

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 25 NOVEMBER 2021

World's First Gender-lens Fund Appoints All-Woman Senior Board Of Advisors

Believed to be the world's first gender-lens fund, the Women in Safe Homes fund – managed jointly by Patron Capital and Resonance – has appointed an all-woman senior board of advisors (SBA) – a first for an impact investment fund that is focused on homelessness.

The Women in Safe Homes fund provides a solution to the lack of affordable, safe and good-quality homes for women experiencing homelessness, many of whom are survivors of domestic abuse, are leaving prison, have mental health issues, or have other complex needs.

It launched in December 2020, raising £15.5m from its seed investors. Since then, the fund has raised over £26m - aiming to reach a target size of £100-£200 million – to provide over 650 homes across the UK for over 6,000 women over its lifetime.

The SBA sits outside the formal legal structure of the fund and is intended to provide a number of important perspectives to ensure the fund's success in creating positive social impact for women.

Meeting on a quarterly basis, the SBA's remit will include supporting the fund's commitment to gender lens and lived experience, its relationships with housing and support providers, providing direct understanding of the need and the services provided as well as investment and fund management, and supporting fundraising and property sourcing.

This unique board consists of a diverse group of ten women, and includes representative from the women's sector and women with lived experience of women's homelessness, who will add a depth and richness to this gender-lens fund, continuing to set it apart in the impact investment sector.

Board members bring a range of backgrounds and experience, from the real estate sector to the social housing sector and from impact investing to the charity and trauma-informed sectors. This diversity of experience is fused with a great energy and motivation to really make the pioneering Women in Safe Homes fund a success for women who, without this fund, would be in unsafe or unsuitable housing.

All have a passion to support the Women in Safe Homes fund in its mission to not only provide safe homes for women at risk of homelessness, but to also value and empower the women's sector organisations and charity partners the fund works with and to promote effective approaches to policy makers in the women's homelessness sector.

The Board

Ann Olivarius, AO Advocates and McAllister Olivarius

Ann is a lawyer who specialises in sexual harassment and women's rights. She is co-founder of the law firm AO Advocates, which represents victims of childhood sexual abuse, and is senior partner at McAllister Olivarius, a leading firm in advancing the rights of women. In 2019 she received the Yale Women Lifetime Achievement Award. Ann has advised individuals from Nelson Mandela and Bill Gates to Margaret Thatcher, to name a few, on a range of matters across injustice and finance, including IPOs and educational and economic policy.

Alison Inman, Past President, Chartered Institute of Housing

Alison is a non-executive director at two housing associations, a care charity and two other housing-related organisations. She has a long history of involvement with the women's movement and the violence against women and girls' sector. Alison was also part of the original working group, put together by Big Society Capital, that eventually led to the establishment of the Women in Safe Homes fund.

Cherine Aboulzouf, BGO Strategic Capital Partners

Cherine is Managing Director, Head of Europe, at BGO Strategic Capital Partners and has spent the last fifteen years in the real estate investment space within a wide spectrum of sectors, and geographies after starting her career in banking.

Colette Cronshaw, Riverside Housing Association

Colette is Project Assistant at Riverside Housing Group – a mixed-gender complex needs homeless hostel in Manchester. She is also a trustee at Manchester Action of Street Health, and volunteers for other charities in the sector.

Elizabeth Corrado, Impulse Impact Ltd

Elizabeth is Co-Founder and Managing Director of Impulse, an impact investment advisory company. Additionally, she is a non-executive director of Your Healthcare CIC, a social enterprise providing health and social care services in South West London. Elizabeth is also a member of the Oversight Committee of Pensions for Purpose, and until recently was a member of the Investment Committee of the Community Investment Partnership, a social impact investment fund.

Ghada Sousou, Sousou Partners

Ghada is CEO of Sousou Partners, an executive search and advisory boutique. She also works on several initiatives with leadership development charity Seeds of Peace, Impact 100 – a philanthropic impact fund primarily benefitting women and girls in London - and the charity, Makan.

Jacinta Kent, Group psychotherapist, trainer and facilitator

Jacinta is a qualified group therapist and group analyst in training based in Leeds, West Yorkshire. She uses trauma-informed principles, intersectionality and psychoanalysis in her work with minoritised and/or marginalised groups and individuals, namely women with experiences of trauma, such as childhood sexual abuse, trafficking, and rape. Jacinta also delivers training to specialist

services and clinicians; leads the Embrace Ethnicity Network within Leeds' primary care consortium; and published works relating to power, privilege, and position within mental health provision.

Laura Dale-Harris, Social Finance and Reconnections

Laura is an Associate Director at not-for-profit Social Finance, and a director at Reconnections, the first social impact bond aimed at tackling loneliness in the UK. She also sits on the board of Drive, a partnership that aims to change the way that statutory and voluntary agencies respond to high harm perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Lynn Fordham, The Royal Marines Charity and Conquering Horizons

Lynn has worked in both the house building and investment sectors and has recently retired as the CEO of a private capital investment business. She is Chair of The Royal Marines Charity, and director of Conquering Horizons – creating innovative mobility products - and an advisor to other ventures.

