

The Rent Income Excellence Network

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At your service

Tony Newman

Tony is a consultant, project manager and trainer with a wealth of practical experience, and manages RIEN. Specialising in housing income management and financial inclusion, Tony has conducted many service reviews and improvement projects. He also designs and delivers HQN's highly-rated arrears and financial inclusion training courses.

Mark Henderson

Mark has worked with RIEN since it started in 2002. He is Director of Housing Operations at Wolverhampton Homes. Mark is an expert in rent income collection and specialises in performance management. He analyses, collates and comments on the quarterly performance information.

Bob Newton

Bob has nearly 30 years' experience in social housing with a number of local authorities and housing associations in the North West. He currently works for Helena Partnerships in St Helens, Merseyside, as Arrears Manager, a post he has held since 2004 when the specialist rents team was set up.

Sue Beasor

Sue is a freelance benefits consultant and trainer. She has worked in benefits for over 20 years and has considerable experience of the practice as well as the theory. She has worked at a senior level in a number of local authorities and has spent several years working closely with social landlords.

"We have found the information available from RIEN to be very beneficial, from their briefing papers, good practice guides and toolkits to their benchmarking club. We have used the site extensively over the last few years to help us drive up performance in our rent management service."

Marianne McManus, Divisional Housing Manager,
Housing Services North Ayrshire Council

"I find the website useful for finding examples of good practice. The benchmarking data also helps to inform strategy development. Generally we also feel that RIEN training sessions/seminars are amongst the best on income collection."

Peter Trahar,
Head of Inclusion, Selwood Housing

RIEN is provided by HQN, a leading provider of information, training and consultancy for housing organisations and their partners, offering high quality services at outstanding value – visit www.hqnetwork.co.uk for further information on our services.

Driving up service quality, performance and customer satisfaction

HQN's Rent Income Excellence Network (RIEN) is a valuable resource for anyone working in social housing income management and financial inclusion wanting to improve service delivery AND increase customer satisfaction.

RIEN helps local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations to improve income collection, reduce arrears and address financial exclusion by:

- Sharing positive practice and innovation
- Identifying topical issues, including changes in regulation and legislation
- Discussing and comparing strategies and solutions
- Evaluating performance and processes through benchmarking.

Expert support and advice is provided through:

- Email enquiry and online Q&A service, giving access to over 220 fellow practitioners and our panel of housing experts
- Library of positive practice examples and regular topical briefings
- Self-assessment toolkits covering all aspects of current and former tenant arrears, Housing Benefit and financial inclusion
- Regular performance benchmarking supplemented by commentary and member surveys of specific aspects of services
- Regional best practice groups seminars and an annual conference, with discounts for RIEN members.

RIEN is supported by experienced Associates and practitioners, giving you access to a wealth of expertise and practice from across the housing income management and financial inclusion world.

If you need this information in an alternative format (for example, large print) please contact rien@hqnetwork.co.uk

Why RIEN?

The story so far...

Take a look at some of the activities from which members have benefited so far:

Benchmarking

- Rent collection and current tenant arrears
- Former tenant arrears, collection and write-off
- Success in encouraging Direct Debit take-up by customers.

Network briefings

Members have received exclusive briefings on:

- Features of top performers
- Efficiency and income management
- Maximising Housing Benefit
- Changes in legislation and case law
- Working with vulnerable people
- Addressing financial exclusion.

Positive practice

Our library of positive practice contains a wealth of ideas from RIEN members including strategies, policies, procedures and sample documents for:

- Improving rent collection, reducing arrears and sustaining tenancies
- Helping residents to increase their income through welfare benefit and money advice
- Developing service standards and involving residents
- Promoting and publicising the service
- Target setting and measuring performance
- Service improvement and value for money
- Structuring the service – job descriptions and structures
- Staff training and development.

Best practice workshops

Highly-rated member workshops in London, Wolverhampton, Newcastle, Manchester, Cambridge and Bristol during 2009, with more planned for 2010.

What we provide exclusively for members

Annual performance indicator benchmarking survey: we carry out a major benchmarking survey of our members every quarter on an ongoing basis, covering rent collection, arrears levels and write-offs and other key performance statistics.

This year, benchmarking also includes information on Direct Debit take-up, a key aspect of demonstrating value for money.

