



**POLICY**

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**MEMBERSHIP**

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Policy reviewed April 23

Date of Next Review April 26

# WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## Membership Policy

### 1. Constitutional requirements

- 1.1 Wellhouse Housing Association's (WHA's) Rules require that the management committee should set, review and publish its membership policy for admitting new members.
- 1.2 This policy ensures that WHA complies with this obligation. Rules 6 to 12 of WHA's Rules deal with membership matters, and rules 13 to 17 deal with shareholding arrangements. This policy reflects any requirements set out in the above Rules.
- 1.3 Members of WHA shall be those people, or organisations, who hold a share in the association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members.

### 2. Promoting membership

- 2.1 WHA is a community-based housing association and is positive about attracting people from the communities it serves, and beyond, to become members of the association.
- 2.2 WHA seeks to establish a broad and active membership by encouraging individuals and local organisations who have an interest in, and support the aims and objectives of the association to become members. It wishes to make use of the skills and experience of its members where possible, particularly where those skills match the identified skills being sought as part of the process of recruiting new committee members.
- 2.3 WHA will promote membership to relevant people and organisations in the following ways:
  - Encouraging new tenants to become members of the association at the point when they sign their tenancy agreement (it will always be made clear that membership is not a condition of being allocated a tenancy).
  - Promoting membership in WHA's regular newsletter, and on its website.
  - Circulating information on membership to local community and representative organisations, and voluntary and other organisations who are active in the Wellhouse community.
  - Advertising for people with relevant skills who may be potential management committee members, and must first become members of the association.

2.4 WHA is committed to promoting diversity and ensuring equality of opportunity. We will strive to ensure our membership reflects the communities we serve. We will put in place arrangements for monitoring the composition of our membership to enable periodic assessment of the extent to which it is representative.

### **3. Eligibility**

3.1 The following groups are eligible to become members of the association:

- Tenants of WHA
- Service users of WHA services
- Other people who support the aims and objectives of WHA
- Organisations sympathetic to the aims and objectives of WHA

3.2 Applications for membership can be received from any person aged 16 or over. There is no upper age limit on applying for or continuing to be a member.

3.3 Applicants who have a joint tenancy with WHA should apply individually for membership. WHA cannot accept joint applications for membership.

3.4 Membership will be open to all those entitled to apply regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances. This includes their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, age sexuality, disability, religion or beliefs, and marital, pregnancy, maternity or family status.

### **4. Applying for membership**

4.1 Any individual or organisation who wishes to apply for membership should send a completed and signed membership application form (copy obtainable from WHA) to WHA's registered office, together with the sum of £1.00.

4.2 Applications for membership will be considered by the management committee as soon as reasonably practicable, normally at its next scheduled meeting following receipt of the application. No application can be considered within 14 days preceding the date of a general meeting of WHA (e.g., an AGM).

4.3 The WHA management committee has absolute discretion as to whether to accept or reject an application for membership. Some examples of reasons for refusing an application are:

- Membership would be contrary to WHA's Rules or policies.
- The management committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of WHA.
- Where a significant conflict of interest may exist.

Applicants will be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest in their application form, such as employment by, or membership of the governing body of another local housing association. The existence of potential conflicts of interest are not in themselves grounds for the rejection of an application. This would only occur where, even allowing for the disclosure of such a conflict, it may adversely affect the work of WHA. Such conflicts may potentially be of more concern if the member were to seek nomination to the management committee.

- 4.4 WHA wishes to encourage membership of WHA, and only in rare circumstances would an application be refused. If this should happen, the applicant will be informed of the reasons in writing, and the £1.00 payment will be refunded.
- 4.5 When an application is approved, WHA will write to the new member to confirm this and will enter their name in WHA's Register of Members within 7 working days of the meeting which approved the application.
- 4.6 The Register of Members will list the name, address and date that the new member was entered into the Register. A second copy of the Register will be kept, which is available for inspection by any member, provided that a written request is first submitted in writing to the Secretary of WHA. Arrangements for access will then be made, normally within 7 days of receipt of the request, at WHA's offices, with a staff member in attendance.
- 4.7 Upon having their membership approved, new members will receive:
  - A share certificate.
  - A copy of WHA's Rules
  - Details of the member's obligations to WHA, and how they can participate in the work of WHA, including how they can stand for nomination to the WHA management committee.
  - A copy of the latest Annual Report, newsletter and WHA's current membership policy

## **5. Membership of an organisation**

- 5.1 Organisations who are sympathetic to the aims and objectives of WHA may apply for membership. Once approved as a member, the organisation is free to nominate anyone it considers suitable to be its representative to WHA. That person represents all of the organisation's rights and powers at general meetings.
- 5.2 The organisation must send WHA a copy of the authorisation or appointment of their representative, to confirm the identity of the individual concerned. This should be signed by an authorised signatory of the organisation, and the

signature must be independently witnessed. The identity of the representative can be changed at any time, by confirming the identity of the new representative, as above, and withdrawing the authority of the original representative.

