

Minutes of the Federation Executive Committee Meeting held on  
Thursday 14 April 16 at 11.30- 3.30pm  
The Brain Charity Norton Street Liverpool

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**In Attendance:** Patrick Rice, Richie Kelly, Walter Macfarlane, Sally Trueman, Anne Robertson, Barbara Fitzgerald, Jean Williams, Ian Caldwell, Janice Murray, John Gray, Michael Hulme, Keith Harkness (NSC observer), and Paul McGregor (NSC observer).

**Staff:** - **Full Day:** Anna Bishop, Mark Hoskisson, Sharon Hutchinson, Imogen Revell (observer) and Maxine Davis - **Part Day:** Barbara Houghton, Sue Powell, James Rae and Lisa Connor.

**2. Apologies:** Heather Bruce, Jo Yoxall, Julie Moss, Kathy Forsyth-Smith and Richard Austin.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting held 18 February 2016 – Agreed**

**4. Matters Arising:**

Item 12 – Noted that the nominations for Tenant Member of the Housing Services Committee would be considered at Group Remuneration Committee on 21 April 2016.

**5. Declarations of Interest – No Declarations of Interest were declared.**

**6. 1% Rent Decreases – Detail and Logistics –** Barbara Houghton gave some background information on the 1% Rent Decreases. Noted that there is a one year exception for Supported and Sheltered Housing pending a broader review of sector funding. Three quarters of Riverside's stock has seen the expected reduction of at least 1% with 17% of income lost for first 4 years. Noted a revised business plan was agreed by Group Board in October 2015 and that Riverside is continuing to provide the Money Advice Service.

**7. Operational Implications of Local Housing Allowance – Sue Powell** explained the ceiling on Housing Benefit and the operational Implications of Local Housing Allowance – noted that LHA is maximum amount of housing benefit that will be paid and is based on 30% of market rents in an area. Housing Benefit

eligibility based on household size not rent and includes any service charges. Concern expressed that LHA applies to all tenants not just those of working age and noted that if bedroom tax also applies the higher of the two deductions applies. Federation asked Riverside to ensure they inform new tenants. Noted that using current occupancy details, around 10,450 households would be affected, however if Riverside assumed full occupancy this would drop significantly to around 6,300. Noted that welfare legislation is applicable across the whole of the UK so will apply in Scotland. However the Scottish government may choose to mitigate the impact of this as they have done the bedroom tax.

The Federation asked to be kept fully informed of Riverside's intelligence/data gathering on the impact of the 1% rent reduction and Local Housing Allowance. It was agreed to support Riverside with the ongoing intense and high profile lobbying of ministers and MP's and to be available for consultation.

**8. Proposal for a joint 2016 Annual Reports to Tenants** – Discussion took place around the recommendation put forward by Riverside and supported by Federation Officers to run a one year pilot to produce a joint Annual Report to Tenants. Concern was expressed by several members about the Federation losing its identity and credibility and also being restricted on content. Noted that an article by Carol Mathews, Riverside's Chief Executive was included to demonstrate Co-Regulation. Noted that the Federation had budgeted for an Annual Report to Tenants for the next 3 years. It was agreed not to progress the one year pilot for a joint Annual Report to Tenants and to continue with the Federation Annual Report to tenants. Agreed to investigate ways of monitoring readership effectively and ensuring the 2016 report was available on different platforms.

**9. Update on the Asset Management Communications Strategy Consultation** – Phil Glover. No update was available.

**10. External Funding opportunities for Federation Activities** – Lisa Connor explained the type of external fundraising activities and funds that are available which the Federation could possibly access. Noted that the Federation would not be able to apply for funding for the next national conference as that is a relatively restricted project and that funding is available for defined projects such as youth involvement. LC offered to run a training day for Federation members, noted this would need to take place before the end of September. **ACTION: SH to set date with LC.**

**11. Advocacy within Riverside's complaints Process** – Anna Bishop explained that the Customer Service Best Practice Group had recently reviewed Riverside's Complaints Process in line with the Housing Quality Network best

practice toolkit. Noted that an area of difference was identified where no facility existed for internal and/or independent support or advocacy for Riverside customers who need it. It was agreed that Riverside should offer independent advocacy as it would make it easier for tenants to get help and that Federation members should be called upon to provide support and advocacy. Agreed that ST, MH and AR would work with AB to move this proposal forward.

**12. Update on Budget 2016/17** – Noted the balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Noted Federation to investigate external fundraising opportunities to deal with the £15,000 budget deficit by end of March 2019.

### **13. Update on Federation Workplan**

- Update on Chin Wag – Noted there are 9 bookings covering 33 days up to 20 May 2016.
- Federation Representation Working Group – Agreed that business part of the joint meeting with the National Scrutiny Committee on 19 May 2016 to be dedicated to drafting the Terms of Reference for the Federation's Representation Working group.
- PR & Promotion – Action Plan still to be finalised.
- Fundraising – Dealt with in item 10.

**14. Minutes from the National Scrutiny Committee meeting held 20 January 2016** – Noted.

**15. Completion of Core Brief** – It was agreed the 3 key topics would be:

- 1% Rent Decreases/Detail and Logistics and the Operational Implications of Local Housing Allowance
- Proposal for a joint 2016 Annual Reports to Tenants
- Advocacy within Riverside's complaints Process

### **16. Any Other Business**

- MH informed all that a Tenant Think Tank Event was taking place 20 and 21 April 2016. It was agreed to send one Federation representative. **ACTION: MD to contact the Federation members not present and the Divisions.**
- ST asked all to encourage staff and tenants to use Chin Wag and to advertise it as widely as possible.
- WM explained that Chin Wag needed to have a mobility equipment check every six months at an annual cost of £138.
- PR explained he had dealt with a complaint made via the Fed's Facebook page. It was noted a query had also been made via the Fed's Yahoo mail box. **ACTION: PR to respond once complaint has been investigated.**

**17. Date and Time of Next Meetings:**

- Thursday, 19 May 2016 at 11.00am in the Brain Charity, Norton Street Liverpool L3 (joint meeting with National Scrutiny Committee)
- Thursday, 23 June 2016 at 11.30am in Riverside Head Office, 2 Estuary Boulevard, Estuary Commerce Park, Speke Liverpool L24 8RF