

Membership Policy

Policy Implementation Checklist	
Document Status	Version 4 - 24 October 2018
Policy Guardian:	Chief Executive Officer
Policy Author:	Corporate Services Officer
Policy Title:	Membership Policy
Approved by Chief Executive on:	
Approved by Policy Working Group on:	21 August 2018
Approved by Linthouse Management Committee on:	13 November 2018
Effective from:	14 November 2018
Due for Review on:	November 2021
Regulatory Standards:	
Policy and Other Linkages:	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) Charitable Model Rules (Scotland) 2013 (as amended 2015).
Training Completed on:	
Plan Tested on:	
Posted on Website on:	
Staff Sign off as Read and Training Completed	
Management Committee Sign off as Read and Training Completed	

Membership Policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy describes:

- How Linthouse Housing Association (LHA) will promote membership to tenants, service users and others;
- How we will manage matters relating to membership, as set out in our Rules.

2.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 LHA 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 LHA's Rules. The Rules and this Policy help ensure that we comply with the SHR's Constitutional Requirements.

2.3 This policy has been reviewed to ensure its consistency inter alia with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) Charitable Model Rules (Scotland) 2013 (as amended 2015).

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 LHA will promote membership as part of our commitment to local control and accountability. LHA's Rules:

- State our intention to encourage membership; Note our Rules specifically state we will encourage membership in cl. 7.2
- Use operational service delivery contacts and programmed succession planning arrangements to encourage membership
- Provide for community influence and accountability through LHA and its assets.

3.2 LHA 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 tenants and residents in our operational area to become members.

4.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

Applications by Individuals

4.1 Prospective members must be aged 16 years or over. People in the following groups can become members:

- a) LHA tenants
- b) Other residents living in our operational area
- c) Other people including service users who support LHA's objects (as set out in the information we send to applicants).

- 4.2 We expect that the vast majority of applicants will live in LHA's area of operation, but we will also consider applications from people living outside the area if the Management Committee agrees that an applicant's membership would be of benefit to LHA.
- 4.3 Employees of LHA cannot become members. No person who retains membership of LHA will be eligible to be employed by the Association.

Applications by Organisations

- 4.4 Organisations applying for membership must be sympathetic with and supportive of our objects, and be formally incorporated (e.g. under charity law or the Companies Acts). 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:

- Our newsletter and other communications with tenants and service users;
- Contact with new tenants;
- 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 LHA, along with £1.00. Note – Rules have been checked and these specifically state £1 membership application fee

- 6.2 To ensure that applications are legitimate, we may:

- Record and number application forms when we issue them.
- 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).
- Validate applications, by contacting the person in whose name a membership application has been submitted or by seeking proof of identity.
- If appropriate and if warranted 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:

- Membership would be contrary to LHA's Rules or other policies;
- Approving an application would create a conflict of interest that, even if disclosed, might adversely affect LHA's work;

- The applicant is the owner of a business trading for profit and is currently seeking to enter into or negotiating a commercial relationship with LHA:
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- The Management Committee considers that accepting an application would not be in LHA's best interests.

7.3 The following examples illustrate circumstances in which an application could be refused:

- The applicant is an employee of LHA.
- The applicant is an employee or Management Committee/Board member of another organisation that is effectively a competitor of LHA.
- The applicant is involved in legal proceedings against LHA.
- The applicant has committed acts that are inconsistent with LHA's values and objectives, for example he/she has engaged in sectarian or racist behaviour.

7.4 We will write to all applicants as soon as possible, after the Management Committee has met:

- Applicants who have been accepted as members will receive a Share Certificate and a copy of the Rules.
- 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.

7.5 Refusal of membership applications must be managed in an accountable way and should not be used to undermine attempts to make LHA locally accountable and representative. If we reject an 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:

- Attend and vote at general meetings;
- Elect the members of the Management Committee;
- Stand for election to the Management Committee, and nominate other members for election to the Management Committee;
- Appoint the auditors, and receive the annual accounts and any annual reports;
- Vote on any changes to the Rules.

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

- Publishing an annual report;
- Publicising general meetings at least 14 days before the date of the meeting;
- 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;
- Holding general meetings at times and locations that maximise opportunities to attend;
- Promoting opportunities for serving on the Management Committee.

9.0 DISPUTES AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

9.1 Disputes regarding any aspect of this 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, about the application of this Policy, 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 Committee. This shall be the final decision-making stage within LHA.

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

- Resigns by giving written notice to the Secretary; or
- Fails to attend, be represented, exercise a postal vote or submit apologies for absence at five consecutive annual general meetings; or
- Is expelled in accordance with the Rules; or
- 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
- Dies or transfers membership as provided for in the Rules.

9.3 The Membership Register will be updated at least annually, 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 LHA welcomes membership applications from all sections of the community, regardless of age (but subject to a minimum of 16 years of age as stated in LHA's Rules), 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 inconsistent 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 and may give instructions to promote membership by people in groups that are currently under-represented.