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Introduction

Impact exists in a competitive culture in the housing/care sector of the economy. The people Impact employ are our most important asset and the major factor in determining the quality of the service provided. Impact is committed to investing in people and developing a highly effective and professional workforce that is capable of meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

The purpose of this handbook is to give employees of Impact guidance and information about the terms and conditions that govern their employment. It is important that staff are as clear as possible about these. If you have any questions about the information in the handbook then please speak to a member of HR who will be happy to discuss this further.

The company in its sole and absolute discretion reserves the right to discontinue, vary or amend any of the schemes highlighted in the handbook at any time. The majority of these changes are made due to changes in legislation however where required reasonable notice will be given to the employee.

The Organisation

Company Background

In 1975 a group of Cleator Moor residents protested against plans to knock their homes down on Duke Street and Queen Street. As a result of their actions a Housing Action Area was set up and Impact was born.

We now have 3,000 properties covering the whole of Cumbria and across the border into Lancaster. Our biggest concentration of houses is in Workington. As well as a stock of general needs housing we are Cumbria's biggest landlord of supported housing with over 500 properties and bed spaces. Additionally we own and run extra care schemes and a recycling and second hand furniture service.

We employ 200 staff and have an annual turnover of 1.5m.

Impact is a Housing Association, registered as an Industrial and Provident Society operating under Charitable Rules. We are also registered and regulated by the Housing Corporation.

We are "owned" by our **Members,** who have each bought a £1 Share. Currently, there are just over 100 Members. Their Share receives no dividend and is non-returnable. Shareholders' liability is limited to £1. Most of those Members are individuals; some are tenants some are organisations (staff cannot become Members). Our Members elect the **Board** at our Annual General Meeting.

We make no profits, but we (hopefully) do make **surpluses.** These are ploughed back into the Association. If we were ever to cease trading, our grants and loans would be paid back (to the banks and the Housing Corporation), and the balance would be distributed to like organisations.

Our Mission

Impact is a Charitable Housing Association based in Cumbria.

Through Partnership, we serve local Communities.

We strive to meet greatest need.

To do so, we provide high quality Community Investment, Housing and Support.

Our Values

Meet Greatest Need

Our Values: We believe all should be treated fairly, with respect and dignity, and have genuine choices in the issues that affect their lives.
Our Commitment: We will endeavour to house and support those people in greatest need, ensuring equality of service for all. We will deliver services that enhance people's independence. We will take on real challenges to further our values, creating opportunities and new investment.

Provide Good Quality Housing

Our Values: We believe that all people have the right to a decent home. People should not be disadvantaged simply through their inability to purchase.
Our Commitment: We will maintain our stock to a high standard and use our resources to provide, as far as we are able, the housing that people want.

Develop Local Communities

Our Values: We believe in the principles of partnership, local democracy and community empowerment.
Our Commitment: We are accountable to both our residents and their communities. We will help them to develop their self-confidence and to influence the services which they use.

Encourage Resident and User Involvement

Our Values: We value and are committed to the involvement of our residents and service users- both in planning our work and delivering our services.
Our Commitment: We will consult our residents and service users on key issues which affect them. We will support their involvement in ways which respond to their needs, including user groups, residents' associations and the overall direction and of our organisation.

Work towards Shared Objectives

Our Values: We work through partnership.
Our Commitment: We will work in partnership with other agencies- locally and nationally, both statutory and voluntary- and in partnership with the local community.

Staff and Committee Commitment

Our Values: We value the differences and similarities between people. We work positively and proactively to achieve our charitable objectives.
Our Commitment: We will develop a culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution that they can make to our

work. We will develop highly competent staff and Board who have a high level of commitment to our organisation and to our shared ethos and objectives.

Environmental Sustainability

Our Values: We treat our resources with respect and use them with conscious thought.
Our Commitment: We will use our resources in a way which minimises harm to the environment. We will actively consider new projects to help the environment.

