

Interview with the board member

The one with the legal training...

Sarah Coburn, a trainee solicitor at Winckworth Sherwood joined the Get on Board scheme in November 2004. She has recently been elected onto the board of Chislehurst & Sidcup HA, a small housing association that provides sheltered housing for older people in Kent.

What inspired you to apply for a voluntary board member position?

I have worked in the Housing Department at Winckworth Sherwood for five years, where housing associations form the majority of our clients.

Working for housing associations in this way has inspired me to become more involved with them and on a more practical level.

Several of my colleagues are also board members who joined through the Get on Board scheme and it was they who suggested that I give it a try. I would definitely recommend the scheme to anyone who may be interested in becoming a board member, or who would like to give something back to their community in a very practical way.

At university I was Rag Chair and a member of the executive committee of the Student's Union. When I became Rag Chair, the status and productivity of the Rag group was on the decline. By organising a key team of people and working together well, we managed to turn this around and build a solid base for future years. It is this experience in working as part of a team and encouraging people to work effectively together, which I think I will be able to bring to my work on the board of Chislehurst & Sidcup Housing Association.

I enjoy the fact that the work that we do as a board has a direct impact on our tenants' lives. Our tenants are elderly and our properties all have resident wardens, which allows us to provide secure, safe, quality accommodation whilst our tenants can maintain their independence. As a board member, it is my job to ensure that this continues and is done in the best way possible. It is of great reward that our properties are very rarely vacant and have long standing tenants.

Lion Court
25 Procter Street
London WC1V 6NY

Tel: 020 7067 1010
Fax: 020 7067 1011

Email: info@housing.org.uk
Website: www.housing.org.uk