

The Strategic Excellence Network

| SEN – supporting leadership in housing

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Comments from our members

"The SEN briefings are extremely informative and enable us to keep up to date with the changes within the sector"
Orbit Group Limited

"SEN helps us keep more informed and this in turn helps us develop strategic thinking. Keep up the good work – it's really useful!"
North Tyneside Council

"Keep up the good work. I think HQN/SEN provides excellent and timely information and your seminars and other 'training' are of very high quality. Thanks for being there!"
Housing Regeneration Initiatives

"The SEN weekly updates are very helpful, and enable me to keep up to date without having to search or read loads of magazines!"
Wirral Council

"We not only read SEN briefings, but use them as well! It's a very useful service"
London Borough of Southwark

"I find the weekly briefings very useful indeed. There are many occasions when receiving it from you prompts follow-up action!"
Bristol City Council

"We wanted to thank you and your colleagues for the work you did with us. You were able to appreciate that we work in a challenging and at times difficult environment. It was really helpful to get some quality objective feedback from a trusted outside source"
Stratford upon Avon Council

"Thanks very much for coming to talk to us this afternoon. You clearly really know your stuff. I'm sure I'll be back in touch at some point for some help and advice"
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

"Perfect!!!"
Brighton & Hove City Council

"The consultation summary is excellent and easy to read – I look forward to receiving it every two weeks – it is very useful"
Newcastle City Council

"FCH are finding the updates a helpful tool to keep on top of the changes that are taking place in the sector and then following this up with training that is relevant"
Fortunegate Community Housing

Housing underpins our ambitions for health and wellbeing, a sustainable economy and stronger communities but, with reducing resources, there's a danger that the foundations will crumble. We need to learn how to do more for less for the sake of our customers and communities.

So what are your options? Put your head in the sand, or raise it above the parapet? If you choose the latter then you'll be in good company as part of SEN, a growing network of people and organisations who recognise that difficult times need a clear vision, strong leadership, meaningful relationships with others and innovation.

With an advisory group of some of the best local authorities and landlords in the country SEN aims to lead the way in new relationships between local authorities and social landlords, on seeking value for money from housing activity, and in improving outcomes for customers and communities.

Can you afford not to be part of this?

We are here to support and advise you, including pointing you in the direction of other professionals who can help.

If you have a query please contact Carla Leyland or Jonathon Kenworthy, SEN Managers, on 07525 802 954 or alternatively, please contact the networks team on 0845 4747 004.

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

Why SEN?

SEN began life in January 2003 as one of HQN's specialist networks. Originally a subscription network for those working in 'strategic housing' in local authorities, it has evolved to respond to demand from a wider audience. Understanding what customers and communities want and planning to meet these needs and aspirations are critical to anyone in housing who wants to deliver successful community and business outcomes.

What's on offer?

SEN offers weekly policy and news updates, regular briefings, monthly consultation updates, email alerts and announcements, a question-and-answer facility, a website and web-based toolkits. We also offer a variety of networking opportunities through round tables, workshops and high profile events.*

We are constantly updating our services to ensure that all our members are supported in the most effective and efficient way possible; in 2010 – we will provide:

- **NEW – benchmarking:** we will provide our members with a value for money benchmarking framework together with guidance for strategic and non-landlord services to support approaches to efficiency (online version) and we will set up national and regional benchmarking groups
- **NEW – housing for non-housing professionals:** we will publish a quarterly update directed at executive officers (in local authorities), elected members and board members of social landlords, and other strategic partners, eg, health
- **NEW – strategic housing partnerships (SHPs):** we will publish a quarterly summary of the issues SHPs (or equivalents) could be discussing with suggestions for questions that could be posed
- **NEW – regional context:** we have developed online profiles for each region, including a summary of regional direction for the development of affordable housing and other investment; we will maintain these to provide our members with a regular overview
- **NEW – national and regional events:*** beginning with joint events with the IDeA and Audit Commission we will be holding events focused on improving capacity and performance in the sector and preparing for changes in regulation
- **NEW – annual conference:** we will hold an annual conference for all members to enable members to take stock the external factors that may change the direction of policies and plans back at the ranch.

