

Non-Executive Director

Candidate Pack | August 2025





Stephen Lodge
Chief Executive



Paul Bryan
Deputy Chief Executive



Rachel Serle
Executive Director



Jan Montague
Executive Director

Your Application

Thanks for your interest in becoming a board member for Westward Housing

You will no doubt do your own due diligence, but please do read this pack carefully as it will provide you with a good overview of the organisation and the role. After you have done that, you may want to speak to one of us, so that we can talk through what you have to offer Westward and get a sense of how that aligns to what Westward is seeking.

To apply, please complete the online application – accessible via our [live jobs page](#) (click link).

The application includes:

- A section where you need to upload your up-to-date **CV**. Please ensure the information is focussed on your current and/or most recent roles (you can sum up earlier roles, say before the last 15 years), and tell us about your achievements so we get a picture of your skills and experience.
- A section to write your **supporting statement** – we want to hear about your motivation, why this role/organisation, and you will also want to evidence how relevant your offer is to the role specification.

You will receive an email confirmation and see an onscreen confirmation message after submitting your application, but **if you have any issues, please contact Debbie Lannon** via debbie.lannon@westwardhousing.org.uk or 01626 245184.

The role closes at **midnight on Monday 25 August 2025**. Please ensure we receive your application in good time.

If you have any questions in advance of completing your application, you can contact PA Justine Janes on 01626 245329 or justine.janes@westwardhousing.org.uk who will arrange a mutually convenient time and date for you to have an informal chat with either Debbie Lannon, Company Secretary or Stephen Lodge, Chief Executive.

Welcome to Westward

It's an exciting time for the housing sector, and an exciting time to join us. The government has just announced a raft of measures designed to support our sector, to help us step up and meet the housing crisis. This coincided with the launch of our new five year corporate strategy.

First and foremost our priority remains getting it right for our current customers. Last year, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced four consumer standards against which we are assessed. We take these very seriously, since they measure how well we are delivering services for our customers.

We also recognise the acute pressure on housing across the south west peninsula. With more than 50,000 households on local authority waiting lists, and more than 1,600 households living in temporary accommodation, we want to do more to help.

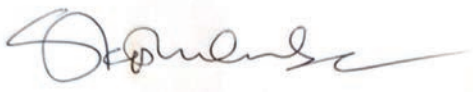
We can only grow our organisation and deliver services to our customers, now and in the future, if we have strong governance and financial resilience. To help us maintain this we're seeking a new member to join our board. If you're committed to customer service, to equity, diversity and inclusion, and to standing up to the injustice of poverty, you'll fit in well.

Ideally, you'll have experience as a board member. Importantly you'll understand governance and regulation. We are especially keen to hear from candidates with experience in people and culture, change and transformation, customer segmentation, service design and delivery, and equity, diversity and inclusion. And we're keen that our board is inclusive and our members are representative of the communities we work in. Your preferred style of working will be collaborative and you'll have the confidence to hold and share your own views. You'll be professionally curious. You'll be comfortable liaising with customers and stakeholders including councillors and MPs.

You'll, of course, do your own due diligence on us. We'd urge you to consider our values and our vision. If they resonate with you and having read this pack you feel you have the skills and experience to really add value to our board, then we'd love to hear from you. You might like to have a chat with our governance manager or CEO to help you decide. If so, just drop us a line to justine.janes@westwardhousing.org.uk.

We know that this is an important decision for you, just as it is for us. We look forward to getting to know you better during the process.

Warm regards,



Stephen Lodge
Chief Executive



Debbie Lannon
Governance Manager & Company Secretary

About Westward Housing Group

Westward is a not-for-profit housing association with charitable status, regulated by government and our regulator deems us a G1 V1.

Westward owns and manages more than 7,500 homes across Devon and Cornwall and delivers a range of contracted support services to 1,000 people, making us one of the leading affordable housing providers in the south west.

We offer a spectrum of homes and services to meet the needs of a diverse community. The majority of our homes are for rent to families on low incomes; these customers are typically in most need for our affordable housing.

The board has just launched its five year corporate strategy, underpinned by four core pillars. These are:

- **S**ervices customers trust
- **A**ffordable quality homes
- **F**inancially resilient and great value
- **E**mpowered and valued colleagues

During the life of the strategy we want to galvanise the passion and commitment of our colleagues and support them and our customers with technology, to further increase our efficiency. We want to improve access to our services and amplify how we hear the voice of our customers; recognising their diversity and how they influence our decisions.

We also want to explore how we can grow the number of homes we manage, to meet more need across Devon and Cornwall and to grow our business and with that, our financial resilience.

To do all of this we want to turn up the volume of our organisational voice, to influence decision makers. Our colleagues, our executive and board members all have a role to play in engaging with our customers and stakeholders.

