

Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation Executive Members' Pack

⇒ Your Constitution

⇒ Your Code of Conduct

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⇒ Your Expenses Policy

Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation Constitution

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP TENANTS & RESIDENTS FEDERATION CONSTITUTION

This constitution defines the purpose, including the aims and objectives, of The Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation. It sets out the rules for the operation and organisation of the Federation's Executive Committee, shows how people can become members and describes powers of the Federation.

1. Name of the group

The Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation (called the Riverside Federation in this constitution).

2. Aims and Objectives of The Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation

2.1 The Riverside Federation is the group which aims to represent the views of tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users across the whole of The Riverside Group (Riverside), particularly in relation to the services which Riverside offers, their quality and range. All tenants become members of the Federation when they take up their tenancy with Riverside. The Federation Executive is a body comprising at least two members from each Riverside Region, from Care and Support, Scotland and Riverside Home Ownership and a further six members selected as national members.

2.2 Riverside has formal relationships with people who live in the accommodation which it owns or manages, and informal relationships with those people who live in the areas where accommodation and services are provided. These relationships include:

- tenants, who have a formal contract with Riverside or its partners in relation to the rented accommodation in which they live
- leaseholders, who have a formal contract with Riverside in relation to the non rented accommodation in which they live
- residents, who are the neighbours of our tenants and leaseholders in those local communities where property is owned or managed by Riverside: there need be no legal contract with these people but they are likely to be affected by Riverside activity in relation to these properties
- service users, who have a formal contract with Riverside over the delivery of non residential services, such as Helpline or floating support services.

The Riverside Federation, its Executive and any, local, area, regional or sectoral groups aim to:

- understand the views of tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users in Riverside, especially in relation to services and the quality of service delivery
- create opportunities for the views of tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users to be expressed, providing a forum for discussion and consideration
- ensure that Riverside considers the views of tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users in relation to its services and the quality of service delivery, as well as in the development of its strategy and policies
- act as a lobbying and campaigning group to influence wider decision making by the government its departments and agencies and relevant organisations, about issues which affect Riverside tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users
- communicate with tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users to keep them informed of involvement activity in Riverside, empowering them in their relationship with their landlord
- promote and encourage good practice in participation amongst all Riverside Group tenants, leaseholders, residents, service users and staff
- work with Riverside to implement and review a resident involvement strategy and good practice guidelines
- promote the work of Riverside and of the Federation to wider tenant audiences and external organisations.

3. Powers of The Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation Executive Committee

Through its Executive Committee the Riverside Federation will:

- 3.1 be the user body with whom Riverside will discuss and consult with on all aspects of service delivery, including standards and quality of services delivered, strategy development and broader business and policy issues. As such the Riverside Federation through its Executive will create opportunities for tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users to develop and discuss their views;

- 3.2 work with Riverside to identify training requirements for tenants, and will deliver or manage training to meet agreed needs. It will commission training both from Riverside staff and from external providers;
- 3.3 communicate with tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users about Riverside and its activities, performance strategy and policy;
- 3.4 look for opportunities to influence external policy and strategy development in relation to housing issues, especially around service delivery. The Federation Executive will agree Riverside tenant representatives to be offered for selection to all national Tenant organisations such as the Tenants and Residents Organisation of England (TAROE), the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and other national or regional tenant groups where they exist;
- 3.5 look for opportunities to work with Riverside to empower its tenants, leaseholders, residents and service users, and will promote projects around the group, for example around financial inclusion and employment and training. It may raise funds or hold equipment in relation to those projects;
- 3.6 nominate members to be Group Board Members, shareholders, and members of committees and working groups of Riverside. Board members and shareholders should normally be full members of the Executive. If, under exceptional circumstances (e.g. the de-selection of a member as an Executive member mid-way through their term as a Board member) such representatives are not full Executive members, they are obliged to report to the full Federation Executive meeting upon request;
- 3.7 set the budget for three years in discussion with Riverside, and manage its financial affairs in line with financial policies which will be agreed at a meeting of the full Executive Committee.

4. The Executive Committee of The Riverside Group Tenants and Residents Federation

- 4.1 All tenants of Riverside are automatically members of The Riverside Federation from the beginning of their tenancy. Membership of the Federation is also open to Riverside leaseholders, residents and service users. The Federation's affairs will be managed by an Executive Committee. This will be made up of up to a maximum of 18 people with at least two members selected from each Riverside region, from Scotland, from Riverside Home Ownership and from Riverside Care and Support. There will be an additional six vacancies for members who are selected as national members.
- 4.1 Tenants should always comprise a minimum of 75% of the Riverside Federation Executive Committee membership. No two tenants living at the same address may serve on the Executive simultaneously.

