

Melville Housing Association



Policy: Membership

Subject:	Association Membership Policy
Section:	Directorate
Objective:	The purpose of this document is to detail Melville Housing Association's Policy and Procedures for recruiting Shareholding Members.
Regulatory Standards	Standard 1 – point 1.3 Standard 5 – point 5.3 Standard 6 – point 6.4
Relevant Legislation & Guidance	Equality Act 2010 Melville SFHA Charitable Model Rules (Scotland) 2020 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 Data Protection Act 2018 & General Data Protection Regulations
Issue Date:	August 2022
Review Date:	October 2025
Policy Ref No:	GOV 002

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Melville Housing Association Ltd is a membership organisation and seeks to recruit as members individuals with an interest in the work of the organisation and to make effective use of their skills, views and experience. Members of the Association are entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Association, to seek election to the Board and to vote in such elections. The formal requirements and procedures associated with membership are set out in our Rules, paragraphs 6 - 17.
- 1.2 Members of the Association are those individuals or organisations who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members.
- 1.3 No member can hold more than one share in the Association.
- 1.4 Membership is open to organisations as well as to individuals. An organisation which is a member is free to appoint any person it considers suitable to act as its representative. A representative of an organisation cannot also be an individual member of the Association.
- 1.5 A person cannot apply for membership if they are under the age of 16.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 As a matter of policy, we will seek to ensure that the Association has a membership which reflects its constitution and the communities it serves. Our membership is an important means of enhancing and demonstrating our accountability to the local communities where we operate. We will actively promote membership through appropriate channels as a way of providing opportunities for interested parties to play an active part in the affairs of the organisation. We will seek to ensure that no individual or group is excluded from access to membership in fulfilment of our equality objectives.

- Tenants are particularly welcome to join, although there is no compulsion to do so.
- We also welcome applications from people involved in local community groups.
- People with a professional knowledge of an area relevant to our work such as housing, property law, property maintenance, planning, building construction, finance, community care, health, community development, IT and human resource management.

It is a requirement of members, however, that they are supportive of the aims of the Association.

- 2.2 We will seek to ensure that all sections of the community are represented in the membership, particularly those which may be under represented. We will therefore particularly welcome applications from:
 - Individuals with direct or indirect experience of disability

- Members of ethnic minority communities
- Individuals who have a Protected Characteristic as defined by equalities legislation

2.3 We will promote membership with particular reference to the priority groups referred to in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 by:

- Providing information on membership to tenants through our Newsletter *Voice*;
- Providing information on membership on our website and our social media channels.
- Promoting membership through Tenant Meetings and other public meetings in which we are involved;
- Publishing a leaflet to explain the benefits of shareholding membership and the application process, and making information available within our office to all those who enquire about membership;
- Make reference to membership when letting a property (although we will make it clear that membership is not a condition of receiving a tenancy).

2.4 We will not only encourage wide membership but also an active, informed and participative membership. We will therefore:

- Publicise general meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting;
- Circulate information to members so they can make informed decisions at general meetings;
- Make every effort to hold general meetings at times and at locations suitable for the membership;
- Keep members informed on all major developments affecting our business and our services;
- Make a copy of our Annual report and our audited accounts available to all our members;
- Provide information, support and training to tenant members who are interested in becoming more actively involved in decision making, in accordance with our Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Promote the opportunities for members to seek election to the Association's Board, in line with our Policy and Procedure on Recruitment of Board Members.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Any enquiry about membership of the association received at any time, whether in response to the promotions referred to in paragraph 2.4 or otherwise, will be answered by issuing the leaflet which explains the benefits of membership, and an application form, together with details of how a membership application will be processed.

3.2 A membership fee of £1.00 applies (which shall be returned to the applicant if the application is not approved). An application will be considered by the Board at its next meeting after the application is made or as soon thereafter as it is practicable. An application will not be considered within a 14 day period preceding the date of a general meeting.

- 3.3 Whilst it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Board has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership and the following shall constitute grounds for refusal of an application for membership:
- Where membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies;
 - Where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest, may adversely affect the work of the Association;
 - Where the Board considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association.
- 3.4 If the application is refused, the applicant will not be given a reason for refusal and will have no right of appeal. The Board's decision is final.
- 3.5 A copy of the Register of Members must be available for inspection by any member or person with an interest in the Association.
- 3.6 Any member who changes their main residence is required to advise the Association in writing as soon as possible thereafter, unless they are a tenant who has moved home as a result of a transfer of tenancy or a mutual exchange.
- 3.7 Any member can end their membership by giving one month's notice in writing. Membership will be terminated if the Board is satisfied that a member has failed to notify us of a change of address, or if a member has failed to attend or to submit apologies for five consecutive annual general meetings. Membership will, under exceptional circumstances, also be terminated where a member's behaviour is deemed to harm the interests of the organisation, subject to the procedures and safeguards set out in our Rules (Rule 11).
- 3.8 Information on members will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. Further details are available in our Fair Processing Notice which is available on our website.

4.0 Equal Opportunities

- 4.1 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.

5.0 Review of Policy

- 5.1 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.