



NORTH STAR Governance and Assurance Manager

Candidate Brief May 2025



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INTRODUCTION

Andrew Carlton, ED Business and Finance Support

Thank you for your interest in the **Governance and Assurance Manager** role.

At North Star, our vision, values and social purpose are at the heart of everything we do. These principles drive our success as an organisation, are reflected in our high performance, the trust of our customers and the dedication of our staff. We take pride in making the right choices – not the easy ones.

We are among just 2% of employers in the UK to hold Investors in People: Platinum accreditation. Our culture sets us apart and has remained deeply embedded, enduring significant sector changes and transitions in leadership. We are a team of people with shared values and our collaborative and supportive approach provides a strong foundation for us to challenge each other constructively when necessary. You will be supported to grow and develop in your role, with encouragement to explore and be curious about all areas of the organisation.

Despite the financial pressures of recent years, North Star has maintained a strong financial position. We are proud to have retained our credit rating over the past four years and have a favourable operating margin when compared to our peers. This ensures our Board can focus on decisions that benefit our customers and communities, rather than simply meeting bank covenant requirements.

The **Governance and Assurance Manager** plays a vital role in maintaining and strengthening our governance framework, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards, and supporting our Board and Executive Team to operate effectively and transparently. This role is responsible for leading on corporate governance, risk management, internal audit coordination, policy oversight, and ensuring we meet all statutory and regulatory obligations. It is a key position that helps safeguard our integrity as an organisation and provides assurance that we are delivering on our commitments in a way that is open, accountable, and aligned to our values.



You'll join a fantastic, hard-working directorate that plays a vital role in ensuring North Star operates at its best.

This is an exciting opportunity to join our team at North Star and I wish you the very best of luck with your application!



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ABOUT US

North Star Structure and History

North Star was established in 2006 to provide services to, and bring together, Endeavour and Teesdale Housing Associations. Darlington Housing Association joined the Group in 2016.

Endeavour began life buying and refurbishing older terraced housing in the inner areas of Tees Valley and was known as a “traditional” housing association with dispersed housing stock. Over the years, the Association spread itself geographically, and operated in 11 Local Authority areas, and providing a wide range of rented accommodation, including supported housing.

Established in 2006, Teesdale was a stock transfer organisation from the previous Teesdale District Council. Operating across a wide geographic area in the South West of Durham, it operated in market towns and, ex-coalfield areas as well as more isolated rural villages.

Like Endeavour, Darlington began life buying and refurbishing older terraced housing in the inner areas of Darlington and was known as a “traditional” housing association with dispersed housing stock. It operated entirely in Darlington.

In 2020 and after 14 years in a Group structure, we became one organisation providing a much simpler governance structure.



We have worked hard to remain true to our roots, whilst modernising what we do and how we do it. We are known for flexibility, partnership working, community focus and adaptability. We have held Investors in People Platinum Accreditation since 2017. We were also placed at Number One and Number Two in the 24Housing Landlord of the year 2018 and 2019 lists, and we won UK Employer of the Year in the 2021 UK Housing Heroes Awards organised by the Chartered Institute of Housing.

We hold accreditation with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and Customer Service Excellence standard for work with our tenants and we are members of the Institute of Customer Service. Tenants have always been and will always be at the centre of the business. This is evidenced by strong tenant scrutiny and involvement through a range of in person and online methods of connection. We make a positive contribution to the areas we operate in and invest significantly in community activities which help to sustain and develop our communities.

Building new homes and delivering local services are continuing priorities.

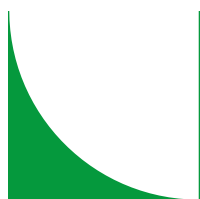
Vision, Values and Social Purpose

Our Vision

Creating homes, building futures.

Our Social Purpose

We care about the people and the communities that we serve. We work, in collaboration with others, to create stable, secure, trusting and supportive environments where people feel they belong.



Our Values

Creative

We create environments to enable people, places and communities to thrive. We believe many things are possible and that our energy brings about exciting change.