- 4.2 Executive Committee members will be selected for a three year term. After three years they are obliged to stand down and the vacancies on the Executive are then to be widely and publicly advertised. Former executive members can stand again but if selected shall serve for no more than nine years continuously on the Federation Executive. Federation Executive members will be selected in a fair and transparent way by means of an assessment and selection process governed by a panel of Riverside tenants and residents who are not themselves standing for selection.
- 4.3 There will be four officers of the Riverside Federation Executive Committee: the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. These four posts will be elected annually by the Executive Committee of the Riverside Federation at the first Executive meeting after the Annual General Meeting, and will form an Officers' Group. The Officers' Group will be responsible for overseeing business between meetings of the Riverside Federation Executive Committee and making any necessary urgent decisions, which will be reported for approval to the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Decisions will be reported to all Executive Committee members within 21 days of being made.
- 4.4 The Officers' Group will review, update and oversee the implementation of the Federation Executive's annual work-plan and will prepare the agenda for full Federation Executive meetings. It will also take reports from National Scrutiny Committee and forward relevant information from this committee to the full Federation Executive.
- 4.5 Tenants and residents selected for co-option to the Executive Committee that are made outside of the three yearly selection process (as a result of resignations or unfilled vacancies for example) will be reviewed by the Officers' Group in consultation with Riverside. All decisions on membership made by the Officers Group will be reported within 7 days to all Federation Executive members. Federation members will be asked to ratify/approve the applicant within 14 days and appointment will be made if the majority are in favour. Any co-opted members will only serve the period of time remaining up to the next three yearly selection date.
- 4.6 Meetings of the full Riverside Federation Executive Committee will normally be held every two months. All meetings will be convened by the Federation Secretary.
- 4.7 If you are successfully selected to serve on the Federation Executive or the National Scrutiny Committee you confirm that you are able to allocate sufficient time to meet the requirements of your role. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee or National Scrutiny Committee, or standing committees appointed by either of these bodies, without offering apologies that are accepted by the meeting will be considered to have resigned their position. Should a member submit apologies for a fourth consecutive meeting those apologies are automatically rejected and the member will also be considered to have resigned. The member may appeal to the

Federation Executive Officers' Group. Should a member miss three Executive or National Scrutiny Committee meetings out of six in any one year from AGM to AGM their membership will be suspended pending a meeting with the Federation Officers' Group. If the Officers rule that membership should be terminated the member may appeal this decision to a hearing comprising three non-officer Executive members. Attendance will be monitored by the Chairs of the Executive and the National Scrutiny Committee.

- 4.8 Tenants and residents may vote only if they are present at an Executive meeting. The Federation can invite Riverside staff to attend meetings, but they will not be allowed to vote.
- 4.9 The Federation Executive will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) open to all Executive members. This will be held within six months of the end of the financial year which will run from April to March.
- 4.10 Federation Executive members will be given at least 21 days-notice of when their Annual General Meeting will be held.

5. The National Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 A National Scrutiny Committee will be appointed through a tenant led process and will comprise no more than ten members. At least one member shall come from each region, from Scotland, Riverside Home Ownership and Riverside Care and Support and where applicable from a scrutiny panel in these regions/sectors. The panel will comprise Riverside tenants and residents and at least 75% of the panel's total membership must be Riverside tenants. The committee will oversee and co-ordinate all scrutiny activity in Riverside and will report its finding regularly to the Federation Executive.
- 5.2 A member of the National Scrutiny Committee may not also be a member of the Federation Executive or a member of the Riverside Group Board.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1 There will be a Code of Conduct for members of the Federation Executive Committee and all involved tenants working with Riverside through national, divisional or local groups (comprising only Riverside Tenants and Residents). All involved Riverside tenants and residents will be expected to sign up to indicate they accept this Code of Conduct or to Divisional adaptations of this code. The Code of Conduct (see Appendix One), forms part of this constitution and covers all members of the Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation at every level of involvement or activity. It covers the Federation Executive and all other national, local or sectoral groups of involved tenants working with Riverside in a formal capacity. All involved tenants are expected to sign up to indicate their acceptance

of this Code or to any variations of it in other fields of Riverside activity they may be involved in. The Code will be agreed and regularly reviewed by a full meeting of the Federation Executive and it will cover:

- a statement of acceptable behaviour
- a complaints process showing how the Riverside Federation will deal with complaints about how it is operating from tenants and residents
- rules on action which the Federation may take when the Code of Conduct is breached
- rules on how members may be suspended and reinstated
- rules on how Federation Executive members and Officers may have their position terminated
- how the Federation should deal with conflicts of interest
- rules to prevent members promoting personal, political party, commercial and charitable interests or organisations or any campaigns that are not agreed by the Federation Executive as relevant to Riverside's tenants, residents, leaseholders and service users
- rules to deal with anyone who brings the Federation or Riverside into disrepute via the media or social media.

This Code of Conduct is considered as part of the Constitution and is included as an appendix (**see Appendix One**).

7. Payments and benefits

- 7.1 There will be no payments to any member of the Riverside Federation Executive. Expenses will be reimbursed in line with the current Federation Expenses policy
- 7.2 The Federation may not employ staff. It may ask Riverside to employ staff on its behalf and it may ask Riverside staff for support in carrying out its work. Tenants Resource Centres may be established in local Riverside areas to provide direct support for tenant activities.
- 7.3 The Federation recommends to Riverside that the Federation's Expenses Policy be used as the basis for **all** tenant expenses arising from resident involvement activity.

8. Equal Opportunities

- 8.1 The Federation will seek to actively promote equal opportunities in line with the Riverside Group's Equality and Diversity and Policy.

8.2 The Federation will promote equality of opportunity for tenants by actively encouraging wider participation and always attempting to develop representation of the community. Training will be provided to ensure there is a common understanding of expectations and behaviour.

