



# Join our Board

## Applicant Information Pack



**We build homes, create communities and transform lives**

# Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a white or coloured background, please contact our Communications team.



[unitedwelsh.com/contact](https://unitedwelsh.com/contact)



[tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com](mailto:tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com)



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# Contents

- 1 About Us
- 3 Non-Executive Board Members
- 5 Role Profile
- 6 Core skills for new Board Members
- 7 Our recruitment process
- 8 Code of Conduct
- 12 Guidance for Declaration of Interests
- 14 How to apply



# About Us

United Welsh is an award-winning not-for-profit organisation providing homes and related services in South Wales. We are passionate about building homes, creating communities and transforming lives.

We look after over **6,300 homes** for people across **11 local authority areas**, and our services help thousands more in our communities.

Helping people to live happily and in good health is important to us, and we are proud to have been named fifth best landlord in the UK.

We have a new building programme that is worth around **£35m** each year and in the next five years, we intend to build **1,300 more homes**. We are ambitious about how we can help people to live their best lives, working

with a range of partners including local and national government and the NHS to give people choice; tackling poverty, improving wellbeing and playing our part in ending homelessness.

The United Welsh Group also incorporates our subsidiary Celtic Horizons Ltd which, in partnership, looks after all our property services, and Harmoni Homes Ltd, which builds affordable homes and homes for sale.

We are also developing a new social enterprise, Celtic Offsite, that will manufacture low carbon homes and support the local economy to thrive.

With almost **400 employees** and a turnover of over **£40m**, we are an ambitious organisation with a strong sense of social purpose.

Life at United Welsh centres around our culture. We live by our values which connect us and inspire us, guiding our strategies as well as the decisions we make day to day.



# About Us

**United Welsh**

**Celtic Horizons Ltd**

**Harmoni Homes Ltd**

Developing homes for United Welsh

**Celtic Horizons**

Asset Management

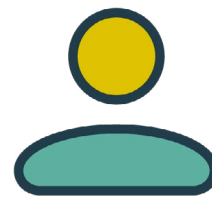
**Celtic Offsite**

Timber frame factory

The Celtic Horizons asset management service for United Welsh is delivered in partnership with Mears Ltd



# Non-Executive Board Members



The United Welsh Board is made up of up to 12 members, with a mix of non-executive and executive Board members.

Currently two members of the United Welsh Executive Team sit on the Board, leaving 10 places for non-executive Board members. Non-Executive Board Members are recruited on the basis of the skills and experience they have to offer. Up to one third of the Board at any one time may be customers of United Welsh.

United Welsh tries to keep a balance of skills and areas of expertise on the Board and to have a fair representation of the geographical areas in which United Welsh operates. The role of the Board is to oversee the work United Welsh does. By being a Board member you can have a say in how the organisation is run.

Board members come from all sorts of different backgrounds, bringing with them a rich variety of life experience, work skills and local knowledge. We want to build a Board that has a wide range of skills, covering broadly the following areas:

- Leadership and working as an effective team
- Direct knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the communities and people served
- General business, financial and management skills
- Knowledge of the external framework, including financial

markets, political imperatives and operating environments in which the Association works

- Other relevant and specialist skills such as commercial, financial, investment, risk management, legal, health, social services, property management, and housing development.

As an individual member you will not be expected to know about all of these in detail. Some members will have more specialist knowledge or experience than others in the different areas of work. We do expect all our board members to have some skills in common, or to be willing to develop them once they become Board members:

- Leading and inspiring
- Participating
- Evaluating and decision-making
- Focusing on customers and communities
- Communicating openly
- Demonstrating professional integrity
- IT skills

Anyone can apply to become a Non-Executive Board Member unless:

- They are a resident and are in breach of their contract, and fail to rectify that breach within 90 days of receiving notice
- They have been disqualified from acting as a company director
- They have been convicted of an indictable offence within the last five years



- A registered medical practitioner who is treating that person gives a written opinion to the association stating that that person has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a board member, co-optee or committee member and may remain so for more than three months.

All Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Wales are required to comply with certain statutory regulations regarding duality of interests.

Where an individual has an interest that would need to be declared under the provisions of Schedule 1 to the Housing Act 1996 in relation to ownership or control of a body trading for profit with whom United Welsh was currently trading, that conflict of interest must be resolved prior to that individual standing as a candidate for Board membership.

If you would like further information on these restrictions, please contact Nia Roblin on 07773 283506.