Rehaila Sharif, Women's Aid

Rehaila is Head of Membership at Women's Aid and has worked in the domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) sector for twenty-three years. She is also a trainer, teacher, qualified counsellor, and a community activist. Rehaila has also worked and volunteered for other charitable organisations in the VAWG sector.

Jacinta Kent, Group psychotherapist, trainer and facilitator, said: *"It's a privilege to be working alongside such a diverse group of women who each bring a wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience to the Women in Safe Homes fund's senior advisory board. I hope that by taking an intersectional, trauma-informed, and financially sustainable approach our combined efforts may support the fund to fulfil its remit, and in doing so, provide women with the physical and psychological stability needed to envision and effectuate their lives moving forward."*

Cherine Aboulzelof, Managing Director and Head of Europe, BGO Strategic Capital Partners, said: *"I am delighted to join the Women in Safe Homes' senior board of advisors and its diverse group of talented women; I chose to get involved because it is the first gender lens property fund tackling the housing needs of the most vulnerable women in our society, and I hope to contribute my real estate and investment experience towards making a difference."*

Elizabeth Corrado Co-Founder and Managing Director of Impulse Impact, said: *"I am delighted to be part of the world's first gender-lens property fund and to help catalyse the interest of both impact and mainstream investors to invest to support vulnerable women and to generate significant social impact."*

Louise Swinden, Resonance Property Fund Development Manager for the Women in Safe Homes fund, said: *"The gender lens focus of the Women in Safe Homes fund is fundamental to the impact it aims to achieve, so having the support, perspective and passion of our unique senior board of advisors enables it to commit to addressing the gender equality challenges faced by women that can lead to*

homelessness. Each of the ten members of the board bring incredible experience and expertise, making a hugely valuable contribution to the fund's aims, and a real difference to women affected by domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. We are incredibly grateful for their support."

Juan Du, Investment Director at Patron Capital, said: *"Not only does the senior board of advisors bring a highly impressive track record across women's rights, the charity sector and responsible finance, but the collective experience of the ten women involved ensures that the Women in Safe Homes fund will benefit from a truly diverse and inclusive gender lens - a crucial element of the fund. With so much achieved in the first year of the fund - including new investors and the first properties being handed over to tenants - we are very much looking forward to building on this success in the months ahead with the help and expertise of our new board."*

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READ THE WOMEN IN SAFE HOMES FIRST SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT [HERE](#)

READ ABOUT COLETTE CRONSHAW'S LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS [HERE](#)

Notes to Editors

- Investors into the fund include Big Society Capital, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust,, City Bridge Trust, The Clothworkers' Foundation, Comic Relief, Church of England, Project Snowball, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and international investors, MacArthur Foundation, Lostand Foundation, and Casey.
- The fund's charity partners include Preston Road Women's Centre, Refuge, Nacro, Bradford Rape Crisis and Safer Places.
- The fund purchases properties (2 bed properties, family homes and refuges) and leases them to its charity partners who rent the homes to women at risk of homelessness, with a secure

tenancy. The fund's charity partners not only support women from a housing and tenancy perspective but crucially, also provide every woman with person-centred specialist support helping women recover from abusive or difficult circumstances, enabling them to find stability, rebuild their lives, and ultimately empower them so that they can have choice and control over their lives.

ABOUT RESONANCE

Resonance is a social impact investment company working with social enterprises and charities. We create and manage award winning impact investment homelessness property funds, which aim to deliver financial return and a targeted social impact. Since 2013 our property funds have raised in excess of £300 million, providing over 1,000 safe and affordable homes for individuals and families across the UK.

ABOUT PATRON CAPITAL

Patron represents approximately €4 billion of capital across several funds and related co-investments, investing in property, corporate operating entities whose value is primarily supported by property assets and distressed debt and credit related businesses.

Women's homelessness and domestic abuse

One of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children is domestic violence. - and other forms of support. Women's Aid's [A Perfect Storm](#) reported that 91% of respondents already experiencing domestic abuse said that COVID-19 had negatively impacted them in at least one way. And of those women living with their abuser during lockdown, 61% said the abuse had worsened.

- 1.6 million women in the UK experienced domestic abuse in 2019 ([Office for National Statistics](#))
- 35% of women who have slept rough, left home to escape violence ([Safe Lives: Safe at Home](#))
- 7 in 10 women in prison are survivors of domestic abuse ([Women in Prison](#))
- 57.2% of refuge referrals were declined in 2019/20 ([Women's Aid](#))
- 30% shortfall in the number of refuge spaces available ([Women's Aid](#))
- 66% of homeless adults in temporary accommodation are women ([Women's Budget Group](#))