



FORUM HOUSING
— it's all about **you** —

A photograph of two women in business attire sitting at a desk. The woman on the right, with dark hair, is smiling and handing a card to the woman on the left, who has blonde hair. A laptop is open on the desk in front of them.

**Volunteer
Information
Pack**

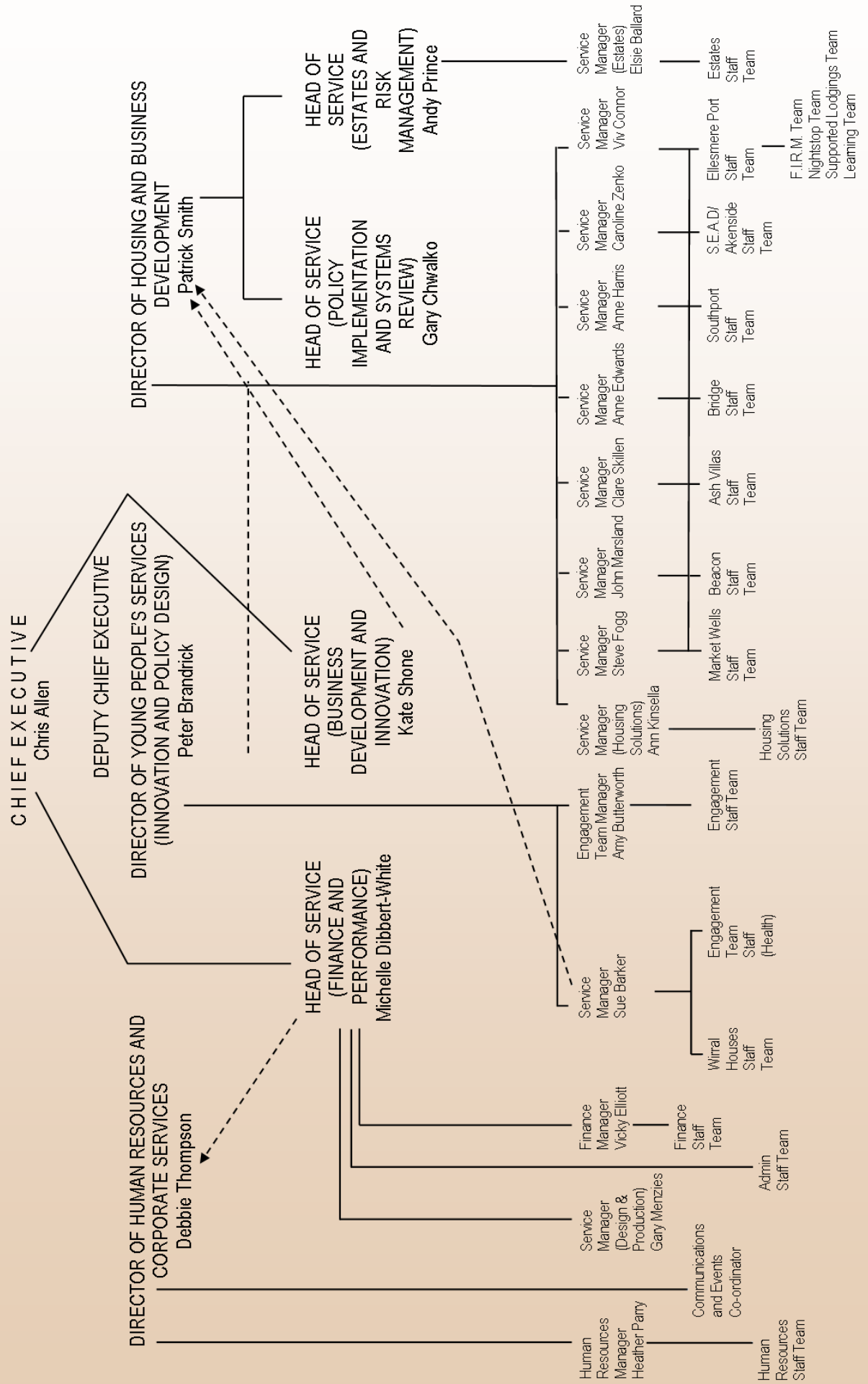


Forum Housing Association have provided supported housing to young people on the Wirral for over 35 years, in Sefton since 1994 and in Ellesmere Port and Neston since 2004. Work began with a number of small dispersed properties offering limited support to young mothers, mainly in the Oxtan area of Birkenhead. A strong partnership with Social Services and the Housing Department in the early 80s increased the Association stock. The Association also developed new areas of support for young people in care, those at risk of offending and an expansion of its services to the street homeless and young people in need of help with basic life skills. Today the Association offers a full range of support and services to Merseyside's homeless and vulnerably housed young people.

