

Membership Policy

Policy details:

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Responsible department	Governance
Related policies and procedures	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy describes:

1.1.1 How the Association will promote membership to tenants, service users and others;

1.1.2 How we will manage matters relating to membership, as set out in our Rules.

2.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 The Association is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Our Rules set out the constitutional arrangements that apply to membership, including the Management Committee's duty to set, review and publish a membership policy for admitting new members.

2.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator have both approved our Rules. The Rules and this Policy help ensure that we comply with the SHR's Constitutional Requirements.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 The Association will promote membership in accordance with our commitment to local control and accountability. Our Rules:

3.1.1 State our intention to encourage shareholding membership;

3.1.2 Provide for community ownership of the Association and its assets, by basing eligibility for membership on residence in our area of operation;

3.1.3 Describe the rights of the members and the democratic principle of "one member, one vote" which applies to all voting by the members.

3.2 The Association also wishes to have a broad based membership that is representative of the communities we serve. Membership is open to all sections of the community and we are particularly keen to encourage our tenants and other customers to become members.

4.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Applications by Individuals

4.1.1 Prospective members must be aged 16 years or over and must live in the Association's area of operation. People in the following groups can become members:

- a) New Gorbals Housing Association tenants
- b) Other service users of the Association
- c) Other people living in the area of operation

4.1.2 Employees of the Association or any of our subsidiaries cannot become members. If a new employee is already a member, their membership shall be terminated.

4.2 Applications by Organisations

4.2.1 Organisations applying for membership must demonstrate that they support the Association's aims and objectives. Examples of potential organisational members include the local authority or other statutory bodies; other partner agencies; and voluntary organisations.

5.0 PROMOTING MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 We will use a range of methods to promote membership, including:
 - 5.1.1 Our newsletter and other communications with tenants and service users;
 - 5.1.2 Contact with new tenants;
 - 5.1.3 Tenant participation and other community involvement activities.

6.0 APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 We will send a Membership Application Form and Monitoring Form to people or organisations expressing an interest in membership. Completed forms should be returned to the Association, along with £1.00. To ensure that applications are legitimate, we may:
 - 6.1.1 Record and number application forms when we issue them.
 - 6.1.2 Reject block applications e.g. the return of more than two applications in the same envelope by post or by handing in at our office (except for applications submitted at the same time by members of the same household).
 - 6.1.3 Validate applications, by contacting the person in whose name a membership application has been submitted or by seeking proof of identity.
 - 6.1.4 Notify the Police if we suspect that applications are false or fraudulent.

7.0 DECIDING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Management Committee shall decide all applications for membership at its next meeting after receipt or as soon thereafter as practical. The Committee will not consider applications for membership within the period of 14 days before the date of a general meeting.
- 7.2 We expect refusal of applications to be exceptional. In this regard, the Rules give the Management Committee absolute discretion in deciding applications for membership, including the following grounds for rejecting a membership application:
 - 7.2.1 Membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or other policies;
 - 7.2.2 Approving an application would create a conflict of interest that, even if disclosed, might adversely affect the Association's work;
 - 7.2.3 The Management Committee considers that accepting an application would not be in the Association's best interests.
- 7.3 We will write to all applicants as soon as possible, after the Management Committee has met:
 - 7.3.1 Applicants who have been accepted as members will receive a Share Certificate and a copy of the Rules.
 - 7.3.2 If the Management Committee has rejected an application, we will advise the applicant of the reasons for our decision and return the applicant's £1.00 payment.
- 7.4 Refusal of membership applications must be managed in an accountable way and should not be used to undermine attempts to make the Association locally accountable and representative. If we reject a membership application, we will offer the applicant one

further opportunity to request membership, and to give reasons why the Management Committee's decision should be changed. The Management Committee will consider the applicant's response at its next practical meeting, and its decision on that occasion will be final.

8.0 MEMBER PARTICIPATION

8.1 Members have important rights under the Rules, including rights to:

8.1.1 Attend and vote at general meetings;

8.1.2 Elect the members of the Management Committee;

8.1.3 Stand for election to the Management Committee, and nominate other members for election to the Management Committee;

8.1.4 Appoint the auditors, and receive the annual accounts and any annual reports;

8.1.5 Vote on any changes to the Rules.

8.2 We will ensure that members are well informed and can actively participate in the Association's affairs, by:

8.2.1 Providing all members with an annual report;

8.2.2 Publicising general meetings at least 14 days before the date of the meeting;

8.2.3 Providing information that allows members to make informed decisions at general meetings. Where information in a particular format or language is required, we will make reasonable efforts to provide this;

8.2.4 Holding general meetings at times and locations that maximise opportunities to attend;

8.2.5 Promoting opportunities for serving on the Management Committee.

9.0 DISPUTES AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

9.1 Disputes regarding any aspect of this Membership Policy or the Rules shall be dealt with in accordance with the Rules. If a member (or someone who has been a member in the previous six months) wishes to challenge a decision made by the Management Committee, he/she will be invited to write to the Committee setting out their concerns, with reference to the Rules. Submissions shall be considered and decided by the Management Committee. This shall be the final decision-making stage within the Association.

9.2 Membership will be ended in accordance with the Rules, when a member:

9.2.1 Resigns by giving written notice to the Secretary; or

9.2.2 No longer lives in our area of operation; or

9.2.3 Fails to attend or be represented at five consecutive annual general meetings or does not submit apologies for absence; or

9.2.4 Is expelled in accordance with the Rules; or

9.2.5 Changes address but does not tell us their new address within three months (not applicable if the new address is a property we own); or

9.2.6 Dies.

9.3 The Membership Register will be regularly updated, to reflect cases where membership has ended. The £1.00 membership fee is not refundable on termination of membership. Access to the Membership Register shall be provided in accordance with the Rules.

10.0 EQUALITY

10.1 The Association welcomes membership applications from all sections of the community, regardless of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief. When attending events such as general meetings, members must show respect towards others. We will not tolerate behaviour at odds with our commitment to equality.

11.0 POLICY REVIEW

11.1 The Membership Policy will be reviewed in 3 years time. The Management Committee will review periodically the results achieved in promoting membership and the profile of the membership. Where appropriate, the Management Committee may decide actions to be taken, for example to promote membership from groups that are currently under-represented.

11.2 Prior to each Annual General Meeting, the Management Committee shall receive a report on compliance with Rules 62 to 67, including the requirements relating to the Register of Members that are set out in Rules 64 and 65.