9 Finance

- 9.1 All income and property shall be used solely towards the promotion of the Federation and in pursuit of activities authorised by the Federation Executive.
- 9.2 The Treasurer will ensure that proper accounts are kept and that they are independently audited, externally or internally.
- 9.3 A Financial Report will be produced at the Annual General Meeting for the previous financial year.
- 9.4 Federation members will not profit financially by receiving payment for their work.
- 9.5 Expenses will be given to members in line with the Federation's Expenses Policy and will be monitored by the Officers' Group.
- 9.6 If the Federation should, for any reason, be wound up the assets to be passed to another voluntary organisation with similar ambition. This would be done through Riverside.

10 Quorum

- 10.1 All meetings of the Executive, including the Annual General Meeting, shall have a quorum of six members, including a minimum of four Riverside tenants.
- 10.2 If there is no quorum within half an hour of the appointed meeting, the meeting will be adjourned. If at the following re-arranged meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour, the members present may, if they feel competent, continue with the business in hand and any decisions made must be ratified at the next Federation meeting.

11 Special General Meeting and Amendments to the Constitution

- 11.1 The Chairperson or Secretary of the Federation may at any time call a Special General Meeting to consider any matter which they decide should be referred to the members in general.
- 11.2 A Special General Meeting will be called after a written request from not less than one third of the Executive members, stating the reasons why they have requested the meeting. The meeting will only discuss the business identified in the written request. This request must be given to the Chairperson or Secretary

who will call a meeting. If a meeting is requested in this manner it must be organised within 21 working days of the Secretary receiving the request.

- 11.3 All Federation Executive members will be notified of the meeting with the names of those who have requested it at least five working days before it is to take place.
- 11.4 A Special General Meeting has the power to amend the constitution.
- 11.5 Amendments to the constitution may also be tabled at the Annual General Meeting.
- 11.6 Any alteration to the constitution will need the approval of a 51% majority of the members voting.
- 11.7 The constitution will be considered by the Riverside Group Board as a condition of acknowledgement of the Federation as the recognised tenant and resident body for Riverside.

12. Dissolution of the Federation

- 12.1 The Federation may only be dissolved by a Special General Meeting, called for that purpose. At least 21 days notice will be given of the meeting.
- 12.2 A proposal to dissolve the Federation shall only take effect if agreed by 51% of the members voting.

Appendix One

Riverside Tenant and Resident Federation Code of Conduct for Involved tenants and residents

1. What is the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct sets out the way that all Federation members are expected to carry out their duties and explains how the members are expected to behave in meetings, at conferences and during all activities carried out on behalf of the Federation or Riverside. Members are asked to abide by the Code of Conduct at all times when carrying out their duties. Any failure to do so may result in the member being suspended or excluded from Federation activities. In addition acceptance of the Code of Conduct means that as a member you must adhere to your tenancy agreement throughout the term of your involvement.

2. Why have a Code of Conduct

The Federation recognises that in order to carry out its work members at all levels need to behave in a co-operative and respectful way, and that conflicts need to be resolved in an amicable way so that activities are not hampered by them. A Code of Conduct sets out rules for enabling the smooth running of the organisation.

It ensures that aggressive or abusive behaviour can be dealt with and eliminated from the organisation, that meetings are conducted in a civil and efficient way, that personal issues are excluded from consideration with the organisation and that respect for all is the guiding principle in all activities. It defines the rules of behaviour that members are expected to abide by within the Federation.

The Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation recognises that there are people involved in its structures and activities who have a long association with Riverside and the Federation but who are not tenants, residents, leaseholders or service users. The involvement of such people in local, divisional or national structures is a decision for the relevant tenant and resident committee.

Following acceptance on to the relevant committee such people will be asked to sign the Federation's Code of Conduct and comply with it as though they were a member of the Federation as a condition of their continued participation in tenant and resident structures and activities.

3. Respect for others

All members should treat everyone - other members, staff, invited guests and visitors - with consideration and respect. They should be polite and courteous and appreciate that contributions from all members of the Committee are welcomed. Equality and diversity within the Federation are highly valued and no behaviour that denigrates fellow members – either directly by insults, or indirectly by comments to others, disruptive behaviour or behaviour designed to exclude others – is allowed.

4. Team Work

Contributions should always be valued from all members; including those whose circumstances make them less active, so that the group is fully inclusive. Training needs will be identified for members so that they are able to fully participate in Federation activities. A “buddy system” will be implemented under which experienced Federation members on the Executive and other committees will help and advise newer members.

5. Equality and Diversity

Members are asked to act in line with Riverside’s Equality & Diversity policy and treat all people fairly and with respect. This document is available to all members on request.

6. Conduct at Meetings and Events

All members have equal status when attending meetings. Members should at all times:

- Be courteous to each other and never use personal abuse
- Allow individuals to talk and not interrupt
- Respect the Chair’s responsibility to conduct the meeting
- Indicate to the Chair that they wish to speak and wait their turn
- Respect and observe the purpose of the meeting and follow the agenda set
- Not use the meeting to raise personal issues during meetings
- Assist and support others and provide constructive criticism even where differences of opinion exist. Remember the purpose of a debate is to achieve a resolution not sharpen conflicts
- Bear in mind the rights of individuals and the duties of staff when proposing solutions
- Implement decisions or act on recommendations once they have been agreed
- Make contributions in a non-aggressive and non- threatening manner
- Not make fun of other members

If a member becomes aggressive or acts in a threatening manner, the Chair or a member of staff through the Chair will ask the member to desist and may stop the meeting until this happens. The Chair can ask a member who is continuously disruptive or aggressive to leave the meeting.