Each of our Projects vary, some with 24 hour support, others with a limited amount. This is dependent upon specific need and the range of services required to those housed. The Association works with over 80 partners to deliver services to our residents and in addition, residents and staff are involved in local community initiatives.

Forum Housing Association's Board, ensure the Association is governed according to all relevant law and regulations. All the Board members are volunteers and are recruited to serve on specific committees according to their qualifications, skills and experience. Committees include Risk and Audit, Housing and Young People's Services and Resources and Business Development.

Organisational structure



Accommodation Services information



Forum Housing Association have provided supported housing to young people on the Wirral for over 35 years, in Sefton since 1994 and in Ellesmere Port and Neston since 2004. Work began with a number of small dispersed properties offering limited support to young mothers, mainly in the Oxtan area of Birkenhead. A strong partnership with Social Services and the Housing Department in the early 80s increased the Association stock. The Association also developed new areas of support for young people in care, those at risk of offending and an expansion of its services to the street homeless and young people in need of help with basic life skills. Today the Association offers a full range of support and services to Merseyside's homeless and vulnerably housed young people.

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The Akenside Project

The Akenside Project consists of 12 units of high standard accommodation which provides outreach supported accommodation for young people aged 16-25 in the Sefton area. Primarily the Project provides for young care leavers and supports them through the transition from Local Authority Care to a more self supporting lifestyle.

The Project is sited in 2 shared houses and 6 self contained flats located in a new build housing estate community setting.



The Lock Project

The Lock in Ellesmere Port opened in June 2004, and offers 8 units of high quality accommodation for single young people aged 16-25, who are homeless or seeking independence.

The support team provide a support, guidance and advocacy service to young people working towards a more self-supporting lifestyle. Support on site is on a 24 hour basis. Accommodation is provided in fully furnished self-contained flats, 1 ground floor flat is adapted for disabled use.



The Quays

The Quays in Ellesmere Port opened in March 2005, and offers 8 units of accommodation for single young people aged 16-25, who are homeless or seeking independence.

The support team from The Lock provide a support, guidance and advocacy service to young people working towards a more self-supporting lifestyle.

Accommodation is provided in fully furnished, 1 bedroomed self contained flats situated over 2 floors. There is a communal hallway.



The Houses

Forum's dispersed housing provision comprises 31 units consisting of one and two bedroom self contained flats, bedsits and shared housing. In Birkenhead, Caroline Place and Rocky Bank Road cater for single parents aged 16 - 25.

Lincoln Drive in Wallasey provides 4 self contained units catering for young people aged 16 - 25 with disabilities. The two ground floor flats are adapted for wheelchair use.

Balls Road in Birkenhead offers accommodation to 16 - 25 year olds. There are 7 units of accommodation, 5 of which are self contained, while 2 have their own kitchen area but share a bathroom. Balls Road is within easy reach of Wirral Metropolitan College.

Also, there are 8 two bedroomed terraced houses which cater for single mothers aged 16-25 years, and 2 one bedroom flats within the Ellesmere Port area

Support is provided on an 'Outreach' basis with 24 hour emergency back up available by contacting the Association's 24 hour staffed Projects. The support at the Houses is structured towards empowering young people progressing to a more self supporting lifestyle and is managed with limited support so is therefore offered to young people who can evidence a range of life and social skills.



Accommodation Services information



Leyland Road Project

Leyland Road in Southport provides 19 units of accommodation, comprising 7 Direct Access and 12 Semi Independent places. It caters for single young people aged 16 - 25 in housing need. The Project was refurbished in January 2004.

Support on site is provided on a 24 hour basis. The support team provide a support, guidance and advocacy service. Accommodation and support are geared towards securing move-on options.

All units are single with own shower and wc, furnished, and secured. The Semi Independent units have the added benefit of their own kitchen. Communal facilities include kitchen (for Direct Access), laundry and a TV lounge.



The S.E.A.D. Project

The S.E.A.D. in Sefton, is an 18 unit Direct Access Accommodation and Resettlement project supporting young people aged 16 - 25 in housing need. The Project was refurbished in July 2003,

Accommodation and support is provided on a 28 day basis and is geared towards generating and securing viable move-on options.