Our 'hot topics' for 2010 will focus on supporting members in the following areas (not exhaustive):

- Value for money and efficiencies
- Community engagement
- Establishing effective partnerships to deliver better outcomes
- Making the best use of the private rented sector
- Enabling access to housing, eg, through allocations
- The future of housing support.
- Enabling new affordable housing
- Upon request we will also cover specific topics – just ask!

* Please note that some events are payable, however SEN members will receive discounts

The SEN team... always on hand to assist you!

SEN is managed by a dedicated manager and is supported by a network of experienced practitioners providing you with access to current housing knowledge and practice from across the country. Specialisms include performance improvement, capacity building, meeting the housing support needs of vulnerable people, enabling effective approaches to affordable housing, regeneration, planning and delivery, to name a few.

Gill Leng is HQN's Executive Director of Strategic Housing Services and specialises in developing strategic approaches to housing, health and social care at all spatial levels. Gill provides SEN with the policy context and leads on many of the joint projects.

Carla Leyland and **Jonathon Kenworthy** are SEN's Managers, working with the advisory group to ensure services are relevant to members and that members use these to their advantage.

Russell Helms is HQN's Business Manager for Strategic Housing Services and can advise on other forms of support to members to help you plan, improve and review services and approaches.

SEN is administered by HQN's networks team.

Our members

SEN's membership base is constantly evolving as we attract members from local authorities far and wide (county and district), small and large housing associations, universities, regional leaders' boards and government agencies such as the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency. Our advisory group is also extremely representative, with officers

from top-performing green flag authorities, Beacon councils, housing associations and government agencies. The group actively plays a role in enhancing existing and developing new and innovative services for our members, responding to consultations and ensuring that there is representation at key national working groups to represent its members where appropriate.

Becoming a member – is simple!

The enclosed joining form provides you with all you need to know about becoming a member of SEN. Membership fees cover a 12-month subscription and discounts are available for HQN members or organisations belonging to other HQN specialist networks.

If you would like to receive further information regarding becoming a member of SEN or on any of the services or content within this brochure, please contact sen@hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on **0845 4747 004** and we will assist you the best we can.

Consultancy support

There may be times when you need tailored support and specialist input to develop your strategic approach. HQN's Strategic Housing Service has considerable experience of working with local authorities, landlords and housing support providers to:

- **Undertake research to inform strategies, plans and policies.** Recent work includes housing market reviews to inform housing strategies and policies and research to inform plans for housing and services to meet the needs of an older population
- **Set strategic direction (vision) and identify priorities.** Recent work includes providing strategic context reviews to inform housing association board and strategic housing partnership decision-making, and facilitating sessions with elected members and Local Strategic Partnerships
- **Develop partnerships.** Recent work includes facilitating discussions between local authorities and landlords to develop new, local, standards, and to improve strategic relationships
- **Review existing strategies, plans and policies.** Recent work includes reviewing and refreshing allocations policies
- **Improve performance.** Recent work includes undertaking mock inspections and other forms of performance assessment of the strategic approach to housing and non-landlord housing services such as homelessness, private sector housing and housing support, and developing improvement plans
- **Understand value for money.** Recent work includes appraising investment and service options, undertaking benchmarking and developing strategic frameworks.

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SEN

BECOME A MEMBER!

Name	
Job title	
Organisation	
Address	
	Postcode
Telephone no.	
Email address	

How did you hear about the network?

SEN membership – 12 months' subscription is £820 plus VAT and I am aware that discounts are available for HQN members or organisations belonging to other specialist networks. I also understand that I will be invoiced for this amount (subject to discounts) upon receipt of my joining form.

Signature

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

If you would like to receive further information regarding becoming a member of SEN, please contact sen@hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on 0845 4747 004.

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

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.