7. Differences of Opinion and Conflict

Freedom of speech should be encouraged and welcomed. However, differences of opinion will occur from time to time and members, on whichever committee or at whichever meeting, should recognise this and respect differing views. Differences should be talked through and majority decisions should be implemented after discussion.

In extreme cases of conflict the relevant parties will be encouraged to meet and discuss the issues, along with the relevant Chair, Vice Chair and a member of staff. If a resolution is not reached by this means the parties may be asked to try some sort of mediation in order to prevent differences from becoming personal.

8. Formal Complaints

Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts by the above means but if an issue cannot be resolved then members have the right to submit formal complaints.

If a Federation member or a member of staff has a complaint about another member or any aspect of how the business of the Federation is conducted this will be dealt with in the first instance by the Chair of the relevant committee (unless the Chair is the subject of the complaint in which case it will be the Vice Chair), who will aim to resolve the complaint within 20 working days of it being submitted.

If the complainant wishes to further (and finally) appeal against the outcome of a complaint then three members of the relevant committee who have had no involvement at all in the complaint will hear the appeal (which can either be in person or in writing). The decision of this panel should be made and communicated within 20 working days of the panel considering the complaint.

At both stages of the complaint the member will formally stand down from their membership of the committee until a decision is made (maximum of 20 days at each stage).

In the event that the complaint is about a member of staff then this should be made in writing to the Director and it will be dealt with in line with Riverside's complaints procedure.

9. Confidentiality

Members should respect all aspects of confidentiality. Information made available at meetings may at times be identified as confidential. Such information shall be treated in the strictest confidence and shall not be disclosed to any person without the express permission of the person or organisation concerned. A data protection form will be required to be completed and adhered to.

10. Conflicts of Interest

Individual members:

- Should only act in the interests of the association, its tenants, residents and other service users

- Should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion at the start of the discussion. The chair may ask them not to take part in a discussion or to leave the room for that matter if the chair considers it appropriate
- Members should not seek, receive or expect any preferential treatment from the organisation for themselves or their relatives or close connections because of their position
- Must use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, complaints, etc. to the organisation
- Must not promote their private commercial, party political, charitable or campaigning interests via the Federation
- Must not use the Federation or its material to secure any personal financial gain and must observe its expenses policy
- Comply with the association's policies and procedures about applications for employment or housing from staff, residents, board members and anyone related or closely connected to them
- Not be involved in the appointment of staff, or for decisions relating to their employment, where they are related or closely connected to them
- Must not be involved in the appointment of, or scrutiny related to, a contractor or supplier where they are related or closely connected to them
- Must try to avoid using the association's contractors or suppliers for private purposes where possible. Where this is unavoidable, they must not receive a favourable service as a result of their position with the association and they must declare it in the register of interests and make a written declaration that no financial or other benefit was secured as a result of their involvement with the association
- Must comply with the law and the association's policies on bribery and corruption
- Must not canvass or receive gifts or hospitality or other benefits. If they are offered them as a result of their position, approval should be sought before acceptance and they should be recorded in the register of interests
- Should declare any conflicts of interest, or any 'perceived' interest (this is anything which others may reasonable assume to be an interest) on the Declaration Form
- Always ensure that their entry in the register of interests is complete accurate and up to date

In the event that a serious conflict of interest arises it may be necessary for the member to leave a group or committee until the conflict is resolved. If a member becomes an employee of the association, they will have to leave the executive and any group as long as they remain employed by the association.

11. Public Relations

Members should understand the importance of their responsibility when representing the organisation externally. This applies to meetings and other public events, in the written media, on the internet, the television and radio. Members of the Federation Executive Committee, the National Scrutiny Committee or any other recognised Tenant organisations within Riverside's official involvement structures are bound by this code of conduct in relation to their personal use of the internet and social media regarding references to Riverside. When such tenants, residents and customers identify themselves on social media as official representatives we expect them to ensure that any comments/posts/pictures etc., reflect the visions and values of both the Federation and Riverside including its policies on equality and diversity and do not bring either organisation into disrepute. This is designed to protect freedom of speech in relation to any personal views expressed by individuals through ensuring that such views are not associated officially with the Federation or Riverside. In the event of a member bringing either Riverside or the Federation into disrepute through such channels the Federation Executive's Officers can investigate and recommend suspension or expulsion from the Federation's Committees or local and divisional forums and panels depending on the findings of the investigation.

12. Breach of Code of Conduct

Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the officers of the relevant committee. They will have the right to issue a warning to, suspend or expel a Federation member from all Federation Committees. In the event of a single serious breach or of repeated breaches of the Code the officers may bar the person involved for a specified period of time from involvement activities. Any member will have the right to appeal against such action at the next full Federation Executive meeting.

You will also be considered to be in breach of the Code of Conduct if you are in breach of your tenancy agreement. You will be asked to step down from any appointed role temporarily until your tenancy issue is resolved.

