

# Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

## Candidate Information

December 2025

Supported by **TILE HILL** 

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**Dear applicant,**

Thank you for your interest in the Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance role at Hightown. This is an important leadership position and plays a central part in how we continue to operate legally, ethically and effectively. As guardian of our compliance and risk management, you will help us uphold the standards that instil trust among our customers and stakeholders.

You will join an organisation with a proud heritage dating back to the 1960s and shaped by the social reform movement of the Cathy Come Home era. That spirit still influences us today. Colleagues care deeply about improving lives and strengthening the communities we serve, and this sense of purpose continues to define our work.

Hightown has grown steadily in recent years. We expanded our portfolio to 9,300 homes and continue to run 90 care and supported housing schemes that meet a wide range of needs. The social housing landscape is ever evolving, yet our mission of Building Homes and Supporting People remains constant. We are committed to continuous improvement and to placing customers at the centre of how we shape services.

This opportunity comes as a valued colleague prepares to retire. We are looking for someone who can bring continuity, assurance and stability, with senior experience in housing association governance. You will be someone who communicates with clarity, brings a natural gravitas and builds confidence quickly with the Board, the Executive team and colleagues across the organisation. Strong judgement and the ability to offer clear, strategic advice will be key.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, you will work collaboratively with experienced professionals from across Hightown. Your leadership will support a refreshed strategy that focuses on investing in existing homes, strengthening the data we hold and ensuring that insight and customer voice inform meaningful improvements.

If what you read in this pack feels aligned to your experience and approach, we would be pleased to receive your application. For a confidential conversation before applying, please reach out to our search partners at Tile Hill.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this opportunity and for your interest in Hightown.

Best regards

**Maxine Espley MBE**  
Chief Executive



Hightown is a charitable housing association working across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. We provide 9,300 affordable homes to more than 19,000 customers and offer care and supported housing to over 1,000 people each year. More than 1,000 colleagues contribute to this work and help create the safe, well maintained homes and thoughtful support that our communities rely on.

### Building Homes

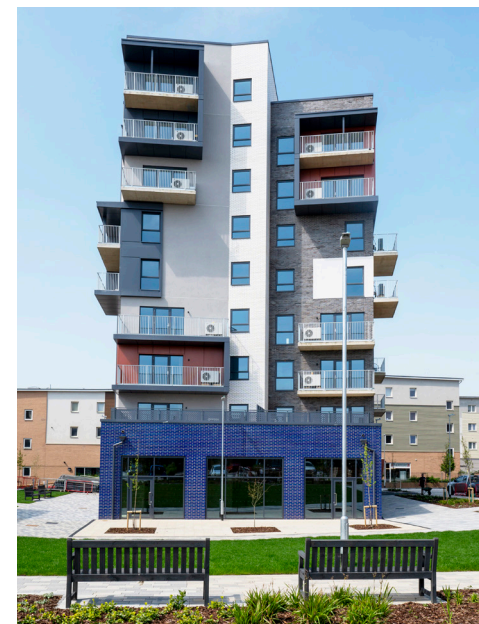
Providing high quality, affordable homes has always been central to Hightown's mission. We continue to grow steadily, with hundreds of new homes delivered each year and further developments underway. The evolving Maylands Plaza neighbourhood in Hemel Hempstead reflects this ambition, bringing together new homes and community facilities that support local people and place.

### Empowering Customers

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We work alongside people to help them thrive in their homes and communities, ensuring their voices inform service improvements through ongoing engagement. Our housing teams use a person-centred approach and are responsive to the often complex or challenging circumstances residents may face, offering support that helps them maintain stable housing. Last year, our tenancy support team assisted hundreds of residents with finances and wellbeing, helping secure substantial additional welfare benefits.

### Care and Supported Housing

Hightown has been a leading provider of care and support for more than 30 years across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. We support people with learning disabilities and mental health needs, offering everything from a few hours of support to full 24-hour care. We also house and support people experiencing homelessness, young people and separated migrant children aged 16 to 17. In the face of challenging funding conditions, which have led many providers to scale back specialist services, we work hard to keep this support at the heart of our offer and central to our social purpose.





Hightown's values have recently been refreshed through a process led by colleagues from across the organisation. Staff came together to capture what reflects the spirit of our work and the principles that guide how we treat each other, our customers and our communities. The result is a renewed set of values that feel authentic to the way people work here and to the culture we want to continue building.

