



Evolve  
Housing  
+ Support



Recruitment of Board members  
Candidate information pack  
March 2023

## New Board members: March 2023

We are looking for four new Board members to help develop and oversee our next business plan as we navigate a challenging external environment. Whilst these roles are voluntary positions, you'll have the satisfaction of joining a dynamic organisation, passionate about making a lasting difference to lives and communities. We want people who share our vision and values.

We welcome applications from people with a wide range of skills, but are particularly seeking people with these broad skill sets at this time:

- Finance: a qualified accountant with experience of operating at an executive level, with strong commercial skills i.e. banking, investment management, auditing, etc. Knowledge of IT and a commercial understanding of projects would be an advantage.
- Housing: in particular, knowledge of housing development, grant funding, regulation and growth. An asset management background would be helpful.
- Fundraising and new business development: including competitive tendering, diversification of income sources. Knowledge of local authority commissioning would be an advantage.
- HR: senior operational experience in HR, including workforce development and culture. Current knowledge and experience of EDI issues would be an advantage.

We are committed to ensuring that our Board remains diverse and reflects our workforce and the communities we serve, so we are keen to find candidates from a broad range of diverse backgrounds. We are looking to bring in both experienced Board members and people without previous Board experience. A full induction and onboarding programme will be provided.

<https://www.evolvehousing.org.uk/>



## Who we are

Evolve is a leading homelessness charity in London, providing housing and support to over 1,300 people each year.

We believe in building on people's strengths, aspirations and goals to break the cycle of homelessness and help them move forward with their lives.

Our mission is to help children, young people and adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness reach their potential, and move on to live happy, fulfilled lives.

Our organisation began in 1861 as Croydon YMCA. We became South London YMCA in 2005 when Croydon YMCA merged with the YMCA of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. We later merged with Earls Court YMCA in 2013 and Grenfell Housing and Training in 2017 (NB – this organisation had no connection with Grenfell Tower).

We now work in the London Boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Merton, Sutton, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, providing over 550 beds in a range of services for vulnerable homeless people. Our customers and staff include people of all ages, men and women from a diverse range of cultures, faiths and backgrounds.

After consulting with customers, staff and other stakeholders, we rebranded in 2015, disaffiliating from the national YMCA Federation at that time. We are now Evolve Housing + Support – a brand and name that accurately represents our work and the full diversity of our customers and speaks to their aspirations for the future.

## Our purpose

Our purpose is to make a lasting difference to lives and communities by providing housing, support and community services to enable people to contribute to society and achieve their full potential.

### **We believe in:**

- Getting involved
- Getting the basics right
- People
- Embracing diversity
- Being ambitious

- Empowering others

**We are:**

- Passionate
- Honest
- Creative
- Optimistic
- Determined
- Inclusive

## What we do

We offer a programme of support tailored to meet people's individual needs, including housing, employment and skills training, health and wellbeing and counselling. We work with young parents to build the skills and resilience that can help prevent homelessness. We aim to build more affordable homes to help people move on to an independent life.

We are a place of positive change and growth for people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. We empower people who have experienced homelessness to build their independent living skills. Our solution-focussed approach looks at strategies customers can use to overcome problems to achieve lasting impact.

This approach is built into all of our housing services as well as our community-based services, including our Work + Learning and Health + Wellbeing programmes.

## Our customers

**Customers are at the heart of everything we do.** We support people to achieve their potential: whether it's helping people move on to independent living (80% of our customers gain independent tenancies after they leave us), improve their health and wellbeing or to get into work or training. We've had real success helping people set up their own businesses, move on to university and in some cases, come to work for us. Co-production is a key theme for the way we work.

*'Before I came to Alexandra House, I was very low, I lost a lot of weight, and I knew that I could not carry on with the life that I was leading. Now I'm healthy and very happy – I love my studio flat.'*

Since moving in, Sharon has taken every opportunity to get involved. She has participated in breakfast clubs, a women's group, cooking and baking workshops, gym classes and karaoke nights.

'I like to keep occupied. When I move out, I will definitely come back to help with the breakfast club as I love to be busy and I get on so well with the staff here.'

With our support, Sharon has grown in confidence and self-esteem and is now ready to live independently. Sharon is now in our step-down programme and is looking forward to moving into independent accommodation.

'The team here have been very kind and supportive. I feel prepared and ready to move on.'

95% of our customers are satisfied with the support they receive, one of the highest results in the sector.



## Our Board

Our Board meets 5 times a year, at the end of January, March and June, mid-September and early December, and there is also an Away Day. Meetings are usually on a Thursday and run from 5pm to no later than 7pm. We are now returning to in person meetings, and we additionally expect Board members to undertake visits to our services and ensure that the Board has visibility for both staff and customers.

## What we can offer you

You will be joining an engaged and committed team. Becoming a Board member is a fantastic and fascinating way to engage in the charitable sector. It's a role which will give back just as much as you put in and often much, much more. Though often challenging, a Board role will reward the adventurous and ambitious with a wealth of personal and professional skills which are valuable for both work and personal life whilst empowering you with a new sense of contribution in the pursuit of a wider purpose.

### **Contributing to a great cause**

There is no doubt that being a Board member is one of the most powerful ways in which you can contribute to your local community or to a cause you really care about. As a Board member at Evolve, you will play an integral part in good governance, not only ensuring the organisation remains viable and sustainable but that it adheres closely to its mission and works in the interests of its beneficiaries.