13. Formal acceptance of the Code of Conduct

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and the Constitution and I agree to comply in full with it. I understand that by not adhering to the Code of Conduct or the Constitution of which it is a part I may be asked to step down from my position. In the event of me serving as a Tenant Inspector, Volunteer, Board member or on any other Riverside or Federation body I hereby accept any specific variations in the Codes of Conduct governing those bodies:

Name:.....Signed:.....Date

Declaration of Interests form

This form should be completed annually, and also at any time when a new matter to be declared arises. Any fields that do not apply should be left blank. Completed forms should be given to the Company Secretary, and will be recorded as appropriate in the association's register of interests, or the register of gifts and hospitality.

Your details

Your name		
Your position with the association – please state all that apply	Board Member	
	Staff Member	
	Resident or service user	

Declaration of compliance

I declare that I have read and understood the Federation's Code of Conduct and agree to comply in full with it. In accordance with the Code, I make below a full declaration of any and all interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with my position with the association.

Details of the declaration

Please give detail of whom this declaration concerns – you, a family member, friend or other person.	
Describe the actual or potential conflict of interest, stating for instance whether it relates to: (a) an employment matter (b) a business matter (c) a company directorship (d) land or property (e) a tenancy or leasehold matter (f) membership of an organisation or society (g) a position of public responsibility	

Give further details of any firm, business, agency, society or other organisation involved.	
Give details of any payment, benefit, transaction, contract, property, land, that is involved (with details such as date, location and sums involved)	
Give details of any gift or hospitality that is involved (with details such as date, location and estimated value)	
Give details of any job applicant or other employment matter that is involved	
Give details of any tenancy or leasehold matter, application for housing etc. that is involved	
Please add any further details about the matter you are declaring	
Is there any reason why this declaration should not be placed on the association's register? Please give details	

Signed	
Signed (for and on behalf of the association)	
Position	
Date	

Appendix Two

Roles and Responsibilities of the Federation Executive and its Members

1. Statement of Purpose

1.1 The Federation Executive is the principal national organisation of tenants, residents, leaseholders and service users (hereafter referred to as tenants for brevity) in Riverside. The Executive is the body which represents all Riverside tenants at a national level. Members are selected by their Riverside Divisions to serve on the Executive for a three year term of office. To represent tenants effectively the Executive must regularly consult with the wider tenant population in Riverside.

1.2 The Executive will normally meet every two months. The purpose of the meetings is to enable the Executive to plan and implement its programme of work on behalf of the tenants.

1.3 The Executive acts as Riverside's "critical friend" - independent but working in partnership with Riverside. It strives to ensure tenants' views and concerns are properly heard and taken into account at all levels of the organisation, from neighbourhood shop to national board.

1.4 It does this through meeting with the Board. It has representatives on the Riverside Group Board and Housing Services Committee. It is involved in organising and implementing consultations with tenants and it lobbies Riverside to put its views across.

1.5 When Riverside is implementing new policies, reviewing old policies or considering major changes it should routinely consult with the Federation Executive. The Executive's role is to consider these changes and formulate a response from a tenant perspective. It also carries out campaigns on behalf of tenants on issues that it agrees are important, wherever possible working in partnership with Riverside on such campaigns.

1.6 In short the Federation Executive is part of the decision making process for Riverside and its tenants and residents, on policy, service delivery and strategy.

2. Training and Support

2.1 No one will be expected to have all the skills required on appointment. Training will be supplied to all Federation Executive members to

develop their potential and equip them with new skills. The training will be ongoing and members will be expected to attend training sessions. Federation Executive members will be supported by members of Riverside's Central Resident Involvement Team who will co-ordinate meetings and provide other administrative support to the group.

2.2 Each Executive member will undertake an annual appraisal at which any additional training needs can be identified and addressed. If you have any other concerns over the work you are doing e.g. confidentiality or any other issues, you can discuss them at your appraisal or at any other time with the appointed Chair of the Executive or one of the Central Resident Involvement team.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 You will be expected to:

- understand the views of tenants in Riverside, especially in relation to services and the quality of service delivery
- create opportunities for the views of tenants to be expressed, providing a forum for discussion and consideration
- ensure that Riverside consults with the Executive on policies, service delivery and strategy and ensure Riverside considers the views of tenants on these issues
- keep up to date with external and general housing sector issues so as to be able to campaign and influence wider decision making, by the government and other relevant agencies about issues which affect Riverside tenants
- regularly consult with tenants and communicate with them to keep tenants informed of Riverside and its service delivery, its involvement activities and its plans, empowering them in their relationship with their landlord and demonstrating the outcomes that have been achieved on their behalf
- represent the Federation at national events and within the wider tenant movement, such as TPAS/TAROE etc. Undertake responsibility as an Executive member for liaising with tenants and tenant groups in your Division and take the lead as an Executive Representative in a service area or on an area Executive work as agreed at its meetings

3.2 You must always:

- act in the interests of the tenants and residents of Riverside
- inform meetings of any personal interests you have when an issue is being considered which could lead to conflict of interest
- keep up to date with the organisation's activities as well as external issues to ensure informed decision making
- regularly attend Federation meetings and work co-operatively with other members and with Riverside staff
- ensure the Federation Executive does not discriminate unlawfully and ensure compliance with Riverside's Equality and Diversity Policy whilst carrying out duties.