- 5.3 Any person who is designated as a representative of an organisation cannot also be a member of WHA as an individual. If WHA is notified of the identity of a representative, and that person is already a member of WHA, we will suspend their individual membership for as long as they remain the representative of an organisation.

## **6. Member involvement**

- 6.1 During their period of membership, members should expect to receive:

- Regular newsletters
- WHA's Annual Report
- The Annual Financial Statements
- Invitations to major events, such as formal openings of new housing schemes
- Invitations to the Annual General Meeting, and any other general meetings called by WHA.

We will make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for all members, which is accessible to all.

- 6.2 Members are entitled to vote on any matters requiring a decision at a general meeting. They are also entitled to nominate another member to stand for election onto the management committee, or to be nominated themselves for election, and to vote in any election for the appointment of committee members.
- 6.3 WHA is committed to keeping its members informed about key issues and developments at WHA, so that members can make informed contributions and decisions at general meetings. It will do this primarily via its quarterly newsletters, but also by preparing short reports to be circulated in advance for any special items requiring consideration.
- 6.4 WHA will actively promote to its members the opportunities that exist for being elected and serving on the management committee. Every year, WHA makes an assessment of the skills, knowledge and diversity that it needs amongst its management committee members in order to have a fully effective committee membership and identifies any gaps that need filling in the next round of committee recruitment and elections. WHA will make this information available to its members each year in advance of any Annual General Meeting, to guide

members in making suitable nominations for committee membership as part of the election process.

- 6.5 Members are obliged to notify WHA of any change of address in writing within 3 months of the change. This is important as failure to do so may lead to termination of membership. This requirement does not apply to tenants who move home in order to transfer to another WHA property.

## **7. Termination of membership**

7.1 Membership will come to an end if:

- A member resigns, giving 7 days' notice in writing to the Secretary;
- The committee reasonably believes that a member has failed to tell WHA of a change of address;
- For 5 AGMs in a row, the member has not attended the meeting, or given apologies, or exercised a postal vote, or appointed a proxy to attend and vote on their behalf.

7.2 Where a member inadvertently loses their membership due to the above, and wishes to continue to be a member, they may immediately re-apply for membership, and the committee will give consideration to their application.

7.3 Membership may come to an end as a result of a complaint about the behaviour of a member, when two-thirds of members voting at a special general meeting convened to consider the complaint agree to this course of action. The details of such a procedure are set out in section 11.1.4 of WHA's Rules.

7.4 It is WHA's policy that its staff members should not be permitted to be members. If an existing member is appointed as a WHA member of staff (whether temporary or permanent), they must resign their membership before being permitted to accept any offer of employment.

7.5 When membership comes to an end, or if the member dies, the committee will cancel the share (no member is permitted to have more than one share) and record the ending of membership in the Register of Members.

7.6 When a share is cancelled, the value of the share (i.e., £1.00) will then normally belong to WHA. A member may nominate a person to whom WHA must transfer their share when they die, provided that the person nominated is eligible for membership within the terms of this policy.

## **8. Publication, implementation and review**

8.1 A copy of this policy will be made available to any applicants for membership on request, and/or to new members at the time of their appointment.

- 8.2 Membership application forms will include diversity information, and WHA will periodically analyse data that it holds on its members, to ascertain whether the membership is representative of the communities that it serves, and whether any initiatives to promote membership to particular sections of the community may be appropriate.
- 8.3 Any personal information given to WHA in respect of its members will be handled in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation, will only be used for the reasons specified, and will not be shared with any third party without consent, except as required by law.
- 8.4 This policy will be reviewed at least within 5 years (by March 2021) or sooner should circumstances require. The Director has lead responsibility for initiating the review, and for the implementation of the policy, but may delegate elements of this to an appropriate member of staff.