A promotional graphic for Westward Housing Group. The top half features a photograph of a modern, multi-story apartment building with white and orange-brown siding and blue-framed windows. In the bottom right corner of the photo is a circular inset showing a smiling woman with long brown hair, wearing a patterned dress, standing in front of a grey door. The bottom half of the graphic has a dark blue background with white and yellow text. The Westward logo is in the top right, followed by the tagline 'providing homes and supporting communities'. Below the photo, three yellow phrases are listed: 'Be proactive', 'Always engage', and 'Show integrity'. A bulleted list of four points follows: 'Services that customers trust', 'Affordable and quality homes', 'Financially robust and great value', and 'Empowered and valued colleagues'. At the bottom right, social media icons for Facebook and Twitter are shown next to the text 'Westward Housing Group' and '@WestwardComms', with the website 'www.westwardhousing.org.uk' below them.

westward
providing homes
and supporting communities

Be proactive
Always engage
Show integrity

- Services that customers trust
- Affordable and quality homes
- Financially robust and great value
- Empowered and valued colleagues

Westward Housing Group @WestwardComms
www.westwardhousing.org.uk



Our Governance

Westward board is made up of nine non-executive directors and one executive director.

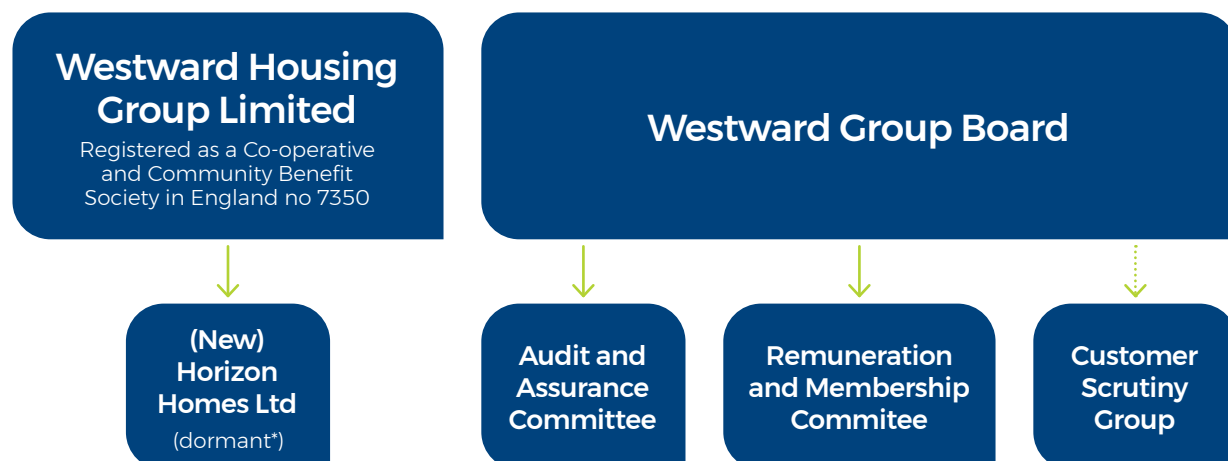
Non-executive directors also join a committee or subsidiary board.

Audit and assurance committee is responsible for internal and external audit matters, assurance and risk. Committee members are Westward non-executive directors and an independent non-executive director.

Our remuneration and membership committee leads on board member recruitment; all three members are Non-Executive Directors.

New Horizon Homes Ltd, our wholly owned commercial subsidiary paused activity in 2021 following the pandemic. This mitigated risk for us during an uncertain economic period. We've left activity on pause while we consider our growth ambitions over the coming 12 months.

Westward Governance Structure Chart



The Role

Purpose

The overall purpose of the board is:

- setting and ensuring compliance with the values, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the organisation, ensuring its long-term success;
- setting a positive culture, with strong customer focus;
- ensuring that the organisation operates effectively, efficiently and economically;
- providing oversight, direction and constructive challenge to the organisation's chief executive and executives;
- the appointment and, if necessary, the dismissal of the chief executive;
- satisfying itself as to the integrity of financial information, approving each year's budget, business plan and annual accounts prior to publication;
- establishing, overseeing and reviewing a framework of delegation and systems of internal control;
- establishing and overseeing a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets and reputation of the organisation;
- ensuring that Westward Housing Group meets legal obligations, regulatory requirements and that the Group's affairs are conducted in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance, probity, financial prudence and good practice;
- maintain overall control and consistency of approach across Westward Housing Group through:
 - strong governance arrangements
 - clear and appropriate levels of delegated authority
 - unified frameworks for strategic planning, financial control, risk management, policy making and performance review

Role profile

Each board member has a personal responsibility to:

- always act in the organisation's best interests;
- uphold the organisation's purpose, objectives and policies;
- uphold the values of the organisation through high standards of conduct and behaviour and by complying with the organisation's code of conduct, rules, standing orders and financial regulations;
- contribute to, and share responsibility for, the board's decisions, including its duty to exercise reasonable care, skill and independent judgement;
- act in a fair and professional manner;
- challenge and question in a constructive manner;
- prepare for and attend board and committee meetings, away days, training/development events and other external events as required;

- participate in reviews of individual and board performance and measures designed to develop the individual and board's capacity and effectiveness;
- establish and maintain a strong positive working relationship with the board, Chief Executive, key staff and customer groups;
- observe and comply with organisational aims, objectives, policies and procedures in relation to health and safety, and observe and continually promote equality and customer service;
- positively represent the organisation and the Group with external stakeholders, including customers, ensuring that the objectives of both are maintained;
- declare any relevant interests and avoid conflicts of interest;
- respect the confidentiality of information;
- ensure your skills and sector awareness are kept up to date and that you participate in learning and development sessions

All board members share the same legal status and have equal responsibility for ensuring that the board fulfils its collective role.

The parent (Westward) board has the ultimate responsibility for the subsidiaries and directs their activities.

A board member reports directly to the Chair of Westward board.



Person specification

Professional skills (required by board as a whole):

Transformation and Change

- Has experience of managing or governing business change / transformation programme within a relevant organisation or has experienced and/or influenced the outcome of a change programme

Strategic IT / Data

- A good understanding of strategic IT and experience of data governance
- Can analyse and strategically apply business intelligence / data
- Experience of major programmes of digitalisation and channel shift

Strategic HR and OD

- Demonstrable experience of excellent colleague engagement
- Understands cultural evolution and the application of organisational values in practice
- Up-to-date organisation design and development knowledge

Customer Journey

- Understanding of good customer relationship management
- Experience of working at a senior level in a housing operations role or lived experience of customer services, setting and monitoring the delivery of associated service standards
- Experience of digitisation of service provision
- Experience of the use of customer insight and data to inform Board decisions

Asset Management

- Expertise in strategic asset management, including overall property portfolio management, capital works, repairs and maintenance, and asset-related health & safety and building safety compliance

Development

- Experience of options appraisals of major development projects
- A good understanding of development/construction/procurement processes and is able to contribute to the monitoring of projects and developments
- Experience of managing major programmes / JVs / Partnerships

Corporate Finance and Business Planning

- Experience of managing finance in an organisation of similar size at a senior / strategic level; and
- Can strategically scrutinise, inform and expertly analyse financial management reporting and financial business plans (including stress testing) and mitigations planning

Treasury Expertise

- Expertise in treasury management, including obtaining new funding facilities, investment, capital markets, loan terms, and monitoring covenant compliance
- The ability to monitor and review funding and treasury matters and identify areas for attention

Regulation

- Experience of governance within a regulated sector (voluntary, charitable etc)

Internal Control and Assurance

- Experience of informing or developing the system of internal controls; and/or
- Experience of developing and/or monitoring an assurance framework

Risk Management

- Experience of establishing a risk management framework and monitoring high-level strategic and operational risks

Compliance

- Experience at a senior level / knowledge of best practice with regards to health and safety and all statutory compliance

Abilities

Analysis and understanding

- Demonstrates clear analytical intellect; assimilates and makes sense of complex data, evaluates options and understands different perspectives
- Possesses confidence to provide challenge, asks questions appropriately and keeps to an appropriate level of detail

Decision making:

- Actively participates in the decision making, shows independent judgement and original thought
- Prepared to take difficult decisions and measured risks

Communication and interpersonal skills:

- Respects, and is open to, the views of others in discussions on key issues
- Communicates clearly and persuasively
- Expects constructive feedback; is aware of own strengths, weaknesses and motivations
- Supports a strong team spirit; able to work collaboratively
- Adds value to board/committee work

Key terms and conditions

Remuneration

The role is remunerated at £5,876 per annum. In addition, reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of duties, including travelling to meetings, will be reimbursed.

Time commitment

The estimated time commitment is around 15-20 days a year (including meetings, reading and preparation time, committee work, board away days, appraisal, ambassadorial events, training and development, etc.)

Board meetings

Board meetings are held six times a year on Thursdays; five of them in person at our head office in Newton Abbot, South Devon and one meeting (business planning and stress testing) held virtually. Audit and assurance meetings are held virtually four times a year and remuneration and membership once a year face to face.

We hold paperless meetings using a clear and easy to use online system; Convene. All papers are published a week in advance and there is a chance to raise queries and comments via Convene before the meeting.

There are two away-days each year, one being an overnight event.

The meeting dates are agreed in September each year for the following financial year.