4 **Accountability**

4.1 Federation Executive members are accountable both to the Federation, to their Divisional tenants and to the Divisional Tenants and Residents Groups. They must make sure that Divisional tenants are kept informed of the activities and plans of the Federation.

4.2 Good communication is at the heart of accountability. The Executive will consult and communicate with tenants using all available methods of communication, including social media.

5 **Meetings**

5.1 Federation Members should make themselves aware of the dates and times of Executive and associated meetings that take place on a regular basis. Members should prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance

5.2 Members should apologise for non-attendance in advance of meetings.

5.3 Executive members must be prepared to attend meetings of Tenants and Residents groups in their Division when required to do so.

5.4 Members should try to give advance notice to the Chair of any items they wish to raise at a meeting.

6. Personal Issues

6.1 Members shall inform the Chair or Secretary, prior to any discussion, if a proposed subject for discussion involves any issue in which they have an interest, financial or otherwise.

6.2 Federation Members will be reimbursed for all reasonable out of pocket expenses, including a carer's allowance, incurred in connection with the organisations official business.

6.3 Members must be objective and not use the Federation Executive as a platform for raising personal issues or complaints.

7. Confidentiality and Code of Conduct

7.1 Information made available to the Federation Executive may at times be identified as confidential. Such information shall be treated in the strictest confidence and shall not be disclosed to any person without the express permission of the person or organisation concerned.

7.2 All members will be required to sign and accept the obligations of the Federation's Code of Conduct and sign a Declaration of Interest form.

Appendix Three

Roles and Responsibilities of the National Scrutiny Committee and its Members

1 Statement of Purpose

1.1 The National Scrutiny Committee is expected to scrutinise the service Riverside provides, drive improvements from a tenants' perspective, and provide a critical friend to the Association as part of Co-Regulation. The role will be independent from Boards and staff and will support the self-assessment and improvement planning process.

1.2 The National Scrutiny Committee will normally meet every two months. The purpose of meetings is to decide what services to scrutinise, commission scrutiny activity and Tenant Inspections.

1.3 The Committee will report directly to the Federation Executive Committee and Riverside Housing Services Committee and make recommendations for improvements. Its findings will be published in the Federation's Annual Report.

1.4 Members will be appointed on a skills basis, and will be expected to serve a three year term of office.

1.5 The National Scrutiny Committee is an essential and valuable tool for ensuring that tenants and residents can hold Riverside to account for its performance and behaviour.

2 Training and Support

2.1 No one will be expected to have all the skills required on appointment. Training will be supplied to all National Scrutiny Committee members to develop their potential and equip them with new skills. The training will be ongoing and members will be expected to attend relevant training sessions. National Scrutiny Committee members will be supported by the central Resident Involvement team who will co-ordinate meetings and provide other administrative support to the group.

2.2 Each Committee member will undertake an annual appraisal at which any additional training needs can be identified and addressed. If you have any other concerns over the work you are doing e.g. confidentiality or other issues, these can be either raised at the appraisal, or at any other time with either the appointed Chair of the Committee or a member of the Central Resident Involvement team.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 You will be expected to:

- Review information and reports from Divisional Scrutiny Panels
- Monitor performance including strategies and best practice examples
- Analyse feedback from Riverside working groups (e.g. Task and Finish Groups)
- Produce reports on scrutiny findings and make recommendations.
- Report to the Federation Executive Committee, Board, Housing Services Committee and Housing Services Directors
- Seek responses to any service improvement issues raised and recommendations made
- Ensure compliance with the principles of Riverside's Equal Opportunity Policy and Environmental Policy whilst carrying out duties

4 Accountability

4.1 National Scrutiny Committee members are accountable to the Federation Executive Committee and Divisional Scrutiny Panels.

4.2 Good communication is at the heart of accountability. The Committee will consult and communicate with tenants using all available methods of communication, including social media.

5 Meetings

5.1 National Scrutiny Committee members should make themselves aware of the dates and times of Committee and associated meetings that take place on a regular basis. Members should prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance.

5.2 Members should try to give advance notice to the Chair of any items they wish to raise at a meeting.

5.3 Members should apologise for non-attendance in advance of meetings.

5.4 Members must be prepared to attend local Scrutiny Panel meetings in their Division when required to do so.

6 Personal Issues

6.1 Members shall inform the Chair prior to any discussion, if a proposed subject for discussion involves any issue in which they have an interest, financial or otherwise.

6.2 Committee members will be reimbursed for all reasonable out of pocket expenses, including a carer's allowance, incurred in connection with the organisations official business.

6.3 Members must be objective and not use the National Scrutiny Committee as a platform for raising personal issues or complaints.

7 Confidentiality and Code of Conduct

7.1 Information made available to members may at times be identified as confidential. Such information shall be treated in the strictest confidence according to the Data Protection Act 1998. Information shall not be disclosed to any person without the express permission of the person or organisation concerned.

7.2 All members will be required to sign and accept the obligations of the Federation's Code of Conduct and a Declaration of Interests form.

Riverside Tenants and Residents Expenses Policy

Riverside and Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation are committed to ensuring residents are involved and empowered through listening and responding to their views and enabling residents to influence how we deliver the best possible service to all our customers. The quality of our services and the way we deliver them is a key part of what we do and only the involvement from everyone ensures that we can provide the most effective and efficient housing service.