All rooms are single, furnished and are secured. Communal facilities include, kitchen, laundry, showers and a TV lounge. The Project is not wheelchair accessible.



The Bridge Project

The Bridge, in Birkenhead, is a 26 unit Direct Access Accommodation and Resettlement Project supporting the single homeless aged 16-25 with support provided on a 24 hour basis.

The Bridge provides young people with a supportive and stable environment, within which personal needs and practical issues are worked through, whilst move on options are generated and secured.

On site all rooms are furnished and secureable. Communal facilities include, kitchen, dining area, laundry, showers and TV lounge. All ground floor facilities are wheelchair accessible.



The Market Wells Foyer

The Market Wells Foyer in the Hamilton Quarter of Birkenhead, opened in June 2002, provides 40 units of high quality purpose built accommodation for single young people aged 16-25.

The Market Wells Foyer also offers training facilities and a real opportunity for young people to maintain a home whilst undertaking options relating to Education, Training and Employment.

The support team provide support, guidance and an advocacy service to young people. Support on site is on a 24 hour basis. Accommodation is provided in fully furnished self-contained flats. Communal facilities include laundry and IT suite.



Ash Villas

Ash Villas in Wallasey provides 54 units of high standard, supported accommodation for single people aged 16 – 25, in housing need. This Project is due for refurbishment this year.

Ash Villas provides staffing 24 hours a day offering support and guidance around personal development for young people progressing towards a more independent lifestyle.

Accommodation is provided in furnished self-contained flats, with 6 ground floor flats adapted for disabled use. Communal facilities include a laundry and conference room, utilised for resident activities.



The Beacon Project

The Beacon Project, in Tranmere, offers 63 units of high quality accommodation for young people aged 16-25, who are homeless or seeking independence. There is also provision for young, single parent families. The Project underwent a refurbishment during 2001.

The Project's support team provide a support, guidance and advocacy service to young people working towards a more self supporting lifestyle. Support on site is on a 24 hour basis. Accommodation is provided in fully furnished self contained flats, 6 of these are adapted for disabled use. Communal facilities include a laundry and conference room, utilised for resident activities.



FORUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

REQUIREMENTS OF A VOLUNTEER WORKER: INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose of a Volunteer Worker

The purpose of a Volunteer Worker is to undertake predetermined specific pieces of work within the Association. The volunteer/employer relationship is a reciprocal one whereby the Association is committed to providing a nurturing environment where Volunteers can grow and develop and consequently contribute positively to the work of the Association.

Expectations for a Volunteer Worker

In line with the Associations ethos, all volunteer workers will be expected to:

1. Promote good practice, through full participation and adherence to the Association's policies and procedures and working practices which may be reviewed from time to time.
2. Approach their volunteer worker role with a flexible attitude allowing for reasonable changes in duties which may be requested.
3. Provide support, good advice and guidance to the young people in the Association's care.

Duties and Responsibilities for a Volunteer Worker (these will vary depending on specific piece of voluntary work being undertaken)

The following gives an indication of the duties and responsibilities that a volunteer worker would be expected to undertake:

1. To assist the relevant Manager as required.
2. To assist and support the Project Staff as required.
3. To provide an efficient and courteous service to the public at all times.

Recruitment of ex-offenders policy



Forum Housing Association is fully committed to all principles of Equality and Diversity and takes an approach which recognises the importance of all seven strands of Diversity (Race, Gender, Gender Identity, Age, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief). As a demonstration of our commitment, this policy and procedure has had an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on it to ensure it has a positive impact on the Association's work regarding equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery.

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

POLICY

The Association is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or other users of its services regardless of their race, religion or religious beliefs, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age or offending background.

The Association actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates who have the right mix of talent, skills and potential. Candidates are selected for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experiences.

The Association makes use of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure service to assess an applicant's suitability for employment. The Association complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

This policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is available to all applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

PROCEDURE

A disclosure is only requested for those positions where a risk assessment has identified the need for one. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all job application forms and job adverts will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process we encourage all applicants called for interview to be open and honest and to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request this information be sent to the Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services under separate confidential cover and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

We will ensure that all those in the Association who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We will also ensure they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters disclosed that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment, once known.

The Association will make every applicant subject to a CRB disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and copies are available on request.

The Association will wherever possible discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the applicant before withdrawing an offer of employment or terminating employment.

