

Bield Partnership Forum

Constitution November 2021





Name, Purpose & Contact

The name of the group is the Partnership Forum of Bield Housing & Care ('The Partnership Forum').

The purpose of the Partnership Forum will be to provide a national group within which tenant participation proposals at a strategic level will be discussed and decided.

The Partnership Forum will be specifically for Bield tenants.

The contact of the Partnership Forum will be Pamela MacMaster.

Membership

Membership of the Partnership Forum will be open to 16 tenants from across Bield's rented or supported housing. Staff and Board members will be invited by Partnership Forum members to attend meetings as and when required.

Tenant Elections

Nominations will be sought for when a vacancy arises when a member resigns/retires from the Partnership Forum. Should a vacancy arise, all tenants will be notified via the regular Partnership Forum newsletter which is issued to all tenants and/or through the relevant formats (eg social media, posters

Only one tenant member is permitted from a development - tenants will be notified of the developments where a current member resides.

Should there be more than one candidate, tenant members will receive background information on proposed candidates and decide whether to accept those put forward or put it out to an election.



In the case of an election, each candidate will be asked to provide the aforementioned background information. This will go on to a ballot paper and tenants in Bield housing developments will be asked to vote for their preferred candidate. The requested background information will be around 150 words and ask the 3 following questions:

- How long have you been a Bield tenant?
- Tell us a bit about your background, where have you worked and any voluntary work that may be relevant?
- Why are you interested in joining the Forum?

Ballot papers will have a clear closing date. It will be made clear that any ballot papers returned after this date will not be accepted, as would any spoiled papers.

Clear instructions on how to return the papers will be included with the ballot paper. A record of all returns, including spoiled and late, will be kept for 1 year.

All candidates will be notified by phone of the election outcome and a letter also issued thereafter with a breakdown of the votes.

All tenants will be notified of the election result via an update on their development noticeboard or through the PF newsletter.

In the event of a draw, tenant members will determine who should be elected on to the PF. There is no fixed period of office once a PF member has been elected onto the group. Members can resign via letter/email or in person. If a tenant is elected onto the Forum and resigns up to 6 months following their first meeting, then the position can be offered to the next best placed candidate.

If a PF member misses four consecutive meetings the group will discuss the matter and agree if the member in question will be asked to step down from the group.



Role of Tenants on the Partnership Forum

The role of tenants on the Partnership Forum is to participate in Bield's affairs at a strategic level. This will allow a tenant perspective to be introduced to the decision making process within Bield.

Tenant members are expected to be broadly representative of the views held by Bield tenants. Members should be free to discuss the work of the group, with the exception of confidential items from meetings. Information will be shared via poster updates, regular PF newsletters, at tenant meetings and via the Bield Bulletin.

Development issues will be dealt with through normal staff structures, which are in place to deal with such issues. It is therefore not expected that the PF will deal with development specific issues, or for tenants will act as a tenant spokesperson within a development.

Chair & Vice Chair of Partnership Forum

A tenant member will chair each of the Partnership Forum meetings with a vice-chair position also in place to support the Chair in their duties. The post of Chair and Vice Chair shall be for three years from the date of their first meeting in that role. After the three year period has ended the Chair will step down from the post with the Vice Chair then offered the position. The Chair cannot re-stand after they have served a term of office and this also applies to the Vice Chair.

For electing each post candidates should put themselves forward for nomination and if there is more than the required number for the positions available an election will be held among tenant members to determine the outcome. In this event each candidate will be asked to provide a short summary on why they would like to stand which will be incorporated into the ballot paper. The election will take the form of a postal vote with only tenant members getting the opportunity to vote. If there is a tie vote for one post the position will be offered to the member who has served longest on the Partnership Forum.



If the Chair resigns then the post should be offered to the Vice Chair for a three year term. Role descriptions for both the Chair and Vice Chair positions are in place which explains their duties in serving the Partnership Forum and training will be offered to those taking up either of the posts.

If there is an indication that a Chair or Vice Chair is not performing in their duties then tenant members will meet as a group with the person(s) present to try and resolve any potential issues. If the situation is still not satisfactorily settled after this then formal mediation will be sought.

Training Opportunities

PF members will be given the opportunity to undertake a range of training opportunities, including induction, up-skills, Chair/Vice Chair training and skills audit training. One meeting each year will focus on a particular area of training as agreed by PF members.

Equal Opportunities

The Partnership Forum is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation).

Acting on these principles, we aim to promote an environment that is free from all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, and one that values diversity.

We seek to treat people fairly, with dignity and respect, and to uphold human rights for all.



Meetings

The Partnership Forum will usually meet four times per year although sub-groups will be convened to progress various issues agreed by the Partnership Forum.

Partnership Forum members will have access to good meeting facilities and will determine future agendas, and have a record of the meeting. In this regard:

- Meeting times will be set having full regard to travel time involved.
- Meeting venues will be barrier free.
- Travel arrangements will be agreed which are appropriate to individual need, including the use of taxis, accessible public transport and where appropriate, Bield vehicles.
- Agendas will be prepared after consultation with members of the Partnership Forum.
- The PF members will agree on necessary staff representation at each meeting.
- Final agenda and papers will be issued at least one week before the meeting date.
- A record of the meeting will be issued to all members shortly after the meeting is held.

Expenses

Expenses will be paid to cover all costs incurred by tenants when engaged on the business of the Partnership Forum. These will be paid in accordance with guidance detailed in Appendix 1.

Relationship to Bield Board and Committees

Board members are invited to attend meetings at the behest of PF members.



Independence and Inter-dependence

All parties of the Partnership Forum will recognise and accept the legitimate need for both independence and inter-dependence within the Partnership Forum.

They will recognise and accept independence which ensures:

- Resources and funding are available to allow tenant members to fulfil their responsibilities.
- That tenant members are able to seek independent advice and assistance if desired.
- That tenant members are able to discuss and consider matters outwith the Partnership Forum meetings and are given adequate time, resources and support to do so.
- Compliance with statutory and contractual obligations placed upon Bield as a Registered Social Landlord, employer and provider of services.

They will also recognise and accept Inter-dependence which ensures: -

- A true partnership approach to consultation at the national (strategic) level.
- Acknowledgement of the different but complementary input each can make to the Partnership Forum.
- A strengthening of the ethos which already exists within Bield regarding partnership working.
- Open and honest sharing of information.
- Open and honest sharing of ideas.
- Open and honest sharing in decision making.
- A strengthening of the mutual trust and respect which already exists with Bield.
- Improved decision making based upon increased awareness.

Review of the Constitution

The constitution will be reviewed on a five yearly basis in consultation with the Partnership Forum and, where appropriate, by obtaining feedback from tenants.