Riverside and Riverside Tenants and Residents Federation recognise the importance of involving residents, but we also recognise many could not participate without the need for residents to claim reasonable expenses. We believe that residents should not be prevented from being involved by reason of out of pocket expense therefore, an Expenses Policy has been produced that gives clear guidance for both residents and staff, which outlines what expenses can be claimed.

Receipts for expenses must be submitted along with an official claim form within two months of the expenditure. If longer, approval must be sought. No receipt equals no payment. Claims without a receipt will only be paid in exceptional circumstances and then only with Riverside Manager/Director approval, or with the approval of the Federation Officers' Group.

Expense forms are available from Riverside staff and should be completed by the resident applying for the payment. If a resident is unable to complete an expense form, then it can be filled in by a Federation Officer or a member of Riverside staff. Expense forms must always be signed by the person applying for payment or by a member of Riverside staff on their behalf.

Video Conferencing

Riverside has invested significantly in new technology, which now makes video conferencing in to meetings a viable alternative to long distance travel. Most offices now have either a video conference facility or a webcam video conference facility via individual PCs. Residents who would ordinarily have to travel significant distances to meetings, should use video conferencing as the most economic means of participating in that meeting wherever possible.

Travel Expenses

When travel is essential, we will reimburse travel expenses incurred by members. Travel must always be via the most economic way possible, and will normally be by public transport, i.e., bus, coach or train. We will not pay for first class travel of any type.

Travel by taxi will be permitted where no convenient public transport links exist or with prior approval from a Riverside member of staff or the Federation Officers' Group. When taxi travel is used a receipt must always be obtained detailing the start and end

point of the journey and signed by the driver. Taxi sharing to the same estate or area is encouraged where possible. To request a taxi, residents must contact a local member of staff who can book via the Riverside taxi account, unless you are attending an event remote from a usual venue.

Wherever possible, the staff member responsible for the event will provide you with rail or coach tickets. Those who need to travel by rail regularly should purchase a railcard if eligible. The cost of the railcard can be claimed using an expenses claim form. You must notify Resident Involvement staff if you hold a railcard so that details can be added to a register for booking of tickets. Rail tickets are much cheaper when booked well in advance so please notify a member of staff as soon as possible about your travel needs.

If residents use their cars for local trips or where it is the most practical option mileage will be paid at a rate of 45p per mile which is in line with the current HM Revenue and Customs rates. When claiming car mileage, drivers should record the starting postcode and end postcode. Routine audits will use tools such as AA Route Planner to verify distances claimed for. Car parking and toll road fees will also be paid on production of a receipt.

Residents are encouraged to consider the possibility of shared car travel in an effort to reduce costs where this is convenient and cost effective. If you give a lift to another person travelling to a meeting or event an additional 5p per mile per passenger can be claimed. The passenger details must be provided on the expense form. (See also "The Facts about Driving as a Volunteer" document for further information.) The current mileage rates are as follows;

Casual User Rate		1-10,000 miles per mile	£0.45
Casual User Rate		Over 10,000 miles per mile	£0.25
Motor Cycles	All combinations	Per mile	£0.24
Passenger Supplement	Cars Only	Per passenger, per mile	£0.05
Bicycle		Per mile	£0.20

Please note: Petrol hybrid cars are treated as petrol for this purpose.

Riverside will not accept responsibility for any car parking fines, damage to, theft from or theft of vehicles.

Overnight Accommodation

Overnight accommodation will be arranged if attending a meeting or event would require you to leave home before 7.00am or arrive home after 9.00pm, unless this is what you would rather do. Overnight accommodation will also be provided for those with a disability which limits the length of time they are able to actively engage in a day.

Many of our sheltered schemes have a guest bedroom which can be booked in advance and is generally free of charge for Riverside residents. The Federation may at its discretion make a payment of £10 towards the scheme's social activities in return for use of the facilities. Where possible and in the interests of value for money, residents are encouraged to use these facilities.

When an overnight hotel stay is required, an evening meal will be provided if required and the reservation will normally be made on a bed and breakfast basis. Hotels will normally be 3 star or equivalent, with a £190 upper limit for bed and breakfast in London and a £100 upper limit for bed and breakfast outside London.

With the approval of a member of staff or the Federation Officers' Group, residents requiring an overnight stay may also elect to stay with friends or relatives. In these circumstances, a flat rate allowance of £25 is payable. This allowance replaces the bed and breakfast and evening meal ceiling.

Meal Expenses

Meal expenses will be paid to residents who are prevented by their voluntary duties from taking a meal at their homes, or where they normally take their meals and as a result incur additional expenditure. Expenses that can be claimed are as follows;

Breakfast

The cost of breakfast is not normally repaid unless your journey starts before 7.30am. The maximum amount which can be claimed on production of a receipt is £8.

Lunch

Lunch is normally provided to residents who are carrying out duties during the lunch period (12 till 2pm). If lunch is not provided or a resident needs to purchase lunch for another reason (e.g. because they are travelling), up to £12 (plus any imposed service charges) can be claimed for lunch on production of a valid receipt.