If you do not agree with our decision to withdraw an offer of employment or terminate employment you can appeal in writing to the Chief Executive at Forum Housing Association, 2nd Floor, 84 Market Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 6HB.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prohibit you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

PROCEDURE REGARDING EXISTING STAFF

The Association currently undertakes a two yearly rolling programme whereby it carries out a CRB check on those staff members where a risk assessment has identified a CRB disclosure to be necessary.

If the situation arises where a staff member is aware that their criminal record may have changed in the period since their previous disclosure, staff are required to be open and honest and share this information with the Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services. The Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services will then arrange to meet with the staff member to discuss the issue further and then undertake a risk assessment of the offence and its relevance to the position the staff member holds within the Association.

Upon completion of the risk assessment, the Director of Human Resources will meet again with the staff member and inform them of the outcome of the risk assessment.

Staff non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Equality and diversity information



FORUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

POLICY STATEMENT

Forum Housing Association is fully committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity, and recognises through its Christian principles that its Equality and Diversity responsibilities are far greater than that of statute. We will strive to cover all areas where an individual or groups are disadvantaged in any way preventing them from reaching their full potential. We will make every effort to ensure that no applicant for housing or employment receives less favourable treatment than another because of their individuality. We recognise all nine Protected Characteristics covered by the Equality Act and as such are opposed to discrimination on the grounds of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation or any other individual characteristic that may effect the treatment of an individual.

We are committed to creating a culture of inclusiveness developing a work place, which reflects the local population with which we work, heightening staff and resident awareness to help people understand and deal with difference. We believe our employees and residents are entitled to dignity and respect, under no circumstances will any form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment be tolerated. It is therefore our declaration to attempt to challenge discrimination in all its forms, direct and indirect by the use of positive action. We want to serve young people within the communities we work; ensuring young people have access to all services, wherever they live, whatever their background ensuring our services are equally accessible to all and by actively encouraging our partners to do the same in order to establish community cohesion.

We believe that it is in the Association's best interests, and those who work in it, to ensure human resources, talents and skills available throughout the community are considered when employment opportunities arise. To this end, within the equality framework, we are committed, whenever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community in which we operate. We have regular reviews and monitor our Recruitment and Selection policy to keep up to date with good practice and changing legislation.

We are committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection, appointment and training and development are on merit and ability.

Our aim is to ensure that Forum Housing Association is an organisation that recognises and embraces diversity. The Association will strive to create a culture of inclusiveness promoting good equality practice.

In practice the Association will value each individual, in their own right, regardless of whether or not they belong to any of the Protected Characteristics groups, enabling staff and residents to be included, participating fully and contributing their best, valuing the different contributions individuals can make.

The Association will also ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

In addition to compliance with the above, the Association will adapt in line with future changes in legislation. However, the Association acknowledges that legislation is defensive and to this end exists to ensure organisations do not do the wrong thing. Therefore, the Association views compliance with legislation as a minimum and through its comprehensive Equality and Diversity Action Plan, the Association is ensuring it is going beyond legislative requirements and making a real difference.



PRACTICE STATEMENTS

The Board, the Chief Executive and the Equality and Diversity Officer are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of and follow the Equality and Diversity policy.

Forum Housing Association will encourage all staff and residents and partnering organisations to share the values expressed in the policy statement.

Every Board member and all staff members have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is put into practice. A personal commitment is expected from everyone in making it effective and in setting an exemplary standard for others to follow.

The Association's Equality and Diversity Steering Group is responsible for ensuring through the Equality and Diversity Action Plan it sets challenging, yet achievable targets and will monitor the Association's progress against this continuously evolving tool.

The Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services and the Equality and Diversity Officer are responsible for promoting equal opportunities across the Association, ensuring that the policy is up to date and monitored on a regular basis.

The Executive team are individually and corporately responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented in their particular areas of responsibility.

All Heads of Service and all Managers have a responsibility for the implementation of the policy in their area of work and at their Services.

The Association's Equality and Diversity staff group, made up of staff members from each of the Association's teams, are responsible for promoting Equality and Diversity within their team and information sharing with their team.

Training for staff and Board Members to raise awareness of Equality and Diversity is available through an internal training Workbook. In addition to this, all new staff are required to attend an Equality and Diversity session at the corporate induction.

Training will also be made available through the Deputy Chief Executive and Equality and Diversity Officer to residents or partnering organisations where appropriate.

Concerns relating to the policy should be taken to the Line Manager in the first instance who will consult with the Equality and Diversity Officer if required.

