

Executive Board

Meet our Executive Board



Dr Christopher Handy OBE, Chief Executive

Chris has a Doctorate in Business Administration, a Master of Law degree, Fellowship of the Institute of Housing and membership of the British Institute of Management. He received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2009 and in 2010 was made a Professor of Governance by Birmingham City University's Business School. He has been Chief Executive of Accord and its precursors for over 20 years, previously working in other housing organisations and local government. Chris is a published author with titles including 'Housing Associations: The Law of Social Landlords' (written jointly with Professor John Alder) and 'Discrimination in Housing' and he is a member of the

Editorial Board for the Journal of Housing Law. Chris is a Non-Executive Director of the Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and was previously a Non-Exec Director of the NHS Strategic Health Authority for Midlands and East of England. He was appointed to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Board in 2012 and leads on enterprise and the green growth agendas for the region. In addition, he is Chair of the Matrix Housing Partnership Strategy Group and was Executive Commissioner of the Commission for Co-Operative and Mutual Housing.

Maxine Espley, Executive Director of Health, Social Care and Support

Maxine joined The Accord Group as Executive Director of Health Social Care and Support in September 2015. Maxine joined the Group after spending 12 years as a Director in the NHS. She was the Managing Director of Community and Mental Health Services for a Primary Care Trust and more latterly the Director of Planning and Contracting for a large Acute and Community NHS Trust where she led strategy, growth, service transformation and contracting. Maxine has over 25 years' experience of working within health and social care settings. She started her career as a social worker before moving to the role of Development Manager for a national mental health charity. Maxine then joined a Midlands based Housing Association as a Regional Manager for Care and Support where she spent 10 years before her move to the NHS.

Stuart Fisher, Executive Director of Resources

Stuart is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. Stuart joined the Accord Group in 2010 from KPMG where he delivered a range of services to the social housing sector, central government departments and the NHS. Stuart is responsible for all aspects of the Group's financial management, Information Systems, Risk Management and Health and Safety and is also the corporate lead for value-for-money. Stuart is a Non-Executive Director at Orbit Group where he sits on the Board of Orbit Treasury Limited and its Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Jonathan Vellacott, Chief Executive, Direct Health

Jonathan has been Chief Executive of Direct Health since acquiring the company in 2003. The company has grown organically and through selective acquisitions to become one of the leading domiciliary care providers in the UK employing approximately 2,500 staff at 18 branches, delivering over 50,000 hours of care per week. Direct Health provides services to over 6,500 customers often alongside partnership with one of the 42 statutory organisations with whom the company works with in partnership. Jonathan was voted ninth most influential person in the care sector by his peers in 2014.

Sara Woodall, Executive Director of Communities

Sara has a law degree and started her housing career as a housing management trainee at Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. She then became an estate officer for Dudley before moving to Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council as a District Housing Manager in 1990. In 1994, Sara moved to Jephson Housing Association as a

housing manager, joining Accord in October 1999 as Director of Housing Services. She then took on a Group corporate role in 2009 as Director of Corporate Services where she also had the strategic lead and overall management responsibility for Moseley and District Housing, before becoming the Chief Executive of Heantun Housing Association in June 2014. In addition, Sara undertakes training and consultancy on behalf of the Group.

Alan Yates, Executive Commercial Director

Alan has over 24 years senior management experience in the affordable housing sector in regeneration and development. He is currently responsible for delivering the development programme for Matrix Housing Partnership as well as Strategic Asset Management, an in-house Design Team and a Construction Services Team for the Accord Group. Prior to that he was the general manager of a building company and had several years' project management experience in the construction industry. Originally qualified in building, Alan has a particular interest in low carbon housing. He is Chairman of the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP). Alan is also a Board Member for Redditch Co-operative Homes and Chairman of Accredited Skills for Industry. He is the Chairman of the NHF Regional Investment Group, a member of the NHF Great Homes Group, Board Member of Ditton Prior Community Land Trust and Director of Energiesprong UK. As the former winner of the Inside Housing 'Green Social Housing Champion' award, Alan led the formation of an offsite manufacturing facility, Local Homes and his development team have won a variety of awards including Inside Housing Development Team of the Year, UKHA Inside Housing Awards Outstanding Development of the Year 2015, Housing Excellence Awards 2015 for best New Affordable Development, Structural Timber Awards 'Best Social Housing Project 2015 and the LABC 'Built in Quality Awards 2015.

If you have any queries you would like to put to the Board, please [email Dawn Hendon](#), Head of Governance and Corporate Affairs.
