

Group Board Member biographies

Alison Fisher

Alison worked in IT and Finance in the private sector for over 25 years, most recently as UK Business Manager for CSC, a large global IT provider. Whilst starting her career in IT Support she has spent the majority of it in Business Management, focussed on financial management, business planning and governance.

Alison is currently Chair of Wrekin's Audit & Assurance Committee - a post she has held since September 2014. Alison holds a number of non-executive and trustee positions and was formerly Chair of The Pioneer Group. Alison is a member of the Birmingham and Solihull Bench and has also served as a lay member on various disciplinary panels. For many years she has been actively involved in community fund-raising for both the NSPCC and Cancer Research UK.

Annette Shipley

Annette has a considerable background in corporate leadership in a number of organisations, including EAGA Plc, specialising in energy provision and once one of the largest social enterprises / employee owned companies in the UK. She was a member of the board for over 20 years, before moving into management consultancy with Baxendale and later Excellence3.

Annette brings considerable experience of working at a strategic level within both small and large organisations. Her professional specialism is leadership, transformation, customer services, OD, people and communications. She has extensive operational and customer focused experience. Annette has held a number of voluntary and non-executive board roles across her industry sectors and the NHS. And is currently an Entrepreneur in Residence at Keele University Business Scholl. Outside of work, Annette is local Parish Councillor for the village of Werrington, near Stoke on Trent. She is also a keen kayaker, having achieved her Level 3 British Canoeing Association qualifications.

Debbie Griffiths

Debbie is the former Group Chief Executive of Housing Plus Group; a role she held for over 13 years. Prior to this, she was Director of Operations for South Staffordshire Housing Association, and she is a professionally qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Since leaving Housing Plus, Debbie has established her own coaching and housing consultancy. She is a coach/mentor with a Masters in Coaching & Mentoring and

works with leaders in a range of sectors. Debbie also undertakes consultancy projects and executive interim roles in the social housing sector.

Debbie has a track record of working at board level, and has experience of leading operations in asset management/investment, housing services and care and support. She has considerable experience of strategic management planning, governance, risk management and financial strategy and planning and development. Debbie is also an experienced non-executive, having served on a number of local and regional bodies, including chairing the South Staffordshire LSP and being a member of the NHF West Midlands regional committee. Debbie is currently Chair of the Group's Finance & Investment Committee

Desmond Hudson – Group Chair

Desmond qualified as a solicitor, who after a successful career in private practices became an in-house Solicitor in financial services, and moved on to senior executive roles in operations and General Management.

This included becoming Executive Director for Savings and Lending and then Director of Residential and Commercial Lending for two major Building Societies and Managing Director of Britannia Life in 1996, before becoming an Executive Director of a FTSE 250 media company as the Managing Director of Publishing.

Desmond is the former Chief Executive of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland and then of The Law Society.

Desmond has held a number of non-executive roles within national agencies and professional bodies, including Chair of the Taxation Disciplinary Board, Director of the Solicitor's Indemnity Fund, Co-Chair of Queens Counsel Appointments, and Chair of Regulation for the institute of Actuaries and Chair of RICS Nominations Committee. He is also a Non-Executive Director with a digital marketing agency in the northwest of England.

Desmond has been responsible for corporate strategy and financial strategy throughout his career. He also has extensive experience of regulatory compliance, audit, risk management and governance. Desmond lives in Oswestry.

Esther Wright

Esther is a non-practising solicitor having graduated from the University of Manchester and qualified as a Solicitor, specialising in criminal defence, in 2000.

She has seventeen years' experience within the arts and charitable sectors. As a non-practising solicitor, Esther's legal background has provided a solid grounding in the principles of good governance. Esther is experienced in fundraising and events

management, having worked for several national and international charities, businesses and individuals. She has been responsible for managing UK teams and advising national and international charities in developing a series of large scale, high income events which have required strong strategic management and planning skills. Esther now manages and owns two businesses and she has also held non-executive roles with various social enterprise organisations. In 2018, Esther became a Fellow of the RSA.

Jacqui Esimaje-Heath

Jacqui's background is in residential development and management consultancy in both the public and private sectors. In her previous roles, she has held responsibility in the areas of residential property development, housing and management consultancy, regeneration, private sector renewal and residential sales and marketing.

Architecturally trained and a qualified PRINCE2 practitioner, Jacqui is Regional Development Director (covering North London) for L&Q.

Jacqui's experience is focused in the areas of development and regeneration. She has successfully managed a range of complex residential-led projects and programmes to time and budget. She also has extensive knowledge and expertise in government funding regimes and she has advised both central and local government in the delivery of capital funding programmes. Jacqui is also an experienced non-executive director, with over 18 years' experience in providing strategic leadership in the not for profit sector. She has also acted as a mentor to individuals at both non-executive and operational levels.

Jacqui has family connections in Shropshire.

Jim Dickson

Jim has a strong sector background having been involved in the social housing sector for over 33 years, working in both Scotland and England.

