

Somer Residents Committee Applicants Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

The FAQ's below are designed to help you decide if being a member of our Somer Residents Committee is for you.

Somer Community Housing Trust, known in short as "The Trust," would like to have residents involved in the decision making processes to ensure our services meet your needs.

When Trust managers feel that changes could be made to improve services, such as the way our repairs team operate and how we provide housing management services, these changes are presented to members of the SRC for their consideration.

As our customers, you are the best people to comment on how these suggestions will work for all our residents.

- **What is SRC?**

The Somer Residents Committee (SRC) is the voice of our residents there to help us make decisions about services. The SRC is made up of Somer residents from across all the areas.

- **Why do we have the SRC?**

When the Trust was set up in 1999, it gave a commitment to residents that they would be consulted on the development of services. The SRC is the 'forum' recognised by the Board of the Trust for this purpose. The SRC also has the power to appoint residents who wish to stand as Board Member on the Board of the Trust. This position is known as "Tenant Trustee".

- **Why is resident involvement important?**

The best people to judge how well services are working, and make suggestions for improvements, are the customers of that service. Residents who live in Somer properties are our customers. It makes complete sense to ask our residents to help us in the continual process of getting better at what we do which is why your involvement is so important.

- **What will it involve?**

The SRC meets every six weeks, or about 8 times each year, normally in the evening between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. One week before each meeting, members are sent an agenda which gives details of items for discussion at the meeting, and will normally also include the reports on topics you are going to discuss so you can think about these matters in advance. While SRC members would normally be expected to attend all the meetings, we accept that there will always be occasions when, for a multitude of reasons, this may not be possible. Because the SRC only has 26 members, if you do not think that

you can commit to attending the majority of the 8 meetings each year, you may wish to discuss your concerns with Somer before completing your application.

- **What will my role be as a member?**

Your role will be to provide your views on issues that are put before the committee. It is important to remember that you are there as an individual resident, rather than a member of any other forum or committee, so your views can reflect what you actually think, rather than any other collective opinions you may have.

- **Will I get any training for the new role?**

To enable you to fully understand the role, Somer will be offering all SRC members, and particularly new SRC members, training opportunities. This training will be something that is ongoing and will be provided to meet your needs in helping to make you comfortable and confident to undertake the role. There will be training to help you understand how the Trust works, as well as the roles of the Committee. There will also be the opportunity for other training at a higher level, which will help you be prepared to become a tenant Board Member in the future if that is your ambition. This training will lead to the recognised qualification of a Certificate in Leadership and Management and will take place over 5 days spread over 5 months (one day per month).

- **What about costs/expenses reimbursement?**

Attending SRC meetings should not leave you out of pocket financially, therefore Somer will either arrange transport to and from the meetings for you, or will reimburse you with any mileage or transportation cost you have to pay to get there. If child care is an issue, we also offer assistance with child minding costs and other expenses you may incur as a result of attending the meetings.

- **What are the benefits of being a member?**
SRC members have the chance to make a difference for all Somer residents, not only by suggesting how we can improve services but also voting on options. SRC members also have a link with the Trust Board and therefore get information on decisions being considered by our Board and have a chance to comment on these as well.
- **What is the length of membership?**
This will be covered in the membership and recruitment policy enclosed.
- **How are members selected?**
Every new SRC member will be asked to attend a selection panel run by other residents. The purpose of the panel is to explain the role, answer any questions you may have, and talk through with you the kind of time you feel you may be able to give to the role, as well as the expectations of the committee.
Somer wants the SRC to be representative of all our residents, so this selection process is intended to encourage residents to get involved rather than putting prospective applicants off.

How do I apply?

You have already expressed an interest in becoming an SRC member, all you need to do now is to fill out the application form and send it in.