

Loreburn Housing Association

Membership Policy



Creating Great Places to Live

Policy	Membership Policy							
Version Reference	V2							
Approved by	MC							
Date of Approval	May 2021							
Review Period	3 yearly or sooner as required due to legislative changes							
Review Due	May 2024							
Policy Champion	Head of Governance & Assurance							
Who this policy affects	Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Customers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Contractors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Members of the Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Where this policy affects	General needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sheltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supported	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Offices/staff base	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Who are we?

- 1.1 We are a forward thinking, tenant focused housing association committed to providing high quality, sustainable places to live designed to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve throughout Dumfries and Galloway. We manage approximately 2,250 properties across the region and are embarking on an ambitious new build programme with a commitment to Passivhaus standards, a focus on specialist housing, including dementia friendly accommodation, as well as utilising the latest technologies to ensure we build homes that meet the needs of our customers now and which will enable them to enjoy their homes for many years to come.
- 1.2 We work closely with our tenants and stakeholders to deliver our Corporate Plan which supports our vision to Create Great Places to Live. (ADD LINK).
- 1.3 If you are interested in working with us, this policy provides information on what being a shareholding member involves and how you could become a member of Loreburn Housing Association.

2. Why become a Shareholder of Loreburn Housing Association?

- 2.1 As a not for profit organisation and a registered Scottish charity, we want to ensure that we have a strong and active membership base that is focused on ensuring we deliver the best possible outcomes for our tenants and their communities.
- 2.2 We will not seek shareholders simply to achieve a large membership. Our priority is to attract and retain members who are passionate about what we do and who wish to actively engage with us through consultation activities as well as participation at Annual and Special General Meetings.
- 2.3 As a member you will be provided with:
 - a Share Certificate
 - a copy of the Association's Rules
 - the Association's Annual Report
 - details of how Members can participate in the Association, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and how to stand for election to the Management Committee.
- 2.4 As a member you will be a key stakeholder of the association and will have the opportunity to influence our strategic direction through consultation of our Corporate Plan, you will receive our Quarterly Members Newsletter as well as

being invited to participate and vote at our Annual General Meeting, to nominate or be nominated for a place on our Management Committee and to participate in the election of Management Committee members. You will be instrumental to the running of the organisation.

3. Who Can Become a Member?

3.1 As well as attracting and maintaining an engaged and active membership we believe that achieving an appropriately balanced Membership is fundamental to the success of the Association.

3.2 Our ambition is to attract and retain a majority of tenant members to ensure our membership reflects the needs and aspirations of our tenants and their communities throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

3.3 Whilst we strive to attract and maintain a majority tenant membership, we understand the importance of balanced representation. As a community based housing association we are proud of the role we play within the wider community as well as supporting communities of need and this policy seeks to ensure that this continues. As well as tenants, we encourage representation from individuals who have relevant knowledge, skills, experience or expertise that are complementary to the aims of the Association. We will seek to ensure that no one organisation or group has undue influence.

3.4 Membership is open to all sections of the community and no one will be discriminated against on the basis of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, age or sexuality. We will actively encourage membership from under-represented groups and will work with applicants to ensure the application process is as inclusive as possible.

3.5 You will be eligible to become a member if you:

- are over the age of 16 and;
- are a Loreburn tenant, factored owner, service user; or
- you are able to demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills, experience or expertise that are complementary to the aims of the Association.

3.6 Whilst all applications are welcome, we aim to recruit non-tenant members with a particular interest in our core objectives and with experience or interest in the following areas:

- Housing management/welfare rights
- Building and maintenance
- Financial management
- Environmentalism
- Health & social care

- Working in the local community
- Equality, human rights and social inclusion

- 3.7 We accept applications from organisations as well as individuals. A member organisation is free to appoint any person it considers suitable as a representative. That person will represent the member organisation's rights and powers at Loreburn H A's AGM, but must act with regard to the best interests of the Association. To confirm the identity of a representative the organisation must send a copy of the signed authorisation or appointment of the representative. An organisation can change their representative by withdrawing the authority of the original representative. If a representative of an organisation is already a Member, they cannot continue to be a member in their own right. Individual membership will be suspended, until such times as the individual is no longer a representative of the organisation they represent.
- 3.8 Existing members of staff will not be eligible to become Members. If a Member takes up employment with us, they will be required to cancel their membership for their period of employment. Members of staff will not be eligible to apply for membership of the Association until one year after the date they cease to be an Association employee and cannot join the Management Committee until 18 months after the date they ceased to be an employee of Loreburn HA.

4. Promotion of Membership

- 4.1 Tenants will be made aware of the benefits of membership at the start of their tenancy and asked if they are interested in becoming a member. Tenants will be made aware that membership is not a condition of tenancy. Membership to tenants will be promoted regularly through our website, social medias and general communications.
- 4.2. Members of the local community and community groups will be made aware of the opportunity to become members through our website and social medias and opportunities may, from time to time, be advertised in local publications and digital platforms.
- 4.3. Membership will be promoted at Loreburn events and within promotional publications where appropriate.

5. Applying for Membership

- 5.1 You can apply to become a member at any time by downloading a copy of our Membership Application Form from our website or by asking a member of our team to send you a copy by e-mail or post. Completed forms can be returned by email to customerservice@loreburn.org.uk or by post and the £1 membership fee can be paid by BACS or post using the details on the form.
- 5.2 Management Committee has responsibility for approval of membership applications and will consider applications at their next available meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter. You should refer to the relevant skills and experiences noted at 3.6 of this policy to ensure management committee have the necessary information to consider your application.
- 5.3 Membership shall take effect from the date of approval and the Register will be updated to reflect that within seven working days. Your Loreburn H A share certificate will be issued to you by post along with a copy of our Rules and our most recent Annual Report.

