

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Code: GOV15

Approved: February 2024

Next review: February 2027

Cross reference: Association Rules



This document can be made available in alternative languages or formats (such as large print, audio etc). Please contact staff as required.

Policy Summary

This policy has been developed to outline how to become a member of Forth Housing Association and the rules governing membership to the association in accordance with our regulatory and legal requirements.

Equalities

No equalities issues have been identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Questions and there is therefore no requirement to do a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Privacy

Data Protection legislation applies to customer records which will be managed accordingly. There is no requirement to do a full Privacy Impact Assessment.

Policy Owner

Name: Head of Corporate Services

Date of Next Review: May 2027

FORTH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Forth HA is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965, regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator, and governed by the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Model (Scotland) Rules 2003.
- 1.2 This Policy seeks to follow and comply with the provisions contained in the Rules for Membership. (See appendix 1.)
- 1.3 This Policy, therefore, also complies with the expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator, which generally expect the following:
 -  It must operate within and comply with the law.
 -  It must operate in accordance with the Association's Equal Opportunities Policy.
 -  It must operate in accordance with the provisions in the Association's Rules.
 -  It seeks to ensure as wide a representation as possible of the communities and groups served by the Association.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to encourage partnership working with others, supporting our tenants and other Stakeholders, to maximise opportunities for engagement with the association and to ensure that there is a robust approach to decision making and that reflects the needs of our tenants, service users and our wider community.
- 2.2 We will aim to
 - Ensure that information on membership is widely available to all interested parties
 - Ensure that we comply with legislative and regulatory requirements
 - Encourage our tenants and other stakeholders to influence our policy and participate in decisions, which may affect them.

- Ensure that we have a broad-based membership which reflects our constitution and the communities we serve
- Ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices. Promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

4.0 Policy Framework

4.1 Definition, eligibility and rights of Membership

Definition

A member of Forth Housing Association is an individual or organisation holding a £1.00 share and whose name(s) are entered in the Register of Members. The membership fee is non refundable.

Eligibility - Who can join?

Forth HA seeks to ensure a wide representation in its membership of the communities which it serves. To this end Forth HA will particularly welcome applications from:

-  Tenants and service users of the Association.
-  Other residents of Stirling, Bannockburn, Cambusbarron, Plean, Fallin, Cowie, Dunblane and surrounding areas, who are 16 years or older and support the objectives of the Association.
-  Organisations and other persons sympathetic to the objects of the Association.

Forth HA seeks to ensure that its membership reflects the communities it serves and that all sections of the community are represented. Membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation or gender reassignment

To this end Forth HA particularly welcomes applications from:

-  Individuals who have experience of disability.
-  16 - 25 year olds.
-  Black and ethnic minority community members.
-  Members of other minority groups.

Forth HA also seeks to recruit as members those with a particular interest in the running of the organisation. To this end Forth HA welcomes applications from those with experience or interest in:

-  Housing management.
-  Building and maintenance.
-  Financial management.
-  Project management.
-  Community care.
-  Voluntary organisation governance.

Forth HA accepts applications from organisations as well as individuals, in accordance with the rules relating to representing an organisation.

The Management Committee of Forth HA reserves the right to exercise discretion when considering any application for membership.

Rights of Membership

No member can hold more than one share and there is no interest, dividend or bonus on shares

Grounds for Refusal

-  Rule 7.2 gives the Association absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership and also outlines the following grounds for refusal;
 - 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 Committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association

4.2 Promotion of membership

Forth will promote membership to its tenants by ensuring information is given to all new tenants. It will also publicise membership via its web site.

In addition it may from time to time circulate information on membership more widely to other residents, local community and representative groups, voluntary and statutory agencies etc. This may be targeted to address specific under representation within the membership.

4.3 Member participation

Forth HA wishes to ensure its members are informed and can actively participate in the organisation. To this end, the Association will:

-  Publicise general meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting.

