



## **Membership policy**

Date Approved by Management Committee:  
Latest review date:

December 2023  
December 2026

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Cernach Housing Association is a membership organisation and aims to attract people from the groups and communities it serves to become members of the Association. The Association seeks 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 its members.
- 1.2 Our membership is an important means of enhancing and demonstrating our accountability to the community in which we operate and is integral to our constitution.
- 1.3 We will actively promote membership to help provide opportunities for interested parties to play an active part in the affairs of the Association. Some of the ways we promote membership are detailed in section five of this policy.
- 1.4 Members of the Association are those people who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered into the register of members. It is a requirement of membership that members are supportive of the aims and objectives of the Association.
- 1.5 This policy aims to promote good governance of the Association and to ensure the proper accountability of its Management Committee by having a membership which is as wide as possible, subject to the criteria described in section six.
- 1.6 Residents come first in every decision we take, so it's not surprising we want as many local residents as possible to become members of the Association. Membership is a real opportunity for tenants to have their voice heard.
- 1.7 The main aims of the policy are to (i) set out the criteria by which the Management Committee assesses applications for membership and (ii) outline the roles and responsibilities of membership.

## **2. Legal and regulatory framework**

- 2.1 Standard 1 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management requires that the Committee "*lead and direct the Association to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.*"

- 2.2 This policy reflect the terms of our Rules, copies of which may be obtained from our registered office, 79 Airgold Drive, Glasgow G15 7AJ or by visiting our website [www.cernachha.co.uk](http://www.cernachha.co.uk). In the unlikely event of an inconsistency between this policy and the Rules, the Rules will prevail.

### **3. Equality and diversity and impact assessment**

- 3.1 The Association is committed to zero tolerance of unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services, and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.
- 3.2 In relation to the operation of this policy, we will adapt both the collective and individual assessment processes to help ensure that all members can participate fully. For example, we will make assessment pro formas and training handouts available in any required format and, where appropriate, will provide a sign or language interpreter to assist at training sessions or individual discussions.
- 3.3 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) on any policies may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) suggests applying a screening process<sup>2</sup> to ascertain whether a particular policy requires an EqIA to be carried out. The screening process was applied to this policy, and it was decided that an impact assessment is not required.

### **4. Promotion of membership**

- 4.1 The Association will promote membership by providing information to tenants, applicants for housing, sharing owners, factored owners, local community and representative groups, local authority departments, housing advice agencies and by providing information on membership on our website.

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act 2010 identifies the “protected characteristics” as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

<sup>2</sup> Six “yes/no” questions as outlined in chapter 8, section 2.2 of “Meeting the Public Sector Duty in Scotland” (EHRC, April 2011).

4.2 A membership application will be issued to all housing applicants and new tenants of the Association, and we will encourage them to join.

## **5. Who can join?**

5.1 You must be at least 16 years old to apply for membership. You do not have to live within our area of operation, but you should have an interest in the Association and our work.

5.2 The Association also accepts applications from organisations so long as these are in accordance with the Rules relating to representing an organisation.

### **5.3 Procedure for applying for membership**

5.3.1 Those who wish to apply for membership should obtain a membership form from the Association. The completed form should be returned with £1.00 to the office.

5.3.2 Every application is considered by the Management Committee at its next meeting after the application is received, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. No applications will be considered by Committee within 14 days prior to the annual general meeting.

5.3.3 Once approved, the Association will write to the new member within seven days to confirm their membership. They will also receive a Share Certificate and a copy of the Association's Rules. Details of how members can participate in the organisation including the AGM and how to stand for election to the Committee of Management will be issued to all members prior to every AGM.

5.3.4 Members will also receive an annual report and regular newsletters.

5.3.5 Exceptionally, the Committee may reject an application for membership. Where this occurs, we will provide the applicant with a written explanation of the reasons for refusal within 14 days of the date of the decision. An applicant will then have one further opportunity to request membership and to give reason why the decision should be changed. This should be made in writing within 14 days of receipt of the refusal letter. The Management Committee will consider the reasons at its next meeting or as soon thereafter as practicable and its decision on that occasion will be final. The applicant will be informed within 14 days of the date of the final decision.

## **6. Who cannot join?**

6.1 The Committee cannot/will not accept into membership anyone to whom any of the following criteria apply:

- a) The person is aged under 16
- b) Where admitting the person to membership would be contrary to our Rules or policies
- c) Where a conflict of interests may exist that, even after disclosure, could adversely affect the work of the Association
- d) Where the Committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association

6.2 In line with section 5.3.5, a written explanation will be provided.

## **7. Members' rights and responsibilities**

7.1 The Association will hold an Annual General meeting to provide members with a report on the affairs of the Association, a report from the auditor on the annual accounts and balance sheet, and to give members the opportunity to elect members to the Management Committee. Each member will be entitled to stand for election to the Management Committee and to nominate and help elect other prospective Committee members.

7.2 Members are entitled to attend and participate in all general meetings of the Association. Members should submit apologies if they are unable to attend a general meeting; any members who miss five consecutive annual general meetings without having submitted their apologies will be removed from membership.

7.3 Members should note that, according to the Associations constitution, there is no right to receive interest, dividends or bonuses on members' shares.

7.4 Members must approve the Association's annual financial statements and appoint the external auditor.

7.5 Members have the right to vote in person or by proxy at such meetings in accordance with the rules.

7.6 Members must agree with any proposal to change the Association's Rules. This can only be done at a special general meeting and is subject to the approval of the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

7.7 Members elected to the Management Committee will have the opportunity to influence the strategies, policies, and management of the Association.

## **8. Member participation**

8.1 The Association wishes to ensure its members are informed and can actively participate in the running of the organisation. To this end, the Association will:

- a) publicise general meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting
- b) send written notice of meeting to members' homes at least 14 days prior to the meeting
- c) circulate information to members so they can make informed decisions at the general meetings. Where information in particular format or language is required, the Association will endeavour to provide this
- d) make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for membership, and in venues that are accessible to all
- e) keep members informed on all major developments affecting the Association
- f) make a copy of our annual accounts available to all our members
- g) provide all members with a copy of our annual report
- h) actively promote the opportunities that exist, through election, for serving on the Management Committee

## **9. Termination of membership**

9.1 Membership will cease where any one of the following applies:

- a) The member has died
- b) The member resigns by giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary
- c) The Committee reasonably believes that the member has failed to tell the Association of a change of address
- d) For five annual general meetings in a row the member has not attended, submitted apologies or appointed a representative to attend and vote on their behalf by proxy
- e) The Association receives a complaint about the member's behaviour and two thirds of the members voting at a special general meeting agree to end his/her membership (with regard to this criterion, please see Rule 11.1.4)

9.2 Where membership terminates, we will cancel the share. The £1.00 membership fee is not refundable on termination of membership. The value

of the share will then belong to the Association with effect from the date of the Committee resolution to that effect. The ending of the membership will be recorded in the register of members referred to in Rule 64.

## **10. Membership records**

- 10.1 The Association will keep a proper register of members containing the names and addresses and such other particulars of members as may be required by the Rules. The register is the substantive evidence of membership. This register will be made available for public scrutiny at all reasonable times upon request.

## **11. Policy review**

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently in line with legal, constitutional, regulatory or best practice requirements. The next review is due in or before December 2026.