Please refer to the contents of this applicant pack to support you in completing your application form.

### **How much time does being a Non-Executive Board Member take?**

The Board meets once a month to deal with its normal business. That usually takes one evening, with some time beforehand to read through the information provided about the decisions to be made. Some Board meetings are face-to-face, others are hybrid using MS Teams for those who wish to join virtually. All board papers and communications are electronic. You will be issued with a suitable device.

The Board sometimes meets in a more informal way to discuss plans for the future and what's happening. That is usually a late afternoon meeting finishing with dinner.

Board members may choose whether to attend other events such as a tour of some of our new properties and other projects; openings, training events and conferences.

### **Is it paid?**

You will be paid a fee of £6,000 gross per annum in respect of your duties as a Board Member. This will be paid quarterly in arrears after deduction for PAYE and applicable national insurance deductions.

We also pay for any travelling costs, childcare expenses or similar costs incurred because you have to attend a meeting or event.

For more information about United Welsh, please visit our website: [www.unitedwelsh.com](http://www.unitedwelsh.com)

# Role Profile



The Board has ultimate responsibility for the governance of the United Welsh Group and ultimate control over all aspects of the Association's work to ensure its financial, legal and service obligations are properly fulfilled.

The Board of United Welsh is responsible for directing the Association's affairs, ensuring its long-term success. Detailed scrutiny is delegated to the Board's committees and day to day leadership and management is delegated to the Executive Team. All members of the Board share the same legal status and have equal responsibility for decisions taken that affect the success of United Welsh. The duties and responsibilities of the Board as a whole are set out in the Board's Terms of Reference.

As individuals, Board members are expected to:

1. Uphold the values of United Welsh and support its vision, aims and strategies.
2. Understand the constitutional and legislative framework as it applies to United Welsh and act within its powers.
3. Uphold the codes of governance adopted by United Welsh.
4. Abide by the United Welsh Board Members' Code of Conduct.
5. Uphold the policies of United Welsh, including financial regulations.
6. Uphold the reputation and integrity of United Welsh.
7. Regularly represent United Welsh, promoting its activities and building stakeholder relationships at events either organised by United Welsh or externally.
8. Contribute to and share responsibility for the Board's decisions, including its duty to exercise reasonable care, skill and independent judgement.
9. Prepare for and attend meetings of the Board, its Committees, general meetings of shareholders, awaydays, Board visits and other events designed to support Board members.
10. Attend and participate in reviews linked to individual performance or that of the Board as a whole.
11. Take responsibility for personal learning and development, making sure their knowledge is kept up to date.
12. Declare any relevant interest and avoid conflicts of interests.
13. Respect confidentiality of information.



# Core skills for new Board Members

New Board members are expected to have these core skills either at the time they join the Board, or to develop them within an agreed time after joining the Board.

## In the board room

- Commitment to preparing for and attending meetings and events
- Able to assimilate information presented in a variety of formats – written, numbers, charts, oral presentations
- Competent using e-mail and the internet
- Uses appropriate criteria for evaluating options (e.g. financial and customer impact)
- Ability to contribute to decision-making
- Willing to contribute in discussion
- Ability to communicate clearly and concisely
- Taking responsibility for corporate decisions
- Taking responsibility for doing what needs to be done to resolve issues at an appropriate level

## With stakeholders

- Appreciates and anticipates the needs of the customer
- Passionate about providing exceptional customer service
- Is prepared to foster a culture that supports staff to develop their potential
- Promote the success of United Welsh, presenting a positive and professional image to external parties

## Personal conduct

- An understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Is aware of confidentiality and discretion regarding sensitive personal or business matters
- A commitment to continued personal learning
- Creates and encourages free flow of communication and information

# Our recruitment process

Successful applicants will be invited to attend an interview with the United Welsh Chair and Group Chief Executive to explore their suitability, values and motivation for being interested in joining the Board.

They will also be invited to attend a number of Board meetings as an Observer so the applicant can assess the Association, and for the Board to satisfy itself of the applicant's suitability. Usually two Board meetings are sufficient, but that may be varied at the Chair's discretion.

After attending as an Observer, successful applicants will be invited to meet informally with the Chair, the Group Chief Executive and Company Secretary to discuss progressing to appointment.

If the candidate indicates that they wish to become a Board member, and the panel deem that the applicant is suitable, the candidate will be presented to the Board for appointment.