Connected

We are connected to the world we live in. Therefore, we are relevant, informed and knowledgeable. We develop strong relationships that are based on integrity and trust.

Courageous

We challenge ourselves and others. We experiment, pioneer and we dare to be different.

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OUR STRATEGY

Strategic Objectives to 2026

The Corporate Strategy 2023-2026 is a three-year plan, that details the organisation's strategic vision and objectives. It is an ambitious but achievable plan that has been approved by the North Star Board. The three-year plan is distilled into annual objectives which are detailed in the annual Corporate Plan. Progress is reviewed and reported to the Board every six months. This ensures that the plan remains dynamic and is subject to scrutiny and challenge.



The corporate objectives, which are set out in broad terms as follows, are:

1. Customers and Communities

We intend to deliver high levels of satisfaction through quality services, strong relationships, clear and focussed communication, and transparency. Our understanding of customers from insight, connections and contact will shape the requirements of digital and face to face services – we will know what is required. Board will be confident they know tenant views that lead to even better decision making. Communities will be well connected, and we will further develop links to training and employment opportunities.

2. Growth, Assets and the Green Agenda

We will gain strength through ambitious growth in the development of new homes including supported housing. Standards will be reviewed using new ethnographical techniques, to ensure we are building what is required. A green strategy will be developed, and data will be used more effectively to better understand stock and its performance using a new tool that informs investment. Relationships with property contractors will strengthen through collaborative reviews and improved standards will constantly evolve using robust tenant feedback.

3. Technology

We will use technology to improve customer services, deliver efficiencies, and add value for money. A comprehensive digital provision will be available for customers who want to interact in this way; it will fully complement face to face contact. The new housing management IT system and enhanced digital processes will free up staff time, and data will be used effectively with one version of the truth.

4. People and Culture

We will continue to develop and maintain the relational culture, with a focus on the growth of people and the provision of opportunity. Where possible North Star recruits from within the organisation whilst developing its offer to apprentices and graduates. There will be continuing investment to develop prospective leaders as role models, collaborators, coaches, and pioneers. North Star will be equitable, diverse and inclusive. North Star encourages staff to become professionally qualified and access academic qualifications.

5. Value for Money

The operating margin at the minimum of 20% will underpin financial strength and assist in retaining a strong credit rating – this will enable us to deliver more. The budget process is embedded and owned with everyone responsible for driving effectiveness and efficiencies. The surplus for purpose statement will ensure there is ownership and understanding.

6. Governance

The Boards generative journey has continued to evolve, the Board is more diverse and understanding of tenants needs strengthened. There will have been a successful transition to a new Chair, with clear succession plans in place for all Board members to provide continuity and reduce disruption. Regulatory Standards are being delivered to a very high calibre. The dynamic governance improvement plan will be delivered.

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ROLE SPECIFICATION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Description

Job Title

Governance & Assurance Manager.

Reporting Relationships

Responsible to:

Director of Finance.

Overall Purpose

To ensure that North Star has a robust Governance and Assurance Framework. This includes the development and implementation of internal controls, reporting, compliance, assurance, best practice and new thinking. The role also supports Company Secretary activities and will have a key relationship with Board.

Key Terms and Conditions of Employment

- Competitive Salary - £53,730-£56,953.
- 35 hours per week.
- Hybrid working.
- 7% Pension Contributions.
- Essential car user allowance (£1885-£4796 depending upon CO2 emission level).
- 25 days annual leave on commencement rising to 28 days after three years, plus bank holidays plus three days at Christmas.
- Based in the Stockton office at Endeavour House although will be required to travel between sites throughout the North-East and North Yorkshire. Hybrid working is available; however, we expect that the Governance and Assurance Manager spends at least part of the week at the main office as appropriate. Therefore, this role would not suit someone who is unable to easily access Stockton.



