

Non-Executive Board Member Recruitment Pack

gentoo

**Great homes
Strong communities
Inspired people
for Sunderland**



Welcome

Keith Loraine OBE 

Chair, Gentoo Group Board

Welcome from Keith Loraine OBE Chair, Gentoo Group Board

Hello and welcome to the recruitment pack for a number of important vacancies within Gentoo Group, as we search for new Members to join our Group Board.

Firstly, thank you for expressing an interest in the opportunity. We are looking for a number of Board Members across various different skills areas to join our Group Board, to provide constructive challenge, expert advice and support to the Group's Executive Team.

I thought you might find a little history and background to our organisation helpful.

Gentoo was formed in 2001 with the transfer of Sunderland City Council's housing stock to form Sunderland Housing Group. In total, 36,356 properties were transferred, generating a receipt of £200 million for Sunderland City Council. This remains the largest transfer of properties in England to date. At the time, £450 million of loans were secured to purchase the stock and to commence a major programme of modernisation and improvement works.

Gentoo is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and its recent history with the Regulator has been mixed. In 2017, we were issued with a downgrade from the RSH for weak governance, something which I, the Board and the Executive Team, took extremely seriously. The downgrade sparked the start of transformational change throughout the business. The Board focused on delivering the requirements of a Voluntary Undertaking and refocused the business back on its core function of being an excellent provider of social housing in Sunderland. This included, in January 2019, the appointment of our current Chief Executive Officer, Nigel Wilson.

In 2020, the Group underwent an In-Depth Assessment by the RSH and the Board and I were delighted that the outcome of this was the Group receiving the highest possible G1 Governance Rating. This was a monumental achievement following a three-year journey of recovery from the downgrade in 2017.

The return to G1 compliance with the RSH is a testament to my colleagues, who worked tirelessly to address the issues and concerns caused by previous poor leadership and weak governance. Following a Stability Check in December 2021, the Group's G1 rating was confirmed by the RSH.

The way in which the organisation engaged openly and honestly with the RSH during the process was key to us rebuilding trust and restoring faith in Gentoo.

The Group launched its Corporate Strategy in 2020, which set out the roadmap for the organisation up to 2025 and outlines the key performance indicators against which the organisation's performance will be measured. Fundamental to the strategy is the delivery of an ambitious £417 million business plan.

Gentoo is operating in a challenging policy environment as we move into the recovery phase following the COVID-19 pandemic. Post Grenfell, there has been a renewed sector focus on health and safety and tenant voice, and this was further emphasised within the Social Housing White Paper. The challenge of social housing decarbonisation is one for both the sector as a whole and for the Group, alongside the changes in the decent homes standard.

The Group's Board Members play a key role in supporting the organisation to deliver against the strategy. It is an interesting and challenging time to work in the housing sector and join Gentoo. We are currently operating in continued economic and global uncertainty, with housing and policy related challenges to overcome both locally and nationally. This is an exciting opportunity to join such a pivotal organisation that is helping to shape Sunderland's future.

Gentoo operates a co-terminous board structure and Gentoo Group Board Members are also Board Members for Gentoo Homes Limited. Gentoo Homes is a profit for purpose commercial subsidiary of the Group and a house builder that sells new homes privately. It builds around 200 new homes for sale every year, and the surplus it generates is reinvested back into Gentoo Group.

The ideal candidates for the role will have a strong background, skills and experience in areas such as:

- Social Housing
- People, Organisational Culture, Leadership and Governance
- Construction or Development
- Finance and Business Risk

The candidates will be pivotal in helping to shape and protect the Group, by applying their skills and knowledge at our Board and Committees. This is a fantastic opportunity to join an organisation with a deep underlying social purpose, and a commitment to deliver truly safe and secure affordable housing for the people of Sunderland.

If you are interested in the role and would like to have an informal conversation about it, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Jo Noble, Governance Manager at Gentoo. Jo's contact details are enclosed later in this pack should you wish to contact her.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the best with your application.

Keith Loraine OBE
Chair, Gentoo Group Board

**Gentoo's new affordable homes
Liberty Grange, Hylton Castle**



About us

We're a housing association with a social purpose that provides more than 60,000 people in Sunderland with a place they can call home.

We're a values driven organisation, with a clear vision, a social purpose and a commitment to investing in people, place and property.

We believe everyone has the right to live in a good quality home they can afford and we invest millions of pounds every year in keeping our existing homes safe, secure and compliant.