A simple reminder, #LivingHightownValues, reflects the belief that values only have meaning when they can be seen and felt in our daily interactions. They influence how colleagues show care, respond to challenges and create a positive experience for residents and service users.

These values belong to everyone at Hightown. They reflect pride in our purpose and a shared commitment to working in a way that is respectful, thoughtful and centred on people.



## EMPOWER

- Trust staff to make decisions and act with integrity
- Provide opportunities for professional growth and learning
- Encourage initiative and support new ideas

## RESPECT

- Listen actively to colleagues, residents and people we support
- Value diverse perspectives and treat everyone with dignity
- Communicate openly, honestly and courteously

## INCLUSION

- Ensure everyone feels welcome and valued, regardless of background
- Actively communicate with and seek input from under-represented groups
- Challenge exclusionary behaviour and promote equal opportunities

## COMPASSION

- Show understanding and patience in all interactions
- Offer help and support to those facing challenges
- Be approachable, empathetic and respond to the needs of others with care and kindness

## COLLABORATION

- Actively share information, ideas, lessons learnt and constructive feedback
- Work as one to strive for excellence, respond to change and overcome challenges
- Celebrate and take pride in successes

## Guiding our governance and assurance

Governance shapes how Hightown is led and how we uphold our responsibilities to residents and partners. In this role, you will provide the oversight and assurance that support clear and confident decision making. You will act as Company Secretary to the Board and lead work across governance, regulatory compliance, risk, assurance, internal and compliance audits and data protection.

The role also oversees legal case management, anti-fraud and corruption, the insurance programme and the complaints function, ensuring fair and consistent resolution. The breadth of this responsibility reflects the trust placed in the role and the need to offer constructive challenge and support healthy accountability where it adds value.

## Shaping what comes next

Hightown is entering a period of focused development, with a renewed emphasis on strengthening how governance, risk and compliance support the organisation. You will help bring clarity to this work and ensure the structures we rely on evolve in a way that reflects our ambitions. As we continue to place customer experience and insight at the centre of how we shape services, your contribution will help guide decisions that genuinely respond to what matters to residents.

You will also play an important role in how we learn from complaints, using insight to strengthen services and support a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. The role calls for someone who can use their judgement confidently, including offering balanced challenge that helps the organisation think clearly and move forward with assurance.

## Working in partnership with colleagues and leaders

You will be part of the Senior Leadership Team and a steady, respected partner to colleagues across Hightown. Your insight will help bring direction to shared priorities and ensure our ambitions translate into outcomes that improve services and strengthen the organisation.

You will contribute to work on a refreshed strategy that focuses on investment in existing homes, deepening our understanding of the data we hold about homes and customers, enhancing systems and infrastructure and ensuring customer voices inform service improvement in meaningful ways. Collaboration is central to this role, and your presence will help create space for open conversation, well judged challenge and constructive accountability across teams.

## Contributing to future ambitions

Hightown's purpose remains clear and steady, even as our environment continues to evolve. This role offers the opportunity to help shape the next stage of our journey.

Your leadership will support governance to remain a firm foundation as the organisation grows, adapts and continues to meet the needs of the communities we serve. The gravitas you bring will ensure that assurance, collaboration and courageous, well timed challenge sit comfortably together as part of effective leadership, and that the Board and Executive are supported in maintaining strong governance and ongoing effectiveness.



We are looking for an experienced governance professional who brings both expertise and presence. You will have worked in a housing association or a similarly regulated environment and will be confident navigating the expectations that come with this. Your judgement will be well developed, and you will be comfortable offering clear, well reasoned guidance to the Board, the Executive team and colleagues across the organisation. You will be confident leading work proactively and supporting Board effectiveness through thoughtful advice, preparation and review.

You will be someone who others naturally look to for insight. Your ability to collaborate, build strong relationships and bring constructive challenge to conversations will make you a respected and trusted voice. You will be comfortable contributing ideas, asking questions and helping colleagues think clearly about the decisions in front of them. You will bring integrity, courage and the confidence to stand behind your advice while working with care and consideration for others.

The role calls for someone who can balance strategic influence with hands on responsibility. You will bring experience of acting as, or working closely with, a Company Secretary, together with expertise in governance, risk, internal controls, internal and compliance audit and data protection. Knowledge of anti-fraud and corruption activity and insurance arrangements will be valuable, as will experience of leading people and supporting effective governance and compliance functions. It will also be helpful if you have worked with a complaints function and used insight from complaints to inform improvements.

