

February 2025

BERNICIA



Independent Member Customer Services Committee

Applicant Brief

Foreword



"Bernicia has developed an enviable reputation as one of the North East's largest and most successful housing providers; building, renting, selling and managing homes, and providing specialist care and support services to over 60,000 customers."

We value our customers, work together and respect each other, encourage innovation and operate with the highest levels of accountability and integrity. We deliver what we say we will, something our residents and partners can rely on. This is all part of the engaging, exciting and infectious 'Bernicia Way' of doing business.

Our ambitious corporate strategy, Housing People, Helping People is focused upon:

Delivering an exceptional housing service Investing in homes, neighbourhoods and communities Building an effective organisation Helping to deliver the regional agenda.

This current commitment provides for investment of 200m in existing and new homes across a wide spectrum of property types and tenures, redefining the range and impact of our services and extending our digital offer to make more services just a few clicks away for customers.

What we do makes a difference to people's lives. People are front and centre in all our strategies and our staff truly care about that; consistently delivering excellent results to make the biggest impact possible.

Bernicia is unashamedly a performance driven business and were looking for the most exceptional talent out there to help us achieve our ambitions – 'The Bernicia Way'.

This is a great time to be part of Bernicia.

John Johnston
Chief Executive, Bernicia

About us

Bernicia was formed in 2008 as the parent company for its two subsidiary housing association's Cheviot and Wansbeck Homes, and its commercial company KPS.

In 2016 Bernicia merged with the Four Housing Group, bringing two further housing associations, Three Rivers and Berwick into the group.

In 2017 we simplified our group structure, with the four operational subsidiaries and the group parent now combined into a single, strong regional housing association, creating the ideal organisational structure to support the delivery of our ambitious corporate strategy, Housing People, Helping People.

The amalgamation of our group structure generated significant savings that have further increased our financial resilience and capacity to fund growth, and we are putting our financial capacity and shared skills and expertise to work to deliver more value for the communities of the North East.

Bernicia owns and manages over 14,000 properties and has a continuous pipeline of new homes development, across a range of property types and tenures. We provide housing and services for single people, couples, families and older residents and for people who need a bit more support to enjoy the independence of living in their own home.

We directly employ over 550 people and recognise that our staff have, and will, continue to be central to our success as a dynamic, modern and forward-thinking organisation.

Our operations are managed from Bernicia's 4 primary offices in Ashington, Durham, Newcastle and Berwick and are underpinned by our continued investment in technology and staff training and development.

Our commercial trading companies operate from our Newcastle offices; Kingston provides property and block management, estate services and facilities management to the private residential and commercial sectors.

Living spaces provides services and advice relating to property development, sales and the residential private rented sector.

Both our social and commercial companies remain high performing businesses and provide a solid foundation for future growth.

Development of the Group has brought financial strength and an even greater ability to invest in our staff, systems and services; meaning we go forward as a strong business well positioned to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead.

The Bernicia Group is governed by a single board, chaired by John Holmes. John is supported by professional and skilled Board members who bring a wealth of expertise and experience to direct and oversee the success of Bernicia.

In summary Bernicia is a North East Housing Association that believes in great homes and services, we have ambitious plans, an experienced and skilled board and great staff who really care about what they do.

About the role

Independent Member - Customer Services Committee

Bernicia Group, Northumberland.

We have a mixture of paid and unpaid Committee positions. The current paid positions are £2,730pa including £500 travel.

Bernicia is high performing, values driven housing provider, with a mission to invest in homes, services and people, and to make a positive impact on communities across the North East.

We build, rent, sell and manage homes, and provide specialist care and support services to over 60,000 customers. We have an annual turnover of £75m and employ over 550 people, predominately from our four primary offices in Berwick, Ashington, Newcastle and Durham.

Tenants Voice

Our Tenants Voice framework sets out how tenants shape our service and hold us to account for delivering services. We are committed to tenants being actively involved at all levels of governance; the Customer Services Committee is a key element of our governance structure.

We've listened really hard to our tenants in developing our new housing strategy that will be launched in April 2022.

Our areas of focus, based on what tenants have told us are:

- Communication
- Being Visible
- Treating people as individuals and offering choice
- Ease and simplicity; right first time
- Relationships and trust

As a Committee Member, you will have responsibility for monitoring the delivery of Bernicia in relation to our core landlord services and our areas of strategic focus, ensuring that the interest and needs of all tenants are considered at all times.

Time commitment



Event	Frequency	Hours
Committee Meetings (2 hours + 2 hours prep)	4 per year	16
Training and Conferences (Full working day)	Usually 1 per year	8
Appraisal (up to 2 hours)	Annually	2
Other duties, additional meetings, phone calls and requests (unlikely to exceed 4 hours)	Ad hoc	4
The Board has two strategy events per year. to which Independent Members may be invited dependent upon the theme.		

Please note that an initial appointment is for a term of 3 years. Independent Committee Members may not serve any longer than 6 years. All appointments are subject to annual review at appraisal and any review of board composition requirements in line with the corporate strategy.

The Person

Independent Member - Customer Services Committee

Bernicia operate a Board and committee structure to retain focus in specific business areas:

Bernicia Group Board	
Board Committees	Bernicia Commercial Board
Audit and Risk	Kingston (Block and estate
(Group) Investment	management) Living Spaces (Estate
Customer Services	Agency)
Reward and Remuneration (Group)	

We are seeking an independent member to join our group customer services committee, who has current experience of living in a Bernicia property.

The main role of the committee member is to determine the strategic direction and policies relating to customer services.

You will be involved in assessing emerging risks and issues relating to the landlord service; measuring and reviewing our performance; and establishing good practice.

You will share our values and work well with others. You will also be ready to challenge information that is presented to you in a constructive and meaningful way, working together to reach the best resolution for Bernicia.

Prior experience isn't essential. We will provide training and support to help you carry out your role.

The skills and experience that this role brings can be used in other areas of life such as applying for jobs or promotions.

How to apply

Selection will be through shortlisting and an interview with the chair of the committee and other independent committee members.

Closing date for applications: **15 March 2025**

Scheduled interview dates: **w/c 31 March 2025**

The first meeting of the Customer Services Committee is 24 April 2025.

Further information, and details on how to apply, please click on the link below:

www.bernicia.com/tenants/get-involved

For additional details, please contact our Director of Housing Services, **Kirstie Kelly** at kirstie.kelly@bernicia.com

Diversity is valued at Bernicia and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.



BERNÍCIA

Housing People, Helping People

www.bernicia.com