# Code of Conduct

As set out in United Welsh's policy on Conduct and Probity, housing associations have a reputation for high standards of conduct and probity. These are reinforced by legislation, the ethos of the housing association movement and by the policies of individual associations.

This code sets out the standards expected from Board members. On signing the Agreement for Services, each Board member acknowledges that they agree to abide by this Code.

## 1.0 Principles

The principles which underpin the Code of Conduct are based on those summarised as the Principles of Public Life (Nolan Committee).

### 1.1 Selflessness

Board members should take decisions solely in terms of the interest of United Welsh. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### 1.2 Integrity

Board members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties as Board members.

### 1.3 Objectivity

In carrying out United Welsh's business, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, Board members should make choices on merit.

### 1.4 Accountability

Board members are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.

### 1.5 Openness

Board members should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the interest of United Welsh clearly demands.

## 1.6 Honesty

Board members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interest of United Welsh.

## 1.7 Leadership

Board members should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **2.0 Upholding the values, interests and reputation of the United Welsh Group**

All Board members are expected to:

2.1 Uphold the values of United Welsh and support achievement of its aims and objectives.

2.2 Act only in the interest of United Welsh and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.

2.3 Put the interests of United Welsh before their own interests.

2.4 Take an active interest in United Welsh's public image and strive to uphold the reputation of United Welsh and those working within it.

2.5 Refer all media enquiries to the Group Chief Executive.

2.6 Not pass or distribute to the press or media any information or material relating to United Welsh. All formal communication to the press or wider public about or in the name of United Welsh should be approved in advance by the Chair and Group Chief Executive.

2.7 When speaking or acting as a Board member, reflect organisational policies and aims.

2.8 Be mindful that when using social media in a personal capacity, readers may make the link with United Welsh. Therefore, Board Members should ensure their profiles and related content are consistent with the United Welsh values.

### **3.0 Personal Gain**

Board members should ensure that private or personal interests do not influence decisions, and that they do not use their position to obtain personal gain of any sort, other than remuneration due under the Agreement for Services or contracts of employment.

In particular, Board members are expected to:

#### **3.1 Conflict of interest**

- Disclose any personal interests and/or relationships with outside bodies, companies or individuals. In particular to be mindful of any interest that potentially falls within the scope of section 5 of the Agreement for Services. Where a Board member is unsure whether a particular interest is within that scope, they are expected to obtain advice from the Company Secretary.
- Make an annual declaration of interest as required under Sch1 of Housing Act 1996.

#### **3.2 Gifts and hospitality**

- Not to accept personal gifts with a monetary value in excess of £25, without first seeking guidance from the Company Secretary.
- Not to accept hospitality if it could be seen as a way of exerting an improper influence over United Welsh's decisions.
- Not to accept money
- To notify the Company Secretary of any gifts or hospitality accepted for recording in the Gifts and Hospitality register.
- Not to give or offer gifts of a monetary value in excess of £25.
- Not to offer hospitality if it could be seen as lavish, or as a way of exerting an improper influence over the decisions of another person or organisation.
- To notify the Company Secretary of all hospitality offered, apart from inexpensive items such as working meals, for recording in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

If in any doubt about the nature of any gift or offer of hospitality, the advice of the Chair or Company Secretary should be sought.

#### **3.3 Use of suppliers to United Welsh**

Avoid, as far as is reasonably possible, making use of the services of any consultant, contractor, professional advisor or other individual or firm who may work for United Welsh. Advice may be sought from the Company Secretary as to whether a particular supplier is used by United Welsh.

Where it is considered to be unavoidable, for example in the case of specialist advisors, then the Group Chief Executive or Company Secretary should be informed in advance and the matter recorded in the register of such interests.

## **4.0 Confidentiality**

Board members must treat as confidential all information relating to the business, organisation, management, future plans, clients, residents and staffing of United Welsh. Furthermore, they must not part with possession or reproduce any of United Welsh's reports, minutes, policies, correspondence etc for the benefit of third parties without the expressed permission of the Chair.

## **5.0 Conduct at Meetings**

Board members are expected to:

5.1 Prepare for and attend meetings, giving apologies ahead of time if unable to attend. A Board member is normally expected to attend all formal Board meetings, Committee meetings (where they are a member of that Committee), AGM or SGMs, and awaydays.

5.2 Engage in debate, respecting the views of others and the authority of the Chair.

5.3 Declare any interest in any item for discussion or decision at Board or Committee. If the interest is clear and substantial, to take no part in the discussion and to leave the room if requested by the Chair.