Your communication style will help build confidence and encourage open, honest conversation. You will establish credibility quickly and work in a way that strengthens collaboration, supports colleagues and contributes to a culture where accountability is shared and well understood. This approach reflects Hightown's values and a commitment to working with integrity. Someone who brings genuine gravitas, enjoys working alongside others and takes pride in shaping ideas that help an organisation grow will find this role both meaningful and rewarding.





## JOB TITLE:

Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

## DEPARTMENT:

Corporate Services

## RESPONSIBLE TO:

Executive Director of Corporate Services

## RESPONSIBLE FOR:

Compliance Manager, Assistant Company Secretary, Complaints & Resolution Manager

## CONTRACT TYPE:

Permanent

## BASED AT:

Hightown House, Hemel Hempstead

## OVERVIEW

The Head of Governance, Risk & Compliance at Hightown Housing Association is a pivotal senior leadership role responsible for ensuring robust governance, regulatory compliance, and risk management across the organisation.

This position acts as Company Secretary, providing expert advice and support to the Board, Chief Executive, and Executive Leadership Team, and is accountable for maintaining effective governance frameworks, managing statutory registers, and ensuring compliance with all relevant codes and regulations. The role also oversees risk and assurance processes, legal case management, data protection, acting as Data Protection Officer, insurance, and the complaints function, while fostering a culture of continuous improvement, organisational learning, and adherence to Hightown's values and objectives

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Governance & Company Secretarial

1. Act as Company Secretary for Hightown Housing Association.
2. Develop and embed a robust governance framework to ensure compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's standards, that these can be robustly evidenced and to ensure the organisation's inspection preparedness.

3. To lead, manage and develop Hightown's approach in the areas of governance and regulatory compliance, anti-fraud and corruption, assurance and company secretarial services.

4. Be the trusted advisor, supporting the Chair, Board, Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team with expert advice and help maintain Board effectiveness through recruitment, onboarding and governance reviews.

5. To provide timely and accurate advice to the Board, Committees, Chief Executive and the Executive Leadership Team, and employees on all governance constitutional matters, regulatory requirements and frameworks, codes of practice etc.

6. Responsible for supporting the Chair and Board members and facilitating an effective and high performing Board through the provision of excellent Governance and Company Secretarial services.

7. Ensure that Hightown's Rules, Standing Orders, Schemes of Delegation are regularly maintained, are up-to-date and fit for purpose.

8. Manage and service the programme of Board and Committee and other meetings producing agendas and minutes in a timely manner.

9. Responsible for the management and maintenance of all company registers – e.g. Shareholding, Seal, Declarations of Interest, Fraud & Theft, Gifts & Hospitality.

10. To arrange and manage Hightown's Annual General Meeting and other Special General Meetings.

11. To be the custodian of the Company Seal ensuring the seal is affixed in accordance with delegated authority.

12. Responsible for the provision of Board and shareholder information in accordance with regulatory requirements including compliance with Fit and Proper Persons Declarations and funders' "Know Your Customer" requirements.

13. Responsible for the control, management and safe custody of Hightown's property deeds records including all registrations at the Land Registry.

14. Support the Chair to undertake an annual Board Effectiveness Review and individual Board member appraisals.



## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Risk and Assurance

1. Maintain a strong and proactive approach to risk management, working with the Executive Leadership Team and ensuring that the organisation's activities and growth plans are underpinned by a risk management strategy that is understood and embraced by colleagues across the organisation.
2. Provide assurance on the effectiveness and operation of controls, responsible for reporting regularly to Risk & Audit Committee and the Board.
3. Ensure that there is a robust system of internal control and assurance framework that is kept up to date to meet changing requirements and best practice, including to coordinate internal audits, oversee the internal audit tender process and manage the delivery of the annual internal audit programme
4. To implement and manage an annual programme of compliance audits undertaken by the Governance team.
5. To drive risk management activities across the organisation.
6. To oversee and coordinate Hightown's legal action register and legal case management.

7. Act as Hightown's Data Protection Officer.

8. To oversee and manage subject access requests.
9. To manage Hightown's insurance programme including the provision of insurance policies through liaison with advisors, brokers and direct insurers.
10. To be responsible for arranging insurance cover and all policy underwriting administration.
11. To liaise with the Insurance Support Officer on all claims.

### Support to Board, Chief Executive and Executive Directors

1. To ensure that Board members have appropriate administrative support to perform their duties.
2. To manage the Assistant Company Secretary and ensure that the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team have effective and proactive administrative and secretarial support and the Executive Leadership Team are supported to lead the preparation of Board and Committee agendas and papers, policies and procedures.