-  Circulate information to members so they can make informed decisions at the general meetings. Where information in a particular format or language is required the Association will endeavour to provide this.
-  Make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for membership, and which are accessible to all.
-  Keep members informed on all major developments affecting the Association.
-  Actively promote the opportunities which exist, through election, for serving on the Management Committee.
-  Issue an annual report and regular newsletters to all members.

4.4. Procedures for applying for membership

Those who want to apply for membership should complete the attached application form (Appendix 2). The completed form should be sent with £1.00 to the Corporate Services Officer, on behalf of the Secretary, at the Association's office.

Every application is considered by the Management Committee of the Association at its next meeting after the application is received, or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

Once approved, the Association will write to the new member to confirm their membership, with details of how members can participate in the organisation including the AGM and how to stand for election to the Committee of Management.

5.0 Monitoring of the Policy

5.1 The Audit and Risk Sub Committee will review this policy at least every 3 years and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

5.2 The Head of Corporate Services will monitor and report the application of this policy through performance reports and of new membership applications to each Management Committee.

6.0 Complaints and Appeals

6.1 Forth Housing Association welcomes complaints and positive feedback, both of which provide information which helps us to improve our services. We use a complaints procedure developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The complaints procedure allows for most complaints to be resolved by front line staff within a five day limit (first stage), or if the complaint is complex, a detailed investigation will be made by a manager within a 20

day limit (second stage). At the end of the second stage our response will be made by a director. If the customer remains dissatisfied, he/ she may then refer the matter to the SPSO.

At each stage we will advise the customer how the complaint should be taken forward and advise which agency would be most appropriate to consider the case.

7.0 Equalities

7.1 Equality and diversity underpin all our activities and services. When delivering our services, we never discriminate on the basis of sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. Full details of our Equalities Policy can be found on our website www.forthha.org.uk or can be obtained from our office.

8.0 Data Protection - Privacy

8.1 We recognise the importance of data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle, use and disclose about them, whether on computer or in paper format. We will ensure that our practices in the handling, use and disclosure of personal information as part of the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer

9.0 Availability

9.1 This policy is available on our website and can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

10.0 Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Audit and Risk Sub Committee and staff are responsible for ensuring that it meets legal and good practice requirements.

EXTRACT FROM THE RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP

6 The Members of the Association shall be those persons or organisations who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members.

Applying for Membership

7.1 The Committee shall set, review and publish its membership policy for admitting new Members. Subject to the provisions of Rule 7.2 the following shall be eligible to become Members:-

7.1.1 Tenants of the Association;

7.1.2 Service users of the Association;

7.1.3 Other persons who support the objects of the Association.

7.1.4 Organisations sympathetic to the objects of the Association.

7.2 If you are applying for membership you must send a completed and signed application form and the sum of one pound (£1) (which will be returned to you if the application is not approved) to the Association's registered office. Whilst it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Committee has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership and the following shall constitute grounds for refusal of an application for membership:-

7.2.1 Where membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies;

7.2.2 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;

7.2.3 Where the Committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association.

7.3 Your application shall be considered by the Committee as soon as reasonably practicable after its receipt by the Association. An application for membership will not be considered by the Committee within the period of fourteen days before the date of a general meeting. The Committee has the power in its absolute discretion to accept or reject the application.

- 7.4 If the Committee approve your application, you will immediately become a Member and your name and other necessary particulars will be included in the Register of Members within seven working days. You will then be issued one share in the Association.
- 8 You can apply for membership of the Association from the age of 16.
- 9 No Member can hold more than one share in the Association.
- 10 If you change your address, you must let the Association know by writing to the Secretary at the registered office within three months. This requirement does not apply if you are a tenant of the Association and have moved home by transferring your tenancy to another property owned and managed by the Association.

ENDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- 11.1 Your membership of the Association will end and the Committee will cancel your share and record the ending of your membership in the Register of Members if:-
- 11.1.1 You resign your membership giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary at the registered office.
- 11.1.2 The Committee reasonably believes that you have failed to tell the Association of a change of address as required by Rule 10 or;
- 11.1.3 For five annual general meetings in a row you have not attended, submitted apologies, exercised a postal vote or appointed a representative to attend and vote on your behalf by proxy;
- 11.1.4 The Association receives a complaint about your behaviour and two-thirds of the Members voting at a special general meeting agree to end your membership. The following conditions apply to this procedure:
- 11.1.4.1 the complaint must be in writing and must relate to behaviour which could harm the interests of the Association.
 - 11.1.4.2 the Secretary must notify the Member of the complaint in writing not less than one calendar month before the meeting takes place;
 - 11.1.4.3 the notice for the special general meeting will give details of the business for which the meeting is being called;
 - 11.1.4.4 you will be called to answer the complaint at the meeting. The Members present will consider the evidence supporting the complaint and any evidence you decide to introduce;
 - 11.1.4.5 the Members can vote in person or through a representative by proxy;

- 11.1.4.6 if you receive proper notice but do not go to the meeting without providing a good reason, the meeting will go ahead without you and the Members will be entitled to vote to end your membership.
- 11.2 If your membership is ended in accordance with Rule 11.1.4, you will immediately cease to be a Member from the date that the resolution to end your membership was passed and any further application for membership by you will need to be approved by two-thirds of the Members voting at a general meeting.

REPRESENTING AN ORGANISATION

- 12.1 An organisation which is a Member is free to nominate any person it considers suitable as its representative to the Association. That person will represent all of the organisation's rights and powers at general meetings.
- 12.2 To confirm the identity of a representative, the organisation must send the Association a copy of the authorisation or appointment of an individual as a representative. This should be signed by a Director, Secretary or Authorised Signatory of the organisation which signature must be witnessed, or in the case of a local authority, by the Chief Executive, or properly authorised Officer of the local authority.
- 12.3 An organisation can change the identity of the person entitled to represent that organisation at any time by confirming the identity of the new representative in terms of Rule 12.2 and withdrawing the authority of the original representative.
- 12.4 If you are a representative in terms of Rule 12.2, of an organisation which is a Member, you cannot be a Member as an individual yourself. If you are already a Member as an individual when you start to represent an organisation which is a Member, the Association will suspend your membership as an individual, until such time as you are no longer a representative of an organisation which is a Member.

APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please answer all of the following questions:

1. Are you 16 years of age or older? YES/NO
Note: no person who is a minor shall be admitted to membership

2. Are you seeking to become a member of Forth Housing Association as a representative of an organisation? YES/NO

(If your answer is YES you should return your completed application with a covering letter from the nominating organisation.)

3. Have you enclosed the sum of one pound (£1.00) for membership YES/NO

4. What is your connection with the Association?
(For example are you a tenant, sharing owner, local resident or someone with another connection/interest?)

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association Ltd - Membership Policy

Will the implementation of this policy have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Age | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Disability | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Gender reassignment | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Marriage and Civil Partnership | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Pregnancy and Maternity | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Race | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Religion or belief | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Sex | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Sexual orientation | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Equality

Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing an Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 - Privacy Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Forth Housing Association – Membership Policy

1. A substantial change to an existing policy, process or system that involves personal information
Yes No
2. A new collection of personal information
Yes No
- 3.. A new way of collecting personal information (for example collecting it online)
Yes No
4. A change in the way personal information is stored or secured
Yes No
5. A change to how sensitive information is managed
Yes No
6. Transferring personal information outside the EEA or using a third-party contractor
Yes No
7. A decision to keep personal information for longer than you have previously
Yes No
8. A new use or disclosure of personal information you already hold
Yes No
9. A change of policy that results in people having less access to information you hold about them
Yes No
10. Surveillance, tracking or monitoring of movements, behaviour or communications
Yes No
11. Changes to your premises involving private spaces where clients or customers may disclose their personal information (reception areas, for example)
Yes No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Privacy Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing a Privacy Impact Assessment.