5.4 Take shared responsibility for all decisions taken by the United Welsh Board.

## **6.0 Equality, diversity, and inclusion**

Each Board member is expected to develop an understanding of and commitment to the positive promotion of United Welsh's policy in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

## **7.0 Enquiries from residents**

Board members will abide by the following protocol when dealing with enquiries from residents on housing matters:-

- Encourage the enquirer to approach the relevant member of staff.
- Avoid taking sides.
- Avoid getting involved in lobbying for allocations or transfers.
- With regard to complaints, refer to United Welsh's policy and procedure for dealing with complaints.
- If the enquiry raises issues regarding policy at United Welsh, request that an item be put on the agenda at a future Board meeting for discussion.



# Guidance for Declaration of Interests

## **Sch1 to Housing Act 1996**

Under the provisions of Schedule 1 HA1996 the Association is not permitted to make a payment or grant a benefit to:

- a) a Board member or employee
- b) a person who has been a Board member or employee within the last 12 months
- c) a close relative of either (a) or (b)
- d) a business trading for profit of which (a), (b) or (c) is the principal proprietor or is directly concerned in its management.

There are certain exemptions to this rule which are listed in the policy or in WAG Circular RSL005/10.

But in any event we need to determine what businesses may fall under part d). So you are asked to declare any such interests.

## **Bribery Act 2010**

Again as described in our Conduct and Probity policy, United Welsh needs to know where there are connections with other organisations that might be considered to have the potential to influence decision-making. If we know about any connections, it means we can take steps to protect both United Welsh and you as an individual from any accusation of improper behaviour in this context.

This guidance is intended to help you decide whether any organisation with which you or members of your family have a connection should be included in your declaration.

If you are not sure about something, please talk to Nia Roblin, the Company Secretary.

## **What is a business trading for profit?**

A business trading for profit is any business which is able to distribute its surpluses or profits to its members, shareholders or directors for their personal use.

## **What is meant by ‘personal interests’?**

This refers to any business where you or a close relative can benefit from the business, either because you own the business or have a significant stake in the business or have senior management responsibilities in the business.

So it’s about a person whose stake in the business is large enough for there to be a real risk that a decision to make a payment or grant a benefit to the business could be influenced by that fact.

The size of the stake cannot be set as any particular percentage share, but will depend on the facts of the case.

A person is considered to be an owner (or part owner) if he or she can vote on questions affecting the management and conduct of the business or its internal constitution, or has the right to any share of the business, or to any share of the capital of the business on a winding-up.

A person is directly concerned in the management of a business if he or she has power to make decisions on behalf of the business so there is a real risk that a decision to make a payment or grant a benefit to the business could be influenced by that fact.

## **Who counts as a close relative?**

No set definition of this term exists and each case must therefore be judged on its merits. But the following general principles apply:

A close relative is a relative by blood or marriage who is so close to you that there is a real risk that the decision to make a payment or to grant a benefit to him or her could be influenced by that relationship.

It will normally include a person’s spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild (including illegitimate children and grandchildren), brother and sister.

Technically, the term “relative” does not include any relationship that is not by blood or marriage however close. But where such a relationship exists and is close, e.g. a partner, please include that person’s interests.

# How to apply

**If you want to make a difference and you care about making things better, we would love you to work with United Welsh.**

We build homes, create communities and transform lives, and we want our people to enjoy their role in making that happen.

We believe that diversity of experience, perspectives and backgrounds makes United Welsh a better place to work and creates better outcomes for our communities. We don't just see work as something you do; it's somewhere you can belong, be your whole self and reach your potential.

If you are interested in joining us as a Board member, we want to hear from you.

To apply, please visit: <https://www.unitedwelsh.com/current-vacancies/>

Here you can download a copy of our application form and Equality, Diversity and Declaration of Interest form to complete and send to [board.recruit@unitedwelsh.com](mailto:board.recruit@unitedwelsh.com)

Alternatively, you can deliver your completed form to: **Nia Roblin, Company Secretary, United Welsh, Y Borth, 13 Beddau Way, Caerphilly, CF83 2AX.**

**The closing date for applications is 5pm on Wednesday 31st July 2024.**

If you would any more information, please contact Nia on 07773 283506 or email [Nia.Roblin@unitedwelsh.com](mailto:Nia.Roblin@unitedwelsh.com)



[www.unitedwelsh.com](http://www.unitedwelsh.com)