We're also playing our part in addressing the UK housing crisis locally, by building hundreds of new, modern and contemporary homes for rent in Sunderland - homes that meet the needs of local people.

Not only do we provide vital housing - we support our tenants, residents and communities by investing in services that help people live their best possible life.

This includes helping people into work, victims of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, young people to live independently, as well as a wellbeing service that supports our elderly tenants and residents.

We're a Sunderland centric organisation and realise we can't do everything on our own. We value partnerships and work alongside key city partners, such as Sunderland AFC, Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and Sunderland College, to ensure a vibrant, dynamic and healthy Sunderland.

We've made a commitment to support the Armed Forces community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant and are proud to hold the gold award as part of the Employer Recognition Scheme. The Covenant is part of our promise to treat those who serve, or have served, fairly.

Gentoo at a glance



1,000 + employees



We're investing £39.4 million in modernising existing properties in 2022/23



£4.3 million surplus



£166 million turnover



Net assets worth £599 million



30,000 properties owned and managed



We're delivering a programme of hundreds of new affordable homes by 2026

Our foundations

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do. They set the direction of our business and ensure we create social value by improving the lives of our tenants.

Our vision

Great Homes

Strong Communities

Inspired People

For Sunderland

Our values

Do the right thing

Give all you've got

Keep learning

Make a difference

Work together

Our Corporate Strategy

Our business strategy centres around five strategic aims and our five Ps:

Place

Provide homes and services that enable our customers and communities to succeed

People

Invest in people and communities to help realise opportunities and release potential

Perform

**Be well governed and financially resilient, operating efficiently and responsibly,
investing wisely to fulfil our social purpose**

Partner

Work with others to influence and generate sustainable change

Pride

Harness the collective passion and energy of our people to support the city

Gentoo Executive Team



Nigel Wilson

Chief Executive Officer

Nigel is the Chief Executive Officer of Gentoo Group having joined in January 2019 from Wythenshawe Community Housing Group in Manchester. He previously held the role of Chief Executive Officer for six years. Prior to his role at Wythenshawe, Nigel was Chief Executive of Parkway Green Housing Trust.

Nigel has worked in the housing industry for more than 36 years, starting his career in a customer facing role as a Housing Officer, before working his way up to a leadership position following a variety of roles in tenant participation, resident engagement, new business and housing regeneration.



Louise Bassett

Executive Director of Corporate Services

As the Executive Director of Corporate Services for Gentoo Group, Louise has over 20 years' experience in the private sector, in consumer and healthcare organisations. She joined Gentoo Group in October 2015 to support the Group's transformation project.

Prior to joining Gentoo, Louise spent a number of years working across Europe on mergers and acquisitions, business transformation and talent management. She held a series of senior HR Leadership roles, including HR Director UK, Ireland and Europe Manufacturing Division and Merger Integration Lead.



Peter Lenehan

Executive Director of Finance

As the Executive Director of Finance, Peter brings decades of experience from the private and housing sectors. He began his career as a Chartered Accountant with KPMG in Newcastle, where he worked with large North East companies such as Nissan, and in sectors including heavy building materials, shared services and property. Peter joined Coast & Country Housing as Corporate Services Director in 2015. During his time there, he helped the organisation manage the impact of social housing rent reductions and oversaw the organisation's merger with Yorkshire Coast Homes to become Beyond Housing.



Susie Thompson

Executive Director of Housing

Susie joined Gentoo in July 2014 and has over 30 years' experience in social housing. She began her career in Glasgow with Scottish Special Housing Association which later became Scottish Homes, the Regulator for Social Housing in Scotland at the time. Susie worked on the front line in some of the most disadvantaged communities before moving to the North East of England and working in the housing team for Sunderland City Council. She was also a director for Erimus Housing and Fabrick Housing Group.