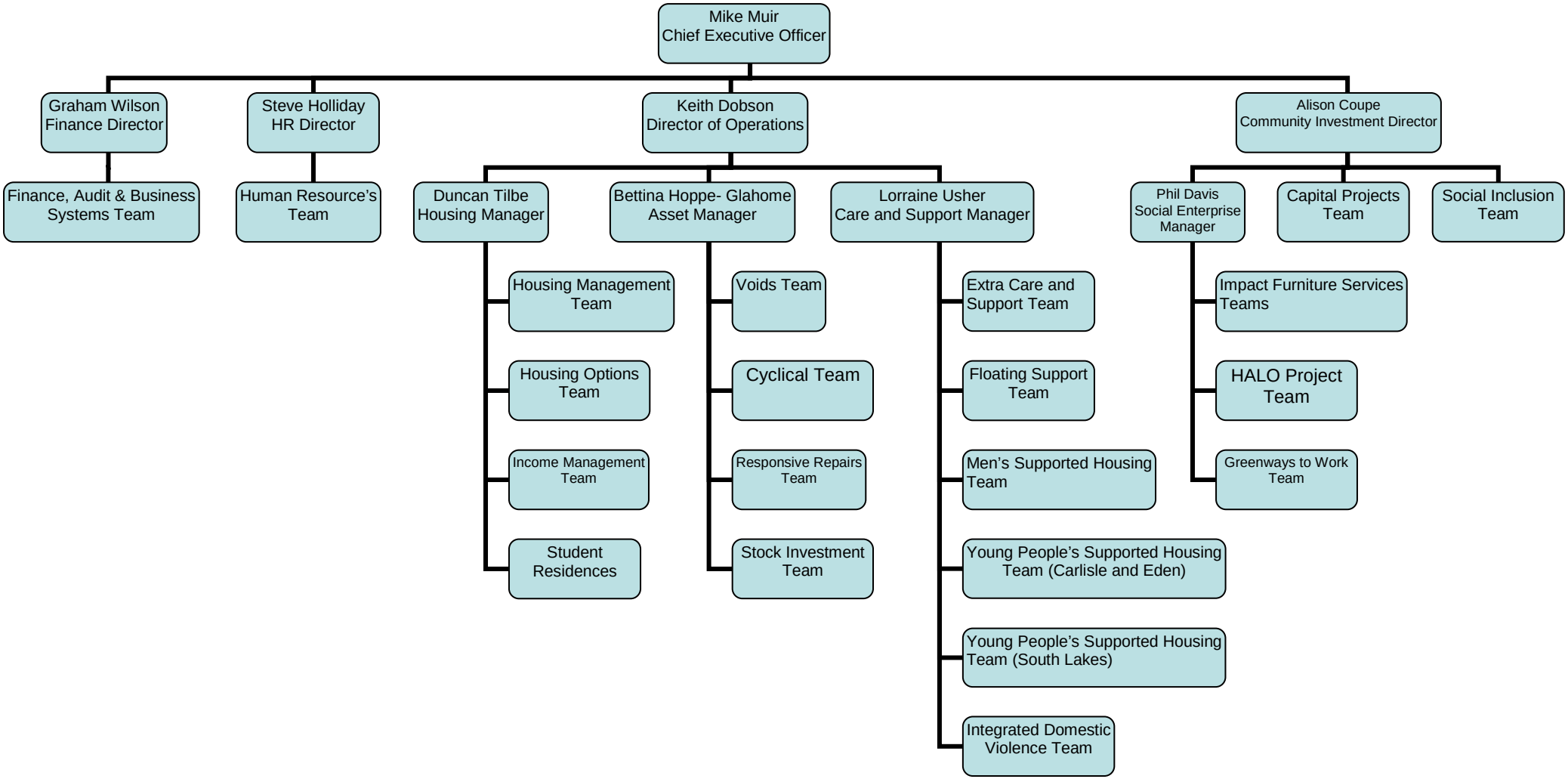
Efficient & Effective

Our Values: We will deliver excellent value for money in all that we do.
Our Commitment: We will prioritise and constantly review the use of our resources to maximise the benefits to our tenants, customers and local communities.