Principal Responsibilities

Governance

1. Contribute to keeping North Star Strong in all matters of Governance regulation and statute.
2. Monitor, self-assess and record compliance against Governance Standard and NHF Code of Governance.
3. Ensure there is a robust process in place for the completion of self-assessments against the RHS Standards (Consumer Standards, Value for Money); Housing Ombudsman (Complaint Handling) code (and actions plans are in place for any gaps).
4. Lead on the management and reporting of the Asset and Liability Register.
5. Work with the Executive Director of Finance & Business Support and SMT to plan, manage and service Board Meetings, Committees and internal/external meetings and events as appropriate. This includes minute taking and annual declaration returns.
6. Management of Convene and other Board communications software as appropriate.
7. Review Governance policies and documents to ensure they meet legal requirements and current best practice.
8. Coordinate the Board appraisal, recruitment and induction process.
9. Manage and service the programme of Board and Committee and other meetings producing agendas and minutes in a timely manner.
10. Ensure high levels of communication and information to Board members – acting as first point of contact.
11. Work with the SMT and Chairs to develop an annual training plan for Board members.

Risk

12. Ensure a robust Risk Management Framework is in place for the Management of risk across the organisation.
13. Support the Director of Finance and Executive Director of Finance & Business Support in administering the operational and strategic risk groups.
14. Management of 4risk or other risk management software.
15. Provision of training to staff and Board members on risk management.
16. Management of a fit for purpose insurance programme across the business that identifies and transfers the risk where appropriate.

17. Support the Director of Finance to Ensure there is robust internal control frameworks in place – this includes the management of the internal audit programme and relationship with the internal auditors.

18. Work with the Director of Finance on RAC and Board reports.

Other Duties

19. General support to the activities of the Finance and Business Support Directorate.
20. Provide as-hoc administrative support to the Senior Management Team
21. Any other duties as required.

Based at Endeavour House, Stockton

Person Specification

Governance & Assurance Manager

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS		
Qualified to a degree standard (or equivalent experience)	✓	
Relevant professional qualification (for example CGI) (or equivalent experience)	✓	
SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE		
Experience of working in a highly regulated environment providing support to an organisations Board	✓	
Experience of dealing with relevant authorities and professional advisors in company secretarial matters		✓
Experience of working with confidential and sensitive material in a professional manner	✓	
Excellent communication skills with the ability to advise, influence, hold to account, and create effective working relationships at all levels including external parties	✓	
Ability to interpret information quickly and to assess compliance against key policies and procedures	✓	
Excellent attention to detail and a focus on accuracy	✓	
Knowledge of the principles of risk management, data protection regulation, and relevant regulatory standards	✓	
Skilled in planning, organising, and maintaining accurate information using a range of digital applications	✓	
BEHAVIOURS / ORGANISATIONAL MATCH		
Creative – wants to bring innovative ideas	✓	
Connected – wants to increase knowledge and understanding	✓	
Courageous – wants to make/challenge decisions	✓	

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HOW TO APPLY

- A curriculum vitae (CV).
- A cover letter (concisely let us know why you want this role and why you think you are the right person).
- A completed Diversity form (available from the microsite).

Further information is available at our candidate microsite here:

www.allcrofta.com/projects/governance-manager

If you would like to discuss this opportunity further, please contact Jim Allcroft, Managing Director, Allcroft Associates at jim@allcrofta.com or 07783 701 922.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 8th June at 1200.
Final selection Tuesday 1st July - Stockton.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - Different Together

At North Star, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are part of our DNA. Together, we continue to build a culture that encourages, supports, and celebrates difference. It fuels our innovation and connects us even closer to customers and communities.

We are keen to reflect the communities we serve and welcome applicants from a broad range of backgrounds and experience. We are committed to tackling issues of under representation in our staff team. As such we will guarantee an interview to any candidate who, has a disability, or considers themselves to be from an ethnic minority background and meets the essential criteria of the role.

We can provide all recruitment material in any format, this includes accepting written applications, as well as online. We will also make any reasonable adjustments necessary to help candidates participate in our recruitment processes.