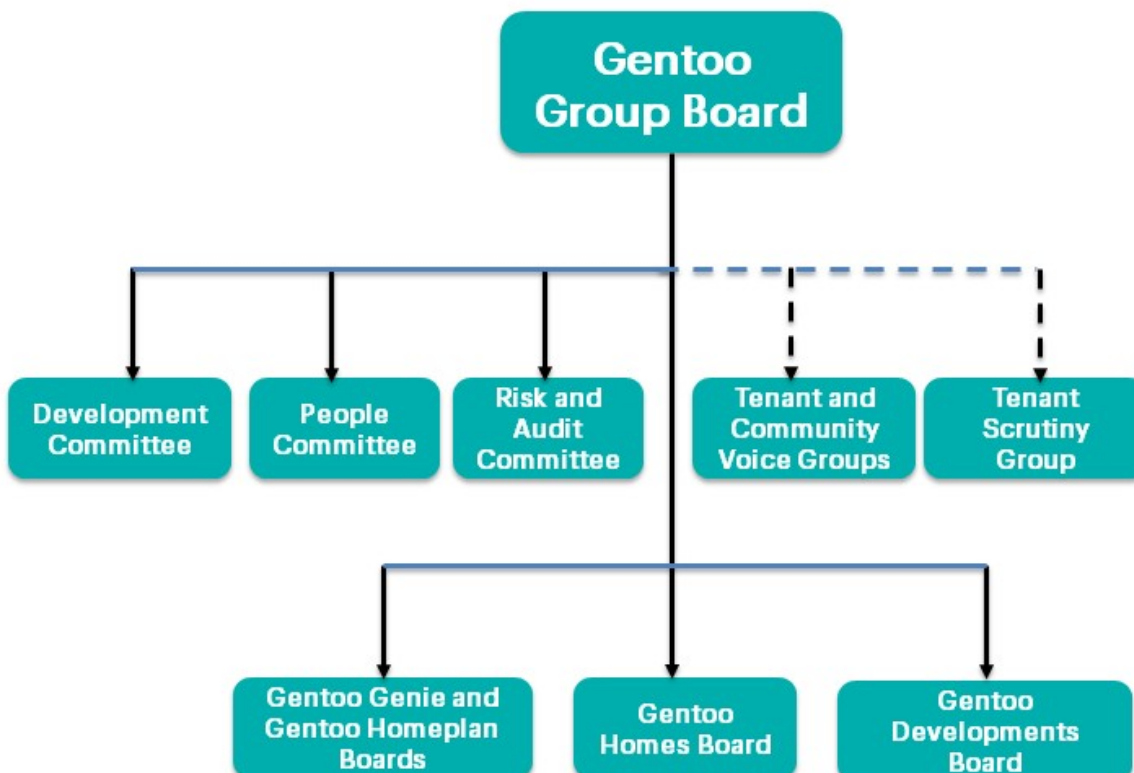
Susie is a board member for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), of which Gentoo is a founding member, and chair of the Safeguarding Rapid Review meetings for Together for Children.

Gentoo Governance Structure

Gentoo's governance structure comprises of the Group Board and a number of subsidiary Boards and Committees.

The membership is made up of Independent, Tenant and Council Members. There are Independent Committee Members on both the Development and Risk and Audit Committees to provide additional oversight and assurance to the Group Board.

All Members play a key role in the leadership and decision making processes of the Group and set the strategic vision and direction of the organisation. Board and Committee Members support the Group's Executive Team with valuable challenge and scrutiny and seek assurance on how the Group is run.



Gentoo Group Board Members



Keith Loraine OBE, Chair

Keith has over 40 years' experience in the housing sector. He retired after 24 years as Chief Executive Officer of Isos Housing Group in December 2016 and was awarded the OBE in recognition of his services to housing and the North East Community.

Keith joined the board of Gentoo Group in February 2017 to continue his career in the sector, in a non-executive capacity. Through his role at Isos Housing Group, he brings a wealth of knowledge of the local area, and the North East business environment. He also has a strong understanding of the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and will assist Gentoo through his knowledge of governance, finance and best practice.

He is also the Chair of Gentoo's Development Committee.



Alison Fellows

Alison Fellows joined the Gentoo Group Board in February 2019. She has extensive experience working at a senior level in the public sector. She currently works as the Commercial Director of Teesside International Airport, having previously been the Group Commercial Director at Tees Valley Combined Authority, where she was responsible for the development and delivery of place-based projects and managed extensive funds to deliver transformational change.

Alison was previously Executive Director of Commercial Development for Sunderland City Council and Assistant Director of Capital Investment for Newcastle City Council. Before that she worked as a partner in a large law firm. Alison spent 8 years as a Non-Executive Director with the North East Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust and was also on the Board of Governors of Sunderland College for 3 years.

She is also a member of Gentoo's Development Committee.



Brenda Naisby

Brenda has been actively involved with the Group for more than five years, most recently as Chair of Gentoo's Community Engagement Forum in Washington. She brings with her to the Board a wealth of experience as a Gentoo tenant and volunteer and will ensure the voice of tenants is at the forefront of the Group's decision making.