To find out more about impact's vision and ambition read the organisation's Blue Print:

http://www.impacthousing.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Blueprint%202010.pdf

Organisation Structure



Service Areas

A description of the function of each of the Association's service areas is given below:

Human Resources:

The team provide information, advice and guidance to managers and employees regarding a range of employee relations issues such as absence, disciplinary, grievance, training etc. The team are also responsible for administering recruitment and selection for vacancies, training programmes, Staff events, employee surveys, Equality and Diversity plans etc and help support managers through programmes of change management and service improvement i.e. restructuring.

Finance, Audit and Business Systems:

Finance- The finance team is responsible for monitoring; appraising and developing the organisations finances as well as monitoring budgets and ensuring the payment of staff, contractors and other creditors.

Audit- the team provide data regarding the organisations performance and handle complaints from service users, ensuring these are resolved appropriately.

Business Systems- is responsible for the design, development and implementation of the organisations Information Technology Service. It also provides training for new staff and for new software packages as well as ensuring the security and maintenance of our current systems.

Housing Management:

Neighbourhood Management- The team are responsible for the letting of all our general needs properties with the aid of the Voids team, Income Management team and Housing Options team. The team carry out Annual Tenancy visits and regular community walkabouts to ensure the welfare of our tenants. The team deal with anti social behaviour in our communities working in partnership with local Police and Community safety professionals. From all the information the team gather through walkabouts and partnership working they put together community plans and work to implement these to improve the lives of our tenants.

Income Management- are responsible for collecting and managing rent payments, this can include providing advice and guidance to tenants who are in arrears or liaising with the Housing Benefit department to ensure tenants receive the right amount of benefit support. The team also assist the Asset Management team in the collection of payment for rechargeable repairs.

Housing Options- are responsible for ensuring our properties are let as quickly as possible to the most suitable tenants. Their day to day responsibilities include processing housing applications, advising customers of suitable properties, administering the advertisement and selection process for lettings and liaising with other housing associations and organisations to ensure the best solution for service users.

Student Residence- The team manages all aspects of running the student halls. In the summer holidays the halls convert to a Youth Hostel and self catering accommodation which the team also manage.

Asset Management:

Responsive Repairs- the team is responsible for the repairs and maintenance of all our tenanted properties.

Voids- the team is responsible for the repairs and maintenance of all our void properties, to ensure that they meet the minimum home let standard. They also carry out option appraisals on our stock, looking at whether we should sell a property and where appropriate administering its disposal.

Cyclical- the team delivers the planned cyclical maintenance for properties which includes organising Gas Servicing, Legionella checks, Electric testing, PAT testing, fire alarm servicing and external decoration and gardening.

Stock Investment- the team is responsible for preparing and managing planned maintenance on our stock, an example of a planned maintenance activity would be fitting a new kitchen. The team carry out in house stock conditions surveys, which include, decent homes, asbestos and energy efficiency checks to ensure our properties, are maintained to Impact's Minimum Homes Standard. They are also responsible for managing the organisations adaptations programme e.g. arranging for a stair lift, grab handles or walk in shower to be fitted etc.

Care and Support:

Extra Care Supported Housing- The team provide support for older and vulnerable service users to enable them to live independently in our self contained flats with communal areas for them to socialise.

Floating Support- provide housing related advice and support to people with a diverse range of needs. Service users can be a tenant of any landlord or live in their own home to access the service.

Young Peoples Supported Housing- the team support young people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in need of housing whilst they are looking for employment, training or education. Each resident has a support worker who works with them to produce and implement a support plan which is tailored to meet their needs and allow them to progress towards living independently.