### Complaints

1. To oversee and ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
2. To manage the Complaints & Resolution Team to ensure customer complaints are handled appropriately and in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Code.
3. To lead and coordinate reviews against good practice guidance issued by the Ombudsman, identify and deliver improvements in complaints handling service delivery.
4. To ensure regular reports on complaints performance and trends are provided to Executive, Committee and Board.
5. To promote an organisational culture of learning from complaints to drive service improvement and customer satisfaction.

### General

1. To maintain the appropriate level of skills, sector awareness and good practice necessary to fulfil the role appropriately.
2. To attend evening meetings and to have a flexible approach to hours worked if necessary.
3. To maintain a commitment to Hightown's vision and values, aims and objectives and equality and diversity policy.
4. Any other duties consistent with the responsibilities of the post at the request of the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

## Knowledge and Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Qualified Company Secretary ICSA, or equivalent.		✓
Legal qualification or background.		✓
Qualified Data Protection Officer, CDPO or equivalent		✓
Skilled verbal and written communicator – able to influence and engage with a wide range of colleagues, board and stakeholders.	✓	
Ability to deliver presentations explaining complex legal and constitutional issues.	✓	
Ability to understand, analyse and summarise complex legal information.	✓	
Able to write concise reports on complex issues.	✓	
High level strategic awareness of sector risks and experience of strategic performance and risk management.	✓	
Skilled proficiency in MS Office, particularly Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams.	✓	
Detailed understanding of data protection requirements and practical application of GDPR.	✓	
High level problem solving and negotiation skills		✓

## Experience

	Essential	Desirable
Relevant experience of agenda-planning, preparation of minutes and production of constitutional and governance documents.	✓	
Expert in governance and compliance requirements of a Housing Association (or similar organisation) including the Governance Framework of the Regulator of Social Housing.	✓	
Relevant experience of managing an internal audit programme.		✓
Experience of managing a Customer Resolution Service		✓
Experience of delivering practical data protection advice	✓	

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Personal Characteristics

	Essential	Desirable
Self-driven, results-oriented with a positive outlook. Able to work with minimal supervision.	✓	
Collaborative approach to cross organisational working, willing to give help and support to colleagues	✓	
Able to challenge constructively whilst maintaining positive and professional relationships.	✓	
A strong attention to detail and a focus on accuracy. Clarity of output and reports.	✓	
Able to work flexibly as required from time to time to meet changing business delivery requirements.	✓	
Able to organise and manage tasks and staff to meet delivery timetables.	✓	
Trustworthy and able to keep information confidential.	✓	
Able to lead, motivate and develop staff.	✓	
Commitment to Five Ways to Excellence.	✓	
Commitment to the values of Hightown to put our residents and service users first and deliver excellent levels of service.	✓	
Take ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult situations.	✓	
Treat people with respect and dignity, dealing with them fairly and without prejudice regardless of their background or circumstances.	✓	