A domestic abuse champion, Brenda was named the TPAS 'Tenant of the Year' in 2020, for the influential role she has played in helping other tenants and residents in Sunderland.

Gentoo Group Board Members



Carol Long

Carol Joined the Gentoo Group Board in July 2018. She has considerable experience of working in the social care sector with a career spanning 35 years in local government, the private sector and for nearly a decade with national charities providing support and accommodation to children and adults with special needs. She is currently a researcher at Durham University.

Carol has considerable experience as a Chief Executive and has well developed skills in business planning, risk assessment and management, and safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults. She has a background in service development. She has experience of serving on a number of boards and committees including for the YMCA, as an executive for the NSPCC and also as Vice-Chair of Governors of a large secondary school in South Tyneside.

Carol is also a member of Gentoo's Risk and Audit Committee.



Chris Watson

Chris Watson was appointed onto Gentoo Group Board in September 2017. He is a retired civil engineer and previously was Head of Strategic Asset Planning and Economic Regulation at Northumbrian Water Ltd. He has extensive experience of complex asset management and working with the industry regulator, Ofwat.

From 2007 to 2015, he was a Non-Executive Director of Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, which was rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission. Chris also brings strong health and safety understanding through his management of Northumbrian Water's capital plan and as a previous Director of Constructing Excellence in the North East.

Chris is also a member of Gentoo's People Committee.



Clare Long

Claire is the Finance Director at Newcastle-based law firm Muckle. She previously spent a significant part of her career working in senior finance roles at Procter & Gamble. Claire qualified as a chartered accountant in 1995 and has experience in strategy, governance, acquisitions and shared services. She is passionately committed to the North East and currently serves as a director and trustee at Northumbria University Students' Union.

She is also a member of Gentoo's Risk and Audit Committee.

Gentoo Group Board Members



David Murtagh

David joined the Board as Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee. A Chartered Accountant since 1989, he has held senior finance roles within the engineering and manufacturing sectors.

David is currently a Finance Director within a major multinational company but in addition he has nine years' experience on the Board of Teesside-based Thirteen Group. He has a strong understanding of risk, particularly in the context of social housing.



Emily Cox MBE

Emily is The Ambassador for the North for Lloyd's Banking Group and the Group Head of Colleague Relations and Policy. Emily was previously the Director of Public Affairs at Virgin Money. She is the Chair of the CBI North East Regional Council and is also a Member of the Board at the Sage Gateshead, an international music venue.

She was awarded an MBE in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to gender diversity in the financial services sector.

Emily is Chair of Gentoo's People Committee and a member of Gentoo's Development Committee.



Kehri Ellis

Kehri joined the Gentoo Group Board in April 2021. She is currently the Chief Executive of North Tyneside Learning Trust, the foundation to 43 schools in North Tyneside.

She has experience working for national charities and spent six years on the Board of Isos Housing. Kehri has worked in housing for 30 years and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Kehri is a member of Development Committee.

Independent Committee Members



Alan Gallagher

Alan Gallagher joined Gentoo's Risk and Audit Committee as the independent risk specialist in October 2021. Alan is currently the Head of Risk and Regulatory Services at North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. In addition to his full-time role, Alan is a long standing trustee with a charitable organisation.

Alan has worked within the public and private sector with significant senior management experience in the specialist areas of safety and risk at local, regional and national level.



David Langley

David Langley was co-opted onto the Gentoo Risk and Audit Committee in October 2021. He is currently the Chief Operating Officer at the North East England Chamber of Commerce, which is a membership organisation representing more than 2,000 North East businesses.

He has experience working across a wide range of businesses in the private and not-for-profit sectors. David has worked in finance for 20 years and is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.



Ged Walsh

Ged was appointed to the Development Committee in September 2020. Ged previously worked as a Director of Development and Assets at a large northern housing association and has over 30 years of experience working in the construction and housing sectors.

Ged is a Chartered Surveyor and, during his career, has worked for several large social housing organisations as well as for Homes England. Ged is also the Vice Chair of Leazes Homes, based in Newcastle.

Role profile

Purpose

Board members provide leadership to the Group and contribute by setting the strategic vision and direction of the organisation. All activity should be in line with regulatory requirements and the Group's objectives, ensuring good governance and effective strategic planning.