Men's Supported Housing- The team support men over the age of sixteen who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in need of housing whilst they are looking for employment, training or education. Each resident has a support worker who works with them to produce and implement a support plan which is tailored to meet their needs and allow them to progress towards living independently.

Domestic Violence Support- the team provide advice and support to women living with domestic abuse throughout Cumbria as well as specialist supported housing schemes for women fleeing domestic abuse.

Community Investment:

Capital Projects- The team are responsible for the procurement and development of new schemes or properties. This includes liaising with contractors, partner agencies and our own staff to ensure the scheme will meet the needs of service users as well as meeting budget and time restrictions.

Social Inclusion- the team work with young people to provide them with social and personal education experiences to help them reach their full potential and play a positive role in the community. Activities include drug awareness talks, outward bound residentials, volunteering in the community as well as gaining accredited qualifications.

Social Enterprise- is made up of several smaller departments but the biggest is Impact Furniture Services the team collect donated furniture and electrical items with the intention of recycling these in the local community. Staff at Centre 47 provide room hire for meetings as well as office space for other organisations. The Greenways to Work team are part of a time limited European funded project which primarily delivers training on energy advice. The HALO team work jointly with other agencies to reduce homelessness and improve the health and lifestyle of supported housing service users.

Communication at Impact Housing

The Company is keen to develop a distinct, open culture in which communication is key to its foundations. Communication is a two-way process and feedback of views from employees, along with participation and involvement, is essential to the success of the organisation. All members of the Senior Management team operate an open door policy so please don't be afraid to raise any questions or highlight any concerns you have with them.

We have also developed several ways of communicating which are highlighted below.

Team Meetings

All Managers are asked to hold regular team meetings, the frequency of which may vary, but are usually every 4 to 6 weeks. The aim is to inform staff of any important developments or information concerning the Company and to give individuals the chance to air their views and discuss any queries, therefore ensuring clarification throughout. Managers are also encouraged to gain feedback at team meetings and feed this back to the Senior Management Team.

You can expect to have visitors from other teams at your team meeting. Regular visitors will include the Chief Executive and your departments Director who will attend to give you business updates and ask you about the pressures your team are currently under. HR will also visit from time to time to provide training and updates.

Staff Monthly Briefing

This is a monthly update to all staff sent via email. It holds updates from the Senior Management team about the future of the organisation, starters and leaver's details, recent achievements and general updates on what's happening in and around the organisation.

Chief Executives Blog

The CEO updates his blog weekly with where he has been or what he has been doing and you are welcome to write comments or questions for him to answer.

To access the blog follow the link on the monthly briefing email and register for updates.

Managers and SMT Days

We hold quarterly Manager and SMT Days looking at the key issues facing Impact and how to combat them as well as providing a forum for managers to discuss current issues and have the opportunity to influence new practices before they are implemented throughout the organisation.

Staff Day

We hold an annual Staff Day (normally in June) which gives all staff members the opportunity to network and socialise together. The morning session includes activities such as updates on the challenges facing the organisation, exercises putting our values into practices and team building activities. The afternoon session is activity based and allows staff to socialise and build relationships.

Annual Planning Days

Each team has an annual planning away day (normally held between July and September) where they look at what plans and projects the team will

undertake in the coming year and what the team's priorities will be. This is influenced by the organisations Business Plan.

The Notice Board

In Outlook there is a Notice Board facility where staff are welcome to post anything of interest. Regular posts include items for sale, requests for help sourcing items for service users, job vacancies, parties etc.

Staff Questionnaires

From time to time we will send out questionnaires to ask your opinions of new practices we have put in place or what the current issues are in the organisation. This helps us to get an up to date picture of morale within the organisation and ideas on how we can improve.

Trade Union Meetings

The Company supports the system of collective bargaining in every way and believes in the principle of solving industrial relations problems by discussion and agreement.

We regularly meet with the Union to discuss issues and the organisations future. The Union will also organise member meetings from time to time to update staff.