Evening Meal

The cost of an evening meal will be repaid if you have to stay away overnight if a meal is not already included in the price of a hotel reservation. The maximum which can be claimed on production of a receipt is £22.50 (plus any imposed service charge). If you cannot get home before 7.30pm due to carrying out Riverside duties, you can claim up to £22.50 towards the cost of a meal on production of a receipt.

Personal Incidental Expenses

When you are staying away from home or travelling between cities whilst carrying out Riverside duties, you may claim a daily personal incidental expenses allowance for things such as non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and newspapers, up to a maximum of £10 per day, upon production of a receipt.

Phone and Internet Costs

The Federation recognises that in order to guarantee the effective functioning of the Executive and the Officers' Group telephone and internet use are essential. To this end a maximum of £20 a month can be claimed by the Executive Officers, the National Scrutiny Officers and the Chairs of other of national groups towards telephone and internet costs. To process such claims it is essential that proof of expenditure (receipts and/or bills and statements) are provided to the Federation treasurer. This allowance may not be used towards the purchase of any equipment but only for the use of such equipment. Federation Executive and National Scrutiny members and members of other national groups may claim a maximum of £10 a month towards phone and internet costs with same requirement of providing proof of expenditure.

Loss of Earnings

We will compensate working residents when it is necessary for them to attend events/meetings during normal working hours and loss of pay would prevent attendance. Any payment would be on proof of loss of earnings from the employer. For self-employed residents, proof of an average day's earnings should be provided. Payments will be paid at the Living Wage rate per full day.

Additional Support Needs

If residents require an interpreter, or signer for a meeting, Riverside will source one if notification is given two weeks in advance of the meeting and provided you are able to give a brief of the specific support you need. The costs of external support booked on your behalf will be paid by Riverside. If you provide your own interpreter or signer, you can claim expenses at the same living wage rate. If you have other support needs which need to be met to enable you to participate, please discuss your needs with a member of staff and we will do our best to meet those needs.

Childcare and Carer Expenses

Payment will be provided for additional costs incurred for someone to look after children or someone else cared for as a direct result of attending a meeting or event.

For formal childcare i.e. registered child minder or nursery, we will reimburse actual costs on production of a receipt. We will also cover the additional costs of child travel to and from school where these are necessary for you to engage in Riverside business.

For informal childcare i.e. a family member or friend, we will reimburse a fixed hourly rate as per table below. We will pay a maximum of 7 hours per day at the Living Wage rate. We do not pay a childcare allowance for children over the age of 14 during term-time. We will only pay for one child irrespective of how many children there are. Payments in excess of these hours or rates will require exceptional approval from Riverside staff or the Federation Officers' Group. You will be asked to provide the carer's contact details and proof of age.

Childcare expenses will only be paid upon production of a child benefit letter or other suitable evidence. Where adults need care, official proof in the form of a GP or social worker letter should be produced. We will reimburse any charge incurred for the GP letter on production of a receipt.

No expenses will be paid to someone who is normally a member of the same household. It is your responsibility to ensure the carer has received appropriate training.

Participants with Special Needs

Those who require a carer to attend meetings or events will be asked to provide a supporting letter from their GP or a health professional. This letter should clearly state whether you are already in receipt of funding for a carer. We will reimburse any charge incurred for the GP letter on production of a receipt. Those who receive carer support funded through an agency/organisation will not be able to claim additional expenses. Other carers will be paid a rate based on the minimum wage, as per the table above. We will pay a maximum of 7 hours per day at the Living Wage rate. Payments in excess of these hours or rates will require exceptional approval from Riverside staff or the Federation Officers' Group. Your nominated carer must have received appropriate training in caring for you and be prepared to take full responsibility for your well-being. Any carer attending to support you will receive meals at the same time as you and will have a separate or adjoining overnight room provided if needed.

Stationery

Pads, pens and other relevant stationery items needed for resident to carry out their duties will be provided by Riverside. Residents may make use of Riverside's photocopying facilities provided it is for Riverside business. Hard copies of papers will be provided when possible to minimise the cost of printing to the resident. Residents may claim the cost of their print cartridges used for Riverside business provided prior approval from a Riverside Member of staff or the Federation Officers' Group has been sought. In the interests of value for money, printouts should be black and white, unless that would hinder the understanding or presentation of the content.

Payment of Expenses and Allowances

Once an expenses claim form has been correctly received within the 2 months since the expenditure, we aim to reimburse you within at least four weeks, though we will always aim to reimburse expenses before four weeks whenever possible. Payments can be made by BACS – direct into your bank account or by cheque.

For Riverside Federation Members and National Scrutiny Committee representatives all expense forms should be sent through to the Federation Administration Assistant who will pass forms to the Treasurer for authorisation or another Federation Officer if the Treasurer is absent. The Treasurer's expense forms will be authorised by another Federation Officer. Cheques made out to Federation Members will be signed by two authorised Federation signatories.

Checks may be made at any time to verify any claim for expenses. Any claims that appear not to have followed the policy will be investigated further. Annual accounts of expenditure should be produced. As the Federation is funded by Riverside, its internal audit team will routinely check the accounts and expense returns. Misuse of the Expenses Policy or attempts to falsify claims will be treated as serious misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly.



I hereby declare my acceptance of the Riverside Tenants and Residents Expenses Policy and agree to abide by its contents.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