Key accountabilities

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership regarding the direction and control of the Group.
- Contribute to setting the vision and values of the business, ensuring that obligations to stakeholders are understood and reflected in strategy and policies.
- Set objectives for the business and determine the strategic aims and required outcomes.
- Promote continuous improvement and set challenging targets for improving services.
- Contribute to the effective governance of the business through membership of internal committees, panels or subsidiary boards.

Effective governance

- Ensure compliance with the Group's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Delegated Authorities, the Regulator of Social Housing regulatory framework and the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance.

Risk management

- Contribute to the evaluation of opportunities, threats and risks across the Group's external environment and strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment, to ensure effective strategic decision-making.

Risk management

- Review the Risk Management Framework and Corporate Risk Register and obtain assurance the Group has a robust and prudent approach to business planning, risk identification and control.

Relationships

- Build and maintain effective working relationships with the Chair, Group Executive, senior staff and other Board Members.
- Participate in the board appraisal process and where appropriate, in the appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Directors and other board members.

Board performance

- Ensure the Board's business is conducted efficiently and effectively through a framework of delegation and systems of internal control.
- Contribute to overseeing organisational performance, ensuring the organisation is managed efficiently and effectively.
- Scrutinise and review performance against agreed targets and budgets.
- Read reports prepared by officers and advisors and contribute to appropriate debate of key issues.

Representing the Group

- Act as an ambassador for the organisation, upholding the reputation of Gentoo and its values and principles. Network and promote the achievements of the business.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including the regulator, key local authorities, funders and residents.

Adding value

- Apply personal expertise, skills and knowledge with due regard to the business and its social purpose. Develop knowledge and understanding of, and keep up to date with sector issues.
- Be a role model for good governance practices and behaviours.
- Attend and provide constructive challenge at board meetings.
- Actively participate in board events and training.

Person specification

Gentoo is seeking new Board Members with current or recent experience gained at a senior level. We are particularly keen to speak to individuals whose current experience and professional expertise is within the areas below and who have the ability to operate at strategic level. The areas of expertise are:

- Social Housing
- People, Organisational Culture, Leadership and Governance
- Construction or Development
- Finance and Business Risk

The Group Board is committed to increasing the Board's diversity, across all underrepresented groups and ensure a diversity of thought and lived experiences. The successful candidates will be strategic thinkers, with the ability to assimilate and analyse complex information and provide independent and constructive challenge.

Behaviours

- Acts with integrity and actively promotes Gentoo and the services it provides.
- Is committed to accountability, openness, and transparency.
- Demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity.
- Possesses excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Embraces learning and development and promotes this across the Group.
- Inspires others through an open, engaging and enthusiastic leadership style.
- Exhibits personal and professional credibility, commanding confidence in the business and with stakeholders.
- Has the ability to interpret and analyse complex information and reports in a timely manner.

Experience and knowledge

- Senior experience – extensive experience of operating at a senior level (ideally as an executive and/or non-executive) within an organisation of similar scale and complexity.
- Governance understanding – knowledge of good practice in one or more sectors.
- Risk management – possess sound financial reasoning and the ability to assess risk without being risk averse.

Skills and abilities

- Strong strategic planning skills
- The ability to challenge appropriately and hold themselves and others accountable
- Able to work collaboratively and take collective responsibility for decisions made
- Strong negotiating skills and the ability to work with others effectively

Terms and conditions

Position

Group Board Members (a number of positions to be appointed in line with the Group's Succession Planning Strategy)

Remuneration

£10,000 per annum

Commitment

9 Board Meetings (including Strategy Days) and 4 to 6 Committee Meetings per annum.

Closing date

Monday 11 July 2022

Shortlisting

Week of 11 July 2022

Interviews

It is hoped to hold the interviews in the week of 18 July 2022.

How to apply

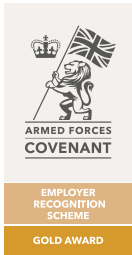
To apply please provide an up to date CV which shows your full career history (no longer than 3 pages please) and a supporting statement explaining why you are interested in this role and how you fulfil the person specification.

Applications must be received by 5pm on Monday 11 July 2022.

You should email your application to jo.noble@gentogroup.com.

If you would like to have an informal conversation with Jo about the roles available, you can contact Jo by telephone on **0191 525 2852**.

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Further information on our current vacancies can be found at www.gentoo.com/careers

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www.gentoo.com



Gentoo Group Limited is a charitable community benefit society, registration number 7302

