

Melville Housing Association



Policy: Recruitment of Board Members

Subject:	Recruitment of Board Members Policy
Section:	Directorate
Objective:	To detail how the Association will recruit new Board Members.
Issue Date:	October 2019
Review Date:	October 2022
Policy Ref No:	GOV 004

1.0 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the arrangements for recruiting new members to the Board of Melville Housing Association Ltd.

The policy is consistent with our Rules, our Standing Orders and the Scottish Housing regulator's Regulatory Standards for Registered Social Landlords in Scotland.

2.0 Principles

The principles underlying this policy are as follows:

2.1 Accountability

We should ensure that our business is directed by a Board which reflects the needs and expectations of our members, customers and local communities, and that the Board is accountable to them.

2.2 Expertise

Our Board should possess the range of skills, experience and objectivity to give effective strategic direction and deliver good customer outcomes.

2.3 Openness

Interested individuals should have the opportunity to put their names forward as potential members of the Board.

2.4 Equality

No eligible individual should be excluded from being considered as a potential Board member.

2.5 Size and Composition of the Board

Under our Rules (Rule 37.1), the Board must have a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 15 members (including co-optees).

We will keep under continuous review the size and composition of our Board in order to ensure that it is able to exercise its responsibilities effectively.

We recognise that having a mix of established and new members on the Board is key to achieving good governance, the Association benefiting from both experience and new ideas. The in-depth knowledge and understanding of experienced members is vital, however, new members can bring essential objectivity and independence to familiar practices and thinking. We must therefore aim for a reasonable turnover of the membership of the Board over time.

As a matter of policy, Melville Housing Association is committed to ensuring that Melville tenants have the opportunity to be actively involved in the running of the organisation. In pursuit of this principle, we will seek to have Board members who are tenants, however, we recognise that there are a number of other ways for tenants to be involved and influence the running of the Association. We will provide information, support and training to tenants who are interested in becoming involved in the Board.

2.6 **Eligibility**

Any interested individual may be considered for membership of the Board, with the exception of the categories, who are statutorily ineligible as detailed in the Association's rules (Rule 43).

Those seeking to become Board members must provide all the relevant information (further details are provided below) and complete an interview with the Chairman in order to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

2.7 **Routes to becoming a member of the Board**

In seeking to recruit new members of the Board, we will:

- Promote opportunities for shareholding members of the Association to be considered for election to the Board;
- Identify skills and expertise gaps on the Board, and seek to fill these through a process of advertising and co-option;
- Consider targeted advertising for vacancies where specific skill gaps have been identified (e.g. advertising with local employers/educational institutions);
- Seek candidates through relevant registers of individuals interested in joining RSL Boards.

These routes to membership of the Board are outlined below.

2.8 **Election from the shareholding membership**

Melville Housing Association has a **membership policy**, which commits it to promoting to all interested individuals the opportunity to becoming shareholding members of the association, in line with the Association's Rules.

While shareholding membership of the Association is open to all interested individuals, it is likely to be of particular interest to the following groups:

- Tenants of the association;
- Representatives of organisations which work in partnership with the association;
- Individuals who have a specific interest in housing;
- Individuals who have an interest in community participation.

We will seek to promote to all shareholding members the opportunities for becoming actively involved in the running of the organisation, in accordance with the Membership Policy.

The procedures for being considered for election are set out in the Association's Rules (Rules 39 – 41) and consist of:

- Notification of election to all shareholding members
- Nomination
- Election
- Announcement of election result.

Nominations must be in writing and in the form specified by the Association and must include the full name, address and occupation of the member being nominated. A member cannot nominate himself/herself for election to Board.

Nominations must be signed by, and include a statement from the member being nominated to show that they are eligible to join the Board in accordance with the Association's rules, and that they are willing to be elected. Completed nomination forms must be returned by hand or by post to the Association's registered office at least twenty-one days before the general meeting.

On receipt of a nomination, the Chairman, with support from the Chief Executive, will establish the shareholding member's eligibility to stand for election, and ineligible applicants will be advised accordingly and not be permitted to stand for election.

A shareholding member seeking election to the Board will be asked to complete an application form designed to establish the skills, experience and expertise which the individual might bring to the work of the Association.

The candidate will also be given the **Board Member Role Description**, in order to clarify what the Association expects of Board members, and what a Board member can expect from the Association.

2.9 **Co-option**

In accordance with our rules (Rule 42), the Board can co-opt anyone to the Board that it considers suitable to become a Board Member. Co-optees do not need to be members of the Association, but they can only serve as co-optees on the Board until the next annual general meeting or until removed by the Board. A person co-opted to the Board can also serve on the Audit Committee.

Co-optees can take part in discussions at the Board or the Audit Committee meetings, and vote at Board and Committee meetings on all matters except those which directly affect the membership of the Association or the election of the Association's Office Bearers. Co-optees may not stand for election, nor be elected as one of the Office Bearers of the Board.

Board members co-opted in this way must not make up more than one-third of the total number of Board or Committee members at any one time.

The Board will regularly consider whether there is the need for co-option to fill identified needs (skills and competencies) and how identified vacancies should be filled. This may include targeted approaches to suitable individuals and targeted advertising/specific approaches to, for example, local employers/educational institutions etc.

2.10 **Promotion of Board membership opportunities**

We will promote the opportunity to become a member of the Board through the use of:

- Advertisements in the local press or relevant trade journals;
- Targeted advertising or promotion;
- Circulation of information to partner organisations and other stakeholders;
- Circulation of information to tenant organisations and community groups;
- Circulation of information to members of the association;
- Registration with any relevant registers of potential members;
- Articles in our newsletters and website.

In each case we will invite enquiries from interested individuals.

The advertisement or circulated information will identify any particular skills or areas of experience where gaps have been identified, and will in particular invite applications from underrepresented groups.

Those enquiring will be issued with a recruitment pack, consisting of the following:

- Information on Background and History of Melville Housing Association;
- Explanatory information on becoming a Board member;
- Board Member Role Description;
- Application form, which asks for information on the areas of skills, knowledge and experience which the applicant can offer, as well as a personal statement from the applicant in which they are asked to state how their skills will be relevant to Melville;

The process of advertisement may be supplemented by personal approaches from members of the Board and senior staff of the association. In the event of such an approach being positive, the details of the individual will be submitted to the Chief Executive, who will issue the recruitment pack as described above.

Completed application forms will be sent to the Association's offices, and the Chief Executive will review the applications with a view to confirming eligibility.

Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Chair, Chief Executive and/or other Board members.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to act as a member of the Board;
- Establish the applicant understands the role of Board member;
- Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience sought by the Association;
- Answer any questions from the applicant;

2.11 New Board Members

New Board members (whether elected or co-opted) will be provided with an Induction Pack.

New Board members will be required to sign the Code of Governance. Acceptance of the terms of the Code is a requirement, and membership of the Board will not take effect until the Code has been signed.

The Board may appoint an experienced member of the Board to support and where necessary mentor the new Board member during the first six months of his/her tenure. Mentoring will consist of being available to answer queries on the role of the Board and its members, advice on procedures and conduct, and support to ensure that the new member is comfortable with his/her responsibilities.

The new member will receive a structured induction programme, tailored to his/her needs, as set out in the association's Policy on Support to Board Members.

3.0 Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 We are committed to Equality and Diversity and will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition, gender reassignment or disability. We aim to promote equalities and comply with all current legislation.

4.0 Review of Policy

- 4.1 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed every three years. Any amendments required or recommended will be submitted to the Board for consideration and approval.