Tenure

Non-executive directors are usually appointed for a three-year term, subject to annual appraisal and the skills and knowledge requirements of the board. Tenure can be extended by another three-year term and then annually up to a maximum of nine years.

Re-appointment to the role after the first term is conditional upon a successful effectiveness review.

Induction

We walk you through a comprehensive, tailored induction and continue to support you with a subscription to a housing sector journal, regular sector updates, meetings with other chairs and members as well as ongoing learning and development opportunities.

Practical considerations

- Access to a portable device, email and the internet are required to access our paperless board portal
- Access to a suitable vehicle or public transport to attend meetings and events at various locations in Devon and Cornwall
- Out of pocket expenses and remuneration are paid in accordance with the relevant policies
- Meetings are generally held on Thursdays in the daytime

Eligibility

To be a board member you need to declare that you:

- are not an undischarged bankrupt or subject to any undischarged compositions or arrangements with your creditors
- are not disqualified or removed from acting as a company director, charity trustee, board member, non-executive director or charity manager
- have not been convicted of any indictable offence, unless the conviction is spent
- have not been convicted of any offence that would be likely to bring Westward into disrepute or might be incompatible with the role
- have not been convicted of any offence involving deception or dishonesty unless the conviction is spent
- are not in dispute with Westward
- are a fit and proper person, as required by HM Revenue and Customs

A DBS check is required.



Key dates and the Selection Process



Closes

Monday 25 August 2025 | midnight

We will be in touch to let you know the outcome of your application before the end of that week.



Interviews

Wednesday 10 September 2025 | in person

The interviews will be conducted by:

- Sue Edmonds (Board Member / Chair of the selection panel)
- Robert Stronge (Westward Chair designate)
- Stephen Lodge (Chief Executive)
- Debbie Lannon (Company Secretary)

If you are unable to attend on either of the identified dates for interviews, please do speak to Debbie Lannon before making an application.

We are passionate about equity, and **we want to ensure that our recruitment process is a fair, accessible, and positive experience for all.** If you require any adjustments to make sure that the interview environment works for you, or if you would like to discuss the support available, please contact Debbie Lannon on debbie.lannon@westwardhousing.org.uk

Still Interested?

We hope this pack has provided some useful and interesting background on Westward and the chair role.

You can find more information:

- on our website www.westwardhousing.org.uk
- by contacting PA Justine Janes on 01626 245329 or justine.janes@Westwardhousing.org.uk who will arrange a mutually convenient time and date for you to have an informal chat with Debbie Lannon, Company Secretary or Stephen Lodge, Chief Executive

If you would like to help us transform lives by providing homes and supporting communities, we would love to hear from you. To apply for the role of chair, please visit our website www.westwardhousing.org.uk/vacancies and click 'apply online' on the bottom right-hand corner of the advert.

Should you be successful, two references will be sought before an appointment is made.

Testimonials



Will Patterson, Westward board member and chair of Audit & Assurance Committee since January 2019:

I joined the Westward board in early 2019 and have found the role to be stimulating, enjoyable and rewarding.

The board and whole organisation has been very welcoming, with a comprehensive and structured induction plan, well organised meetings with open and constructive discussion. There are also excellent learning and development opportunities.

It is great to be able to bring my skills and experience into the context of a financially sound housing association which is making a significant contribution to addressing the acute housing need in the south west and is also rooted in the local community.



Frances West, Westward board member and Senior Independent Director since January 2019:

My initial three-year term as a Westward Housing Group board member has been excellent and the role is one I would highly recommend. A comprehensive, well thought through induction package set me up to quickly engage with the Westward strategic agenda and the executive group were highly constructive contributors to the process. The chair and fellow board members are all committed and experienced professionals from a range of backgrounds and our mix is well balanced, ensuring excellent discussion. The board is pragmatic, sensible and business focussed, but also has a social conscience that is evident in decisions. I really look forward to meetings and, until recently, had a lead role

with customer engagement, which has given me the opportunity to engage with tenants and to translate my previous housing experience into informing board debate and decision making. I've chaired a stage 3 customer complaints hearing which are rare and it was positive to see how the organisation responded to a tenant's concerns.

The resources available to support board meetings are excellent with papers circulated with enough time to digest, feedback and get responses ahead of the meeting if necessary and the supporting Convene software package makes this work well. The structure of away days spread over a two-day package in the spring and autumnal one day top up has been a great educational and social opportunity, as well as the chance to shape the organisational road map. It was obvious from my first contact with the group, that Westward values it's non-execs and our contribution is properly resourced, supported and respected.



Our Purpose:

**Providing homes and
supporting communities**

Our Values:

Be Proactive | **Always Engage** | **Show Integrity**

Our Objectives:

- Services that customers trust
- Affordable and quality homes
- Financially robust and great value
- Empowered and valued colleagues