He retired in July 2013 after nine years as Chief Executive of a Housing Association in Gloucester and for twelve years prior to that, was Chief Executive of a rural association in the West Highlands.

He has extensive non-executive experience including chairing various boards and committees. He was a Guinness Partnership Board member for 6 years until 2016 as well as a member of Guinness Care and Support for 4 years, retiring in 2018. He also chaired a divisional board at Guinness from 2010 until 2016 and also chaired the Customer Services and Partnership Services Committees at various times. Jim was also a Board member of Severn Vale Housing Society for 4 years prior to its merger with Merlin Housing Association and Bromford in 2019, chairing its Health and Safety Committee.



During his tenure in Scotland he was a member of the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust and was Secretary and Treasurer of the Rural and Islands Housing Association Forum, a constituency of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, prior to moving to England in 2004.

Shaun Davies

Shaun Davies was elected Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council in May 2016 and is one of the UK's youngest Council Leaders. He first joined the Council in 2011 and was immediately appointed as Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and The Cooperative Council. His responsibilities were then extended to include employment, skills and business.

Under his guidance, Telford and Wrekin's rate of youth unemployment was halved and its Job Box initiative has helped promote employment, skills and training in the borough.

Shaun has been the driving force behind the Council's Pride in Your Community initiative to improve the Borough's roads and environment. He has also been instrumental in a number of initiatives to promote the Borough as a place for business and investment, including the Telford Growth Package and Telford Land Deal, believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, between the Council and Homes England.

Shaun was raised and educated in the Borough and studied law at Aberystwyth University. In addition to his Council work, he is a solicitor for a Shropshire-based firm representing clients across the West Midlands region. Shaun lives in Telford with his wife and children

Independent Board Member Biographies

Jane Moulder – Choices Board

Jane worked in the fields of HR and organisational development for over 30 years, where she specialised in change management. She held a number of Board level and senior positions within the manufacturing, engineering and telecoms sectors before moving into the not for profit sector in the late 1990's. More recently she worked for Arch Ltd., an organisation which supports people, with a range of housing needs, to live independently. As Head of Business Support, Jane was responsible for non-service delivery areas including HR, learning and development, property management, quality and ICT. She played a key role in Arch's development and enabled its successful merger with a major housing association.

Jane has also worked as an independent HR and OD Consultant working primarily with SMEs and voluntary organisations, advising on HR and business development. Her consultancy assignments have also included working with a number of NHS Trusts.

Coupled with her consultancy role, Jane is a musician and musical instrument maker and regularly performs throughout the UK and Europe. She is also a freelance writer and researcher and works for the National Trust. Passionate about sustaining local communities, Jane has initiated and worked on a number of community projects in her home town in North Staffordshire.

Julian Fletcher – Choices Board

Julian has graduate and post-graduate degrees in Sociology and in Social Administration and is also a qualified social worker. His career however has been spent principally in the delivery of social care services for people who need assistance in their lives, especially elderly people and those living with dementia, and adults with learning disabilities. Half of his career has been with Local Authorities and half within the independent sector.

As a Manager of a residential care home, he pioneered care practice that individualised the support offered and which enabled people to live with independence and dignity even within care settings, and which was recognised nationally. His belief has always been that every care service should actively enhance the person's happiness and quality of life. He went on to manage groups of services before becoming Director of Care and then Chief Executive of the Fremantle Trust, based in Buckinghamshire. One of the great satisfactions of his career has been to see these enlightened care services replace bleak institutional care practices of his youth, though more remains to be done.



As Chief Executive, Julian took a lead in strategic planning, initiating the transformation of the Fremantle portfolio of properties, in financial management, and in managing human resources (c2,000 staff). Meanwhile he did not lose his passion for care practice and taught extensively. Subsequently, Julian has used his experience in governance roles in medium and large care and housing organisations as a Director and as Chair, driven by the same values that have guided his career.

Julian has been a member of the Choices Board since 2012.

Sanaya Robinson – Audit & Assurance Committee

Following a degree in Chemistry, Sanaya qualified both as a Chartered Accountant and as a Corporate Treasurer.

Her early career comprised several FTSE 100 companies: ICI, Abbey National, Kingfisher and Safeway. She has been Finance Director of Wickes (1999-2003), Moat Housing Group (2004-2005), and Acorn Care and Education (2005-2008).

Since 2009, Sanaya has held various Non-Executive roles. These include Housing and Care 21 (2009-2018), Group Board and Audit Committee Chair; Buckinghamshire Building Society (2012-2016), Group Board and Audit Committee Chair; and Town and Country Housing Group (2009-2018), Group Board and Audit Committee. In 2012, she graduated from the FT NED diploma. Since 2018, Sanaya has served on the Finance Committee at Red Kite Housing Group and also on the Audit & Assurance Committee at The Wrekin Housing Group.

Sanaya is well versed in strategy, finance, treasury, corporate governance, audit and risk matters, and the social housing sector.

She has voluntary roles with the Bedford Society Committee (University alumni body) and the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group in her local area in Buckinghamshire.