Any member of staff who harasses any other employee or resident on any of the grounds covered within this policy will be subject to the Association's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, will result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

The Board will be given quarterly reports to update on the progress of Equality and Diversity within the Association.

Code of conduct for staff



Forum Housing Association is fully committed to all principles of Equality and Diversity and takes an approach which recognises the importance of all seven strands of Diversity (Race, Gender, Gender Identity, Age, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief). As a demonstration of our commitment, this policy and procedure has had an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on it to ensure it has a positive impact on the Association's work regarding equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

All permanent staff, casual and volunteer staff members who represent the Association in those capacities will adopt this Code of Conduct to promote positive working relationships between all based on mutual trust and respect.

The Association has a Christian Ethos and this underpins the leadership and management style of the Association. Staff are required to carry out their duties in accordance with all the Association's Policies and Procedures including especially Behavioural Competencies. The manner in which staff conduct themselves whilst undertaking their work must reflect the values of the Association. This Code of Conduct has been written to provide permanent, casual and volunteer staff with a statement of the Association expectations. Compliance with standards of behaviour and values in this code will help protect the reputation of both the Association and its staff. Breaches of the Code of Conduct could lead to disciplinary action. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff reporting to them are aware of this code of conduct.

VALUE STATEMENT

ALL THOSE TO WHOM THIS CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES WILL STRIVE TO PROMOTE SHARED VALUES WHICH WILL ENCOMPASS:

- respect for persons both within and outside the Association
- honesty in speech and actions
- fairness and justice in the treatment of all
- openness in communication
- belief in diversity within an environment of corporateness and professionalism;
- commitment to quality, individual empowerment and the Association's ethos
- accountability for their decisions and actions.

WORKING PRACTICE

ALL THOSE TO WHOM THIS CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES WILL:

GENERAL

Be aware of the Association's policies, procedures and practices and ensure compliance at all times.

Be aware of the Association's Behavioural Competencies and demonstrate them in all that they do.

Have due regard to the Association's Equality and Diversity Policy and not to discriminate in any area.

Take responsibility for working effectively within the job description, contract of employment and policies and procedures guide.

Recognise the leadership and management structure of the Association and accept that authority and responsibility is defined within that structure.

Be committed to delivering the Association's standards by acknowledging the leadership and management style and ethos, which is based on mutual respect for, and care of others.

Refer all complaints and/or criticisms through the appropriate channels.

Attend and participate in identified training courses or sessions, staff meetings or other events as appropriate.

Code of conduct for staff



SPECIFIC

Promote and maintain good relationships with others by respectfully working with them in a spirit of harmony and co-operation and giving others courteous consideration of their opinion.

Recognise that colleagues have valued contributions and treat them with due regard to their professionalism.

Work together for the common good and to achieve the Association's aims and objectives.

Avoid entering into contentious debate or discussion, which may lead to erosions of good working relationships both within and outside the Association.

Be committed to delivering a high quality service to residents and other stakeholders.

Be committed to seek means to empower residents to make decisions.

Afford courtesy to all residents, stakeholders and visitors, treating them all with equal respect.

Do not enter into inappropriate relationships with residents.

Dress appropriately (as directed) for tasks and duties and maintain acceptable personal hygiene.

Avoid duplicity in any matter of word or deed and if compromised advise line manager immediately.

Be open and accountable to colleagues in relation to both written and verbal communication.

Maintain a confidential approach to all information shared within the Association. Abide by the Association's Confidentiality Policy.

Ensure use of record keeping and information sharing takes account of confidentiality for residents and the Association's Confidentiality Policy.

Do not pass or distribute to the press or media, articles about the Association and its activities, or write letters or articles in the capacity of an employee, without prior permission from the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive.

Be convinced all relevant material is available before decision making takes place.

Ensure that decision making and taking gives due consideration to equality of treatment for all.

Be aware that arbitrary decision making may cause conflict, therefore others opinions may need to be sought.

PROCEDURE

All Association staff will receive a copy of the Code of Conduct Policy at Induction.

Staff must complete the below CCS1 to confirm that they have received, read and understood the Code of Conduct.

The CCS1 should be returned to the Human Resources Manager.

Staff non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary proceedings.

I have received and understood the Code of Conduct for Staff/Forum Representatives

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Dated: _____

Please return this Tear Off Slip to Heather Parry, Human Resources Manager





For any further information about the Association
please visit our website.

www.forumhousing.co.uk



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