Other benchmarking and surveys: we carry out benchmarking on other hot topics: the latest was a survey on the structure of members' income management teams, carried out in February 2010. More surveys are carried out when a key issue arises.

Good practice: we summarise the good practice from all of our members on key issues, and also from inspections, and circulate regularly.

'Ask the members': if you need help or ideas, simply post your question on our website to reach over 220 members.

Briefings and updates: specially commissioned briefings and updates written by housing income specialists on the key topical and emerging issues.

Policy and practice: we take the strife out of searching for up-to-date information on income management policy and practice by providing summaries and information on 'hot topics'.

Best practice workshops: our regional workshops are ideal for sharing good practice, discussing key themes, reviewing benchmarking results and creating an effective face-to-face network of members. Workshop topics have included:

- Maximising sundry debt income such as repair recharges
- What the inspectors are looking for
- Performance management and target setting
- Efficiency and value for money
- Increasing Direct Debit take-up.

And there's more...

Discounted rates for HQN's RIEN annual conference, regional seminars and events.

'Early warning' for any income-related seminars and training events so you can jump the booking queue.

As a RIEN member, you'll be able to influence our programme of national seminars and events as we'll ask you about the issues that you want us to cover.

Why you should become a member of RIEN

The network will:

- Carry out benchmarking of performance and other statistics for members
- Take the hard work out of keeping up to date with good practice through briefing papers and regular email updates
- Provide you with policy support by analysing and translating emerging policy into practical steps that can be taken at a local level
- Put the knowledge and skills of our team of experts at your disposal – only a phone call away

- Put you in touch with like-minded peer colleagues who have similar interests
- Provide cross-reference help and information from our other specialist networks such as the Leasehold Excellence Network (RIEN) and the Housing Finance Excellence Network (hf:expert) where policies, good practice or other issues also relate to housing income management.

You will get personal contact from a dedicated network manager who will help to shape the network's activities to meet the needs of members, co-ordinate good practice, and help to resolve your issues and problems.

And if you need more support?

HQN's performance improvement, finance and asset management consultancy teams offer bespoke consultancy support in relation to policy-making and service implementation.

Examples of recent and current work include:

- Health checks of income management services, identifying strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for improvement
- Assistance in preparing for inspection, including service reviews and help in improvement planning and implementation

- Support to develop and implement income management and financial inclusion strategies and policies
- Review and updating of procedures and service manuals
- Facilitation of customer focus groups and consultative exercises
- Development of training needs analysis tools for income staff.

Membership fees

Details of the RIEN membership fees for 12 months' subscription can be found in the enclosed joining form. Discounts may be available for organisations that are already members of other HQN networks.

If you would like further details please email: rien@hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on 0845 4747 004. We believe that by introducing some of the tips of top performers, membership will pay for itself.



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JOIN NOW!

RIEN – one of a range of specialist networks run by HQN, offering information and advice to practitioners working in rent arrears and collection. The Network draws together and shares best practice from the country's top performers in the field.

Name	
Job title	
Organisation	
Address	
	Postcode
Telephone no.	
Email address	

How did you hear about the network?

RIEN membership – 12 months' subscription is £820 plus VAT at the applicable rate and I understand that I will be invoiced for this amount upon receipt of my joining form.

Signature

RIEN is one of a range of specialist networks run by HQN, a leading provider of consultancy and training, designed to help you to achieve real and lasting improvements in your services.

Discounts may be available for organisations that are already members of other HQN specialist networks. If you would like further details, please email rien@hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on 0845 4747 004.

Please return to: HQN Limited, Rockingham House, St Maurice's Road, York YO31 7JA

Please note that network membership is for individual organisations (or groups) and the staff employed by those organisations (or groups). Tenants and board members/councillors linked to the organisation/group that holds network membership can also access all member benefits, including the website password and published briefings. Members must not share any member benefits with other organisations who are not network members, as this devalues the benefits of membership for paying members. This includes sharing the password and the forwarding of emails, briefing papers or other documents to non-member organisations. HQN reserves the right to terminate network membership in cases of a breach of this code. We are, of course, happy for members to refer to network publications at meetings, etc. If further clarification is required, please contact hqn@hqnetwork.co.uk and your enquiry will be forwarded to the relevant network manager.

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