **2 to 3 times a year**.
- The total time commitment is estimated at around **6 to 7 days per year**, including meeting preparation, attendance, and any additional duties such as committee involvement.
- Board Members are expected to:
 - **Commit time and energy** to understanding the work of Fair oak.
 - **Build relationships** with fellow Board members and staff.
 - **Prepare fully** to participate effectively in discussions and decision-making.
- Board Members typically serve a **maximum of two terms of 3-years**, in line with our adopted Code of Governance.
- While the role is currently **unpaid**, this is under review and may change during **2025/26**.
- **Reasonable travel expenses** are reimbursed and all Board Members will have access to **training and development opportunities** to support them in the role.

Fairoak tenant, County Durham

How to apply

If you're interested in joining the Board of Fair oak Housing Association, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

The Appointment Brief and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form are available to download from our website: www.fairoakhousing.co.uk

To apply, please send the following:

1. Your up-to-date CV

Please include your contact details (email and telephone).

2. A covering letter

This should explain how your experience meets the criteria set out in the Person Specification and tell us why you're interested in becoming a Board Member at Fair oak.

3. Referee details

Please include the names and contact details of two referees. If possible, one should relate to your most recent board or governance role (if applicable).

Let us know if you're happy for us to contact your referees during the selection process.

4. A completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

This can be downloaded from our website or requested from our office on 01539 720 082.

Please email your completed application to:

Lisa Chant, Chief Executive
lisa.chant@fairoakhousing.co.uk

All applications will be handled with the strictest confidence.

Assessment and selection process

All applications will be carefully reviewed and assessed against the criteria outlined in the Person Specification.

If you are shortlisted for interview, we will contact you by **phone or email** to arrange a time that is convenient for you.

Any offer of a role on the Board will be **subject to the following checks**:

- **Satisfactory references**
- **Proof of eligibility to work in the UK**
- **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check**



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What does it mean being a Fairoak tenant?

"Living here means everything. My home is my independence and my safe place where I can live as independently as I am able."

"It's good to have my own room as I can spend time on my own. It's my safe space. You won't get anywhere better than here."

"I feel safe and happy in my home. 10 out of 10 for everyone at Fairoak".

"I am lucky to have a way of securing help and support from Fairoak. I feel so lucky to have this lovely flat and I cannot thank them enough."

"On the rare occasion I may raise an issue, they respond, they listen, and they act upon it. They value us."



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