### **Strategic experience**

Strategic experience can be hard to come by. It can often take decades to find yourself in a role which requires strategic oversight. A Board role is a fantastic way of getting a head start on this, at once giving you the opportunity to develop and hone your critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills, as well as developing vital strategic sensibilities and team working skills.

Equally, for those who have already had some strategic responsibilities, a Board role provides an opportunity to use those skills in a significantly different context.

### **Continued personal development**

Joining a Board can be a very interesting experience, not least because it allows you to adapt and apply everything you have learned to date into a new context. Through a Board role you can gain a clearer idea of your own professional strengths and weaknesses whilst simultaneously learning new skills. Understanding how to adapt your professional knowledge to useful and impactful ends is a good reminder of your own versatility, giving you confidence in your existing abilities whilst challenging you push the boundaries of your expertise.

### **Teamworking**

As a member of our Board you are an essential part of our team and will have the opportunity to apply your unique skills and experience while learning from others. Working closely with a passionate team of people who have different perspectives is often one of the most enjoyable aspects of the role. You will use your ability to collaborate effectively with others. You will also use your ability to constructively challenge the ideas of fellow Board members as well as those of the senior executive team. This is essential to ensure the Board's strategic decisions are scrutinised and tested before being implemented. Negotiating, empathising, listening and clearly communicating ideas and concerns are huge factors in this process and often help to set the tone and culture of Board meetings.

## **Role description: Board member**

### **Role summary**

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The Evolve Housing + Support Board is crucial to the successful running of the organisation. The Board, in partnership with the senior executive team, ensures that Evolve operates effectively, setting its strategic vision and delivering its Business Plan. The Board is responsible for upholding and demonstrating excellence in governance, and ensuring that the organisation works within the parameters laid down by its Articles of Association and all regulatory requirements.

## Main responsibilities

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### Leadership, governance and strategy

- To review and approve the strategic Business Plan, Annual Plans and Budgets.
- To contribute to the effective leadership and governance of the organisation.
- To contribute to ensuring that the affairs of Evolve Housing + Support are carried out effectively and in compliance with its Articles of Association, the Charities Act, the Companies Act and all regulatory bodies.
- To contribute to ensuring that effective internal controls are in place and to ensure compliance with internal financial regulations, standing orders and delegated authorities.
- To monitor all aspects of performance to ensure services are delivered to the highest standards and in line with Evolve's vision and values.

### Attending meetings

- To attend Board meetings, including Away Days or similar, and contribute effectively in accordance with guidelines set by the Chair.
- To maintain confidentiality and be aware of any possible conflicts of interest, declaring same in advance.
- To prepare for meetings in advance to enable a full contribution and appropriate decision making.
- To carry out specific functions as delegated by the Chair, including attending sub committees on a regular or ad hoc basis.
- To attend an annual appraisal meeting with the Chair.

## Internal relationship management

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- In conjunction with any Remuneration Committee, to help determine executive remuneration and deal appropriately with succession planning and recruitment.
- To assist with hearing any appeals as required under HR, complaints and other internal procedures.



## External relationship management

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- To represent and promote Evolve Housing + Support in the wider community, acting as an ambassador for the organisation.
- To network and promote the work, achievements and future plans of the organisation.
- To be an excellent role model exhibiting good governance practices and behaviours.

## Person specification

### Core competencies

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- Able to contribute effectively to the work of the Board, providing appropriate strategic oversight and scrutiny of the organisation's work.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, able to liaise effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and audiences.
- Strategic thinking, able to analyse complex information, demonstrate clear analytical intellect and guide rational decision making.
- Ability to proactively support the values of Evolve Housing + Support.

### Knowledge and experience

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- Governance experience or knowledge of good governance practice.
- A strong track record in a relevant sector, with empathy for our core customer group.
- Business acumen: offering a commercial focus will be an advantage.
- Track record in differentiation between strategic governance and operational

### Skills and abilities

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- Skilled at working together to generate a strong team spirit, able to work collaboratively, achieving consensus in decision making and see the bigger picture.
- Ability to question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately on all matters presented to the Board.
- Able to assess risk and promote risk awareness without being risk averse or needing to be overly involved in the detail.

## Personal behaviour and style

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- Actively role models the professional conduct expected of a Board member.
- Passionate about service improvements; strongly champions the right of customers to have influence and access to excellent services.
- Enabling and supportive management style that motivates the executive and other staff and Board colleagues to deliver the best.
- Relevant confidence and empathy to act as a critical friend. Ability to “read the room”.
- Has the time and commitment to effectively discharge the responsibilities of the role: based in London or the South East; and able to attend all meetings as required.

### Statement on diversity

We are looking for people who can act as advocates for Evolve Housing + Support and who will be committed to our mission and approach. Our approach to diversity supports everything else we are committed to do and we expect all our Board members to demonstrate a personal commitment to equality and diversity; social justice and inclusion.

We are looking to increase the diversity of our Board as our Board needs to be as diverse as our colleagues and customers. We also know that people from different backgrounds bring perspectives and skills that create fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient. We are an equal opportunities employer, our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) can tell you more about our approach.

## How to apply

Application is by CV and a covering letter which should indicate **why you are interested in applying for a Board member role and how you meet the role requirements**. Please send this to Paul Venning at our recruitment partners Eastside People, [recruitment@ep-uk.org](mailto:recruitment@ep-uk.org). If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Paul, [p.venning@eastsidepeople.org](mailto:p.venning@eastsidepeople.org) to arrange a convenient time. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can help with making the application process work for you.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April** with shortlisting interviews taking place the week after. Interviews with Evolve Housing + Support will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May.



# Eastside People

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