

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Thenew Housing Association is committed to rebuilding sustainable communities by developing and maintaining a range of affordable housing. We work with our communities to maximise participation in decision-making and we involve all our partners in promoting social inclusion. We are a membership organisation, and aim to attract people from the groups and communities we serve to become members of the association. We also seek to establish a wide and active membership by recruiting as members, individuals with an interest in the work of the organisation and to make effective use of the skills, experience and views of our members.

The aim of this policy is to promote good governance of the association and to ensure the proper accountability of our Management Committee by having a membership that is both open and widely reflects the communities and groups that we serve. We seek to attract also to attract people to membership that have an interest in our work and can make effective use of their skills, views and experience. Membership is not a condition of receiving a tenancy with the association.

The Management Committee approved this policy on 6th December 2005.

2. PROMOTION OF MEMBERSHIP

The Association will promote membership by circulating information on membership to tenants, our service users, local community and representative groups and housing advice agencies. Information on membership will be disseminated through our annual report, newsletters, area association and other resident meetings, other contact with tenants, prospective tenants and applicants for housing.

3. CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

In order to ensure that there is a good balance on the management committee reflecting the main activities of the Association, there are four categories of membership: -

1. General: Individuals with particular skills or experience

Membership of this category is open to individuals over the age of 18 who have no personal involvement in Thenew's housing, who are not tenants of the Association and who have personal or professional knowledge, experience, skills or expertise in:

- Housing associations or co-operatives;
- Housing management;
- Finance;
- Development, architecture or planning;

- Personnel;
- Special needs groups;
- Community care issues;
- Education, training or community development;
- Our regulation regime;
- Working in a local community.

Or any other relevant field agreed by the management committee.

2. Glasgow East End Tenants

Membership of this category is open to individuals who reside in those areas of the 'East End' of Glasgow who are: -

- Tenants or joint tenants of the association aged 16 or over;
- Members of the tenant's household who live permanently with the tenant and are aged 18 or over.

3. Other Tenants of the Association

Membership of this category is open to individuals who are: -

- Tenants or joint tenants of the association who reside within the association's area of operation, excluding those in the East End of Glasgow, aged 16 or over;
- Members of the tenant's household who live permanently with the tenant and are aged 18 or over.

4. Other residents who reside within the association's area of operation.

Membership of this category is open to individuals who are: -

- Resident in any of the associations areas of operation, aged 18 years or over,
- Residents who receive a factoring service from the association,
- Residents that share ownership of their property with the association.

In all cases we seek to ensure that our membership reflects the communities we work with and that all sections of those communities are represented. Membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, age or sexuality. To this end we particularly welcomes applications from:

- Black and ethnic minority community members
- Individuals who have experience of disability
- 18-25 year olds (if a tenant 16 years old), and
- Any others that are under represented.

4. APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

To apply for membership applicants should contact the association for a membership form. The completed form should be sent with £1.00 to the Secretary at our registered office. Every application is considered by the association's Management Committee at its next meeting after the application is received, or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

If we approve an application, then membership of the association is immediate, and the name of the new member will be included in our register of members referred to in Rule 67 of our rules. One share, in the name of the new member, is then issued.

Whilst it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Management Committee has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership, taking full account of both this policy and our rules.

5. REFUSAL OF MEMBERSHIP AND HOW TO APPEAL IF NECESSARY

Where an application is unsuccessful a statement of the reasons for refusal will be given. An applicant will then have one further opportunity to request membership, and to give reasons why the decision should be changed; it is helpful, but not mandatory, that this should be made in writing. Generally, refusal of membership will be exceptional where the applicant fails to meet any membership criteria, or where we agree that membership would compromise the interests or independence of the association. The Management Committee will consider the reasons at its next meeting and its decision on that occasion will be final.

6. MEMBER PARTICIPATION

The association wishes to ensure its members are informed and can actively participate in the organisation. To this end we will: -

- Write to every member at least 14 days before the day of a general meeting. This will give details of, the time, date and place of the meeting, whether it is an annual or special general meeting and the business for which the meeting is being called.
- Where information in particular format or language is required the association will endeavour to provide this.
- Make every effort to hold such meetings at times and locations suitable for membership, and which is accessible to all.
- Keep members informed on all major developments affecting the association.
- Actively promote the opportunities that exist, through election, for serving on the Management Committee.

Being a member of the association therefore allows the following opportunities for involvement: -

- Attending the annual general meeting and any other general meeting of the association;
- Elect the management committee members in their own category of membership.
- Stand for election to the management committee in their own category of membership.
- Appoint auditors
- Receive upon request copies of any of the association's policies and procedures or other appropriate information.

Members can also become involved through: -

- Being co-opted to the management committee or sub-committees of the Association;
- Local area or our various project management committees.

7. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership will cease when a member –

- Resigns, by giving due written notice to the Secretary
- Fails to tell us of a change of address as set out in Rule 11 of the association rules.
- Fails to attend five annual general meetings in a row and does not submit apologies.
- Is expelled in accordance with the association rules
- Dies.
- Becomes an employee of the association

Members no longer eligible under one category may apply to the management committee for approval to transfer to another category. Upon termination, the £1.00 membership fee is not refundable.

8. MONITORING MEMBERSHIP

To ensure the membership and the Management Committee is representative of our communities, the membership application form will be used collect the following information

- Their connection with the association e.g., tenant, local resident, or other connection
- Equal opportunities, age, disability, gender and ethnicity
- Paid and voluntary work experience
- Other relevant skills or experience.

An analysis of this information will be included in the association's annual report.

9. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Management Committee of the association are elected at the Annual General Meeting, (AGM), in accordance with our rules which also set out the eligibility criteria. The Management Committee shall have a minimum of 7, and a maximum of 18 members (including any co-optees, rule 39). To become a Management Committee member, an applicant must be both a Member of the association and be aged 18 or over, (aged 16 if a tenant).

Of the 18 places on the Management Committee, the following categories of membership are reflected: -

Category of membership	Maximum number
General individuals	6
East End tenants	6
Other tenants of the association	4
Other residents	2
Total	18

In accordance with legislation, (the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001), we require that certain people are not permitted to be members of the Management Committee of the association, and they are: -

- Anyone who is declared bankrupt under the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985
- Anyone who has made an arrangement with their creditors
- In the opinion of a qualified medical doctor, a person is unable to go to Committee meetings for 12 months because of incapacity due to a physical or mental illness

- A person is sent to prison for a month or have been convicted of a crime of dishonesty for which the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 has not expired or for which rehabilitation is excluded in terms of the said Act.
- Anyone who is party to any legal proceedings in any Court of Law by or against the association.
- Anyone that will be away for a period of 12 months and are thus unable to attend the committee meetings.
- Anyone that has been removed by Communities Scotland from the committee of another 'Registered Social Landlord'.
- Anyone that has been removed from a charity under Section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions)(Scotland) Act 1990 (in connection with the power of a Court to prevent someone from being a director, liquidator or administrator of a company or a receiver or manager of company property or being involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company).

In addition, anyone cannot be a Management Committee member if he or she: -

- Resign their position in writing
- Leave the membership of the association or have their membership withdrawn
- Miss four Management Committee meetings in a row without special leave or absence previously granted by the committee
- Are excluded under Rule 44

10. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR THE ASSOCIATION

The new's Management Committee will ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of the association and will take fully into account the interests of members, tenants and all those we seek to serve. We will regularly review membership make up and endeavour to ensure that:

- The emergence of a self-perpetuating group never happens.
- The broadest and deepest possible representation is commensurate with our constitution of all who make up the communities we serve on the Management Committee.
- No skills gaps emerge by using the power of co-option of specialist skills and knowledge when needed.
- The Management Committee consists of individuals with the interest and ability to effectively and efficiently manage the business of the association to the required standards.

11. INDUCTION FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

New Management Committee members will be supported by information to be provided in the form of an induction programme. This will include:

- General information about the association, e.g., stock size and location, type of housing and client groups we work with.
- Information on the relationship between the respective roles of Management Committee members and staff members
- Information on Management Committee members' general responsibilities, obligations and collective responsibility including the declaring of interests and the signing of documents.

- Payments to Management Committee members, including an explanation of Schedule 7 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 or the contractual equivalent
- Schedule of committee dates
- The organisation's structural chart
- A list of Management Committee members and key staff
- The association's rules with sections relating to attendance and absence highlighted
- Performance Standards
- The association's Code of Governance.
- A list of policies and procedures (the actual policies and procedures will be made available separately).
- Information about the conduct of the Management Committee meetings
- Information about any sub-groups.
- Information about internal or external training opportunities for Management Committee members.

This programme will be available for all new Management Committee members and as a refresher for existing members through various methods.

12 CO-OPTEEES

The Management Committee can co-opt to the Management Committee anyone who is suitable to become a Management Committee member. Co-optees do not need to be members of the association, but they can only serve as a co-optee on the Committee until the next annual general meeting or until removed by the Management Committee. A person co-opted to the Management Committee can also serve on any sub-committees.

Co-optees must not make up more than one-third of the total number of Management Committee or Sub-Committee members at any one time, and they may not stand for election or be elected as one of the Office Bearers of the Management Committee.

Further information on co-optees can be found in the association rule number 39. A fully detailed procedure for the election of Management Committee members is contained in the association rules numbered 40 to 46.

13 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier should good practice, legislation or operational matters prevail.