6. Refusal of Membership

- 6.1 Whilst it is our intention to promote and encourage membership, the Committee reserves the right to refuse membership and the following shall constitute grounds for refusal of an application for membership:
 - ▶ Where the membership would be contrary to the Loreburn'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 Loreburn
 - ▶ Where the Committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of Loreburn
 - ▶ Where the applicant has not successfully demonstrated relevant knowledge, skills, experience or expertise that are complementary to the aims of the Association
 - ▶ Where the applicant is a member of the Loreburn H A workforce or has been employed by Loreburn HA in the previous 12 months.
- 6.2 If an application is unsuccessful reasons for refusal will be given in writing and the right of appeal will be provided within **14 working days** of the decision being made. The £1 membership fee will also be returned at this time.

7. Appealing a Refusal of Membership

- 7.1 If your application is not successful you will have the right to appeal.
- 7.2 Appeals must be made within **14 working days** of the notice of rejection.
- 7.3 Appeals should be made in writing, if this is not possible the Chief Executive may be contacted directly to receive the details of the appeal.
- 7.4 The Management Committee will consider the appeal at their next available meeting. A final decision will be confirmed in writing to the applicant within **7 working days** of the meeting.

8. Participation of Members

8.1 As a member we will keep you informed and up to date with our activities. Whilst we will aim to digitalise our communications as far as possible, we will always look to contact you in a way that meets your needs and in line with our Rules. We will:

- Publicise Annual General Meeting at least **14 days** before the day of the meeting
- Circulate information to you so you can make informed decisions at the Annual General Meeting
- Provide information in a different format or language .
- Make every effort to hold Annual General Meetings at times and locations suitable to our membership
- Keep you informed on all major developments affecting the Association and actively promote consultations and opportunities to serve on the Management Committee

9. Termination of Membership

9.1 Whilst we seek to main an active membership there will be circumstances in which membership will cease. Membership will cease when a Member:

- Resigns by giving **7 days** written notice to the Secretary
- Becomes an employee of Loreburn
- Is expelled in accordance with the Rule 11.1.4
- Changes address but does not notify us of their new address within three months, unless the new address is also one of our properties
- Fails to attend or submit apologies for five consecutive Annual General Meetings
- Death

9.2 The **£1.00** membership fee is not refundable on termination of membership.

10. Complaints

10.1 Loreburn has a commitment to valuing complaints and ensures the organisation benefits from feedback to identify areas for change or improvement.

10.2 Loreburn has a Complaints Policy which ensures there are robust and effective procedures in place for complaints to be properly managed and acted upon.

10.3 Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint having exhausted Loreburn's complaints procedure has the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

11. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

11.1 Loreburn aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to the way we work and how we treat our customers. We support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of our work as an employer and service provider.

11.2 Loreburn will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors, suppliers or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010).

12. Policy Review

12.1 The policy champion is the Head of Governance & Assurance.

12.2 This policy will be reviewed **every three years** or as required due to legislative or regulatory change. The review will be completed by the Policy Champion and circulated to the Management Committee for approval.

13. Associated Policies & Guidance

13.1 This Policy takes account of the following documents:

- Rules of Loreburn Housing Association
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Privacy Policy & Data Protection Act

- Scottish Federation of Housing Association’s Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members
- Scottish Housing Regulatory Standards of Governance & Financial Management

14. Responsibilities Chart

14.1 The chart below illustrates the responsibilities of all staff in relation to this policy.

Responsibilities	Management Committee	CEO	PA to CEO	HGA	All Staff
To set the Membership Policy	✓				
To approve Members	✓				
To maintain Register			✓		
Ensure Loreburn H A staff have an understanding of Association membership				✓	
Take lead and make decision regarding applications	✓				
Lead appeal process		✓			
Policy Champion				✓	
Ensure effective and clear communication with membership				✓	✓
Ensure complaints feedback is used to improve service					✓
Ensure policy is reviewed as necessary	✓				
Ensure Equality & Diversity guidance is adhered to					✓

Policy Assessment Checklist

Health & Safety Assessment

Does this policy have the potential to affect:

Lone Working	Yes
Safety and/or wellbeing of customers	Yes
Safety and/or wellbeing of staff	Yes
Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy?	Yes

Comments:

Staff may be lone working during promotion of membership for example at sign up stage. The fee for membership will be encouraged to be paid by BACS wherever possible. Staff will follow the relevant lone working and finance policies and procedures.

Equality & Human Rights Assessment

Does this policy have the potential to affect:

Staff's rights to equal opportunities	No
Tenants' / Customer's rights to equal opportunities	Yes
Tenants' / Customer's ability to access to homes and/or services	No
Have the above items been considered in the preparation of this policy?	Yes

Comments:

This policy aims to actively encourage representation from underrepresented groups. Staff will assist as far as possible to ensure the process is as inclusive as possible including providing information in other formats and arranging interpreters as required. In order to address any identified under representation, promotion of membership may be targeted to particular groups for example younger people and BAME groups. The membership application form has been amended to include demographic information to allow the balance of representation to be monitored.

Agile Working Assessment

Agile working requirements have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this policy: Yes