### Other Requirements

	Essential	Desirable
Car Driver.		✓
Ability to attend evening meetings.	✓	

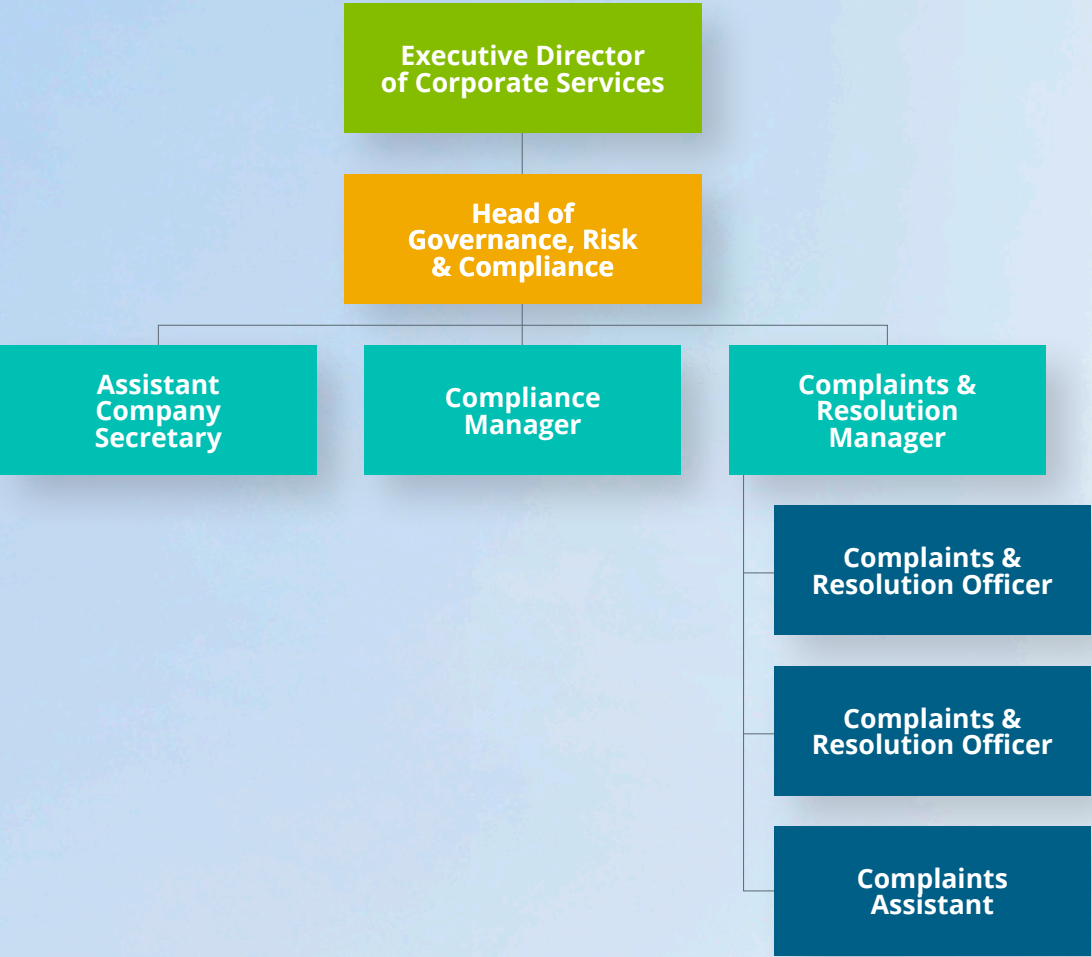




Salary	£83,405 per annum	
Annual leave	25 days per annum plus bank holidays	Rising to 27 days after 2 years' service
Pension	4% employer contribution	Defined contribution scheme with SHPS
Performance bonus	1% of annual salary, paid in December	Subject to commencement of employment prior to 1st April in given year, and to satisfactory achievement of objectives
Attendance bonus	1.25% of monthly salary	Paid monthly if no sickness in month
Life assurance	3 x annual salary	
Hybrid working	Minimum of 2 days per week in the office	







### To apply, please submit:

- An up-to-date copy of your CV (four sides of A4 maximum)
- A supporting statement (four sides of A4 maximum) that addresses the criteria set out in the relevant role profile and uses examples to demonstrate how you meet the essential requirements. It should also cover your motivation for the role and the organisation.

### Applications must include:

- Full contact details;
- Names, positions, organisations and contact details for two referees (we will ask your permission before contacting referees);
- Details of your current salary and notice period;
- Notification of any dates when you are not available for interview.

### Deadline for submissions:

Applications close on Sunday 11th Jan, at midnight.

Applications should be submitted via the following link:

<https://www.tile-hill.co.uk/job/head-of-governance-risk-compliance>

Once your application has been submitted, you will receive a response to confirm that it has been received. If you do not receive this response, please contact us to let us know.

### Contacts:

For further information or to discuss the roles in more detail, please contact:

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**Holly Kennedy,  
Senior Consultant**

Telephone: 07771 109 401

Email: [holly.kennedy@tile-hill.co.uk](mailto:holly.kennedy@tile-hill.co.uk)

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**Ella Milward Hamylton,  
Research Associate**

Telephone: 07398 478852

Email: [ella.milwardhamylton@tile-hill.co.uk](mailto:ella.milwardhamylton@tile-hill.co.uk)

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### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

At Tile Hill, we are committed to inclusion and accessibility. We champion and support all individuals to ensure everyone feels valued, listened to and motivated to get the very best out of each recruitment process and that processes are designed to meet the needs of individuals.

If you have any specific requests and would like a confidential discussion with the Tile Hill team, then please email: [inclusion@tile-hill.co.uk](mailto:inclusion@tile-hill.co.uk)

### Key dates:

#### Application closing date:

Sunday 11th Jan, midnight

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#### Preliminary interviews:

Friday 23rd Jan or Tuesday 27th Jan

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