

HYDE GROUP

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Julie Hollyman, Chairman, Hyde Group”

A SAFE PAIR OF HANDS

Last year Hyde Group, one of the UK's top five social housing businesses, needed to recruit a new Chief Executive after the death of the previous incumbent. During his illness, the Finance Director, David Eastgate, had been acting as Chief Executive. Chairman Julie Hollyman turned to Noorzaman Rashid, who had recruited her to the post of Chair, and then helped her recruit an entirely new non-executive board at the Hyde Group.

“Noorzaman listens hard to what you want, and isn't afraid to constructively challenge you and explain why he disagrees,” says Hollyman. “He is open and honest, extremely responsive and an ace networker: he knows everyone, which makes it easy for him to make discreet connections.”

Rashid also enjoys a strong reputation for fielding a diverse group of candidates – something that was important to Hyde, as was Harvey Nash's strong private sector practice. “We wanted someone with the right values and a strong social ethos, but who also had the ability to make commercial decisions.”

Hollyman briefed Rashid in May, and together they developed the specification for the post. After a high-profile media and internet advertising campaign, combined with executive search, they came up with a long list of 17. “It wasn't easy: the field was enormous,” recalls Hollyman. They then brought in some board members to help whittle the list down further.

“Noorzaman helped us at that stage too,” says Hollyman. “He understood the board dynamics and the chemistry between what were essentially two sets of people – those with a traditional housing association background and those who had come in from the outside – and supported me in the role of honest broker in terms of the kind of person we needed to appoint. He also saw beyond the CVs in a way that helped us avoid making mistakes with our recruitment.”

Following numerous meetings with a wide selection of candidates, Hyde appointed the FD, who had by then been doing the job for a year, to the full-time position.

“While we had diverse range of candidates, including existing Chief Executives, we decided to appoint our Group FD David Eastgate. The recruitment campaign enabled us to test the market and helped us think through a number of issues in



- Hyde Group needed to appoint a new Chief Executive after the death of the previous incumbent
- Chairman Julie Hollyman turned to Harvey Nash to find someone with commercial nous and a strong social ethos
- The recruitment campaign helped Hyde Group to challenge its own thinking and, with Rashid's help, it ended up appointing the Finance Director, who had been Acting Chief Executive for a year, to the full-time post

more detail,” says Hollyman.

“David was the right person for the job. He has private sector experience, but his heart lies in the Third Sector, which makes him an ideal fit, both culturally and commercially. He has already found us a potential merger partner, and if the merger goes through it will make Hyde Group the biggest housing association in the country.”