



WILLIAMSBURGH
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Membership Policy

Revision History

Policy	Membership
Reviewer(s)	Corporate Services
Committee Name	Management Committee
Number and Date of Meeting	549 – 25 th September 2024
New Policy or Description of Revision	Revision from 2021
Equality Impact Assessment Complete	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment Complete	N/A
Health and Safety Risk Assessment Complete	N/A
Consultation Complete	N/A
Next Review Date	September 2027

Introduction and context

Williamsburgh Housing Association (WHA) is committed to seeking and promoting meaningful and positive engagement with service users and recognises that membership of the Association is a key part of this.

Members of WHA are those people who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered into the Register of Members.

WHA Membership Policy is intended to demonstrate how we are going to fulfil our commitment and clarify the rules and processes that govern membership of the Association.

Aims and Objectives

This policy will:

- Describe the eligibility criteria for membership of WHA
- Explain how WHA will promote membership and how membership applications are decided
- Introduce how WHA will encourage and support an informed and active membership
- Encourage and support an informed and active membership
- Make information on membership widely available to all interested individuals, groups and organisations
- Promote good governance and accountability
- Ensure that the Association complies with legislation, regulatory requirements and its own Rules and objectives.

Eligibility for membership

Applications by individuals

Prospective members must be aged 16 years or over and be:

- a) A WHA tenant or service user, or
- b) Another person who supports WHA's objectives

No individual can hold more than one share in WHA and memberships cannot be held jointly. There can be more than one shareholding member in a household.

Applications by organisations

Organisations sympathetic to WHA's objectives may also apply to be a member. Examples of potential organisational members include the local authority, partner agencies and voluntary or community organisations operating in our housing stock areas.

The organisation must confirm the identity of the representative in writing by providing the Association with a copy of the authorisation or appointment of the individual nominated.

This should be signed by the Chief Executive/Secretary or other authorised signatory of the organisation and witnessed. In the case of the local authority nominating a

representative, the authorisation should be signed by the Chief Executive or another properly authorised officer.

An organisation can change its representative at any time by writing to the Association to withdraw the previous nomination's authority and confirming the identity of the new representative in the same way as above.

Benefits of Membership

By paying a £1 shareholding membership, members of the Association are entitled to:

- Attend the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Attend any Special General Meetings called
- Information on nominees to the Management Committee
- Stand for election to the Management Committee
- Nominate and elect members to the Management Committee
- Be informed of vacancies on the Management Committee and be co-opted onto the Committee
- Appoint the Association's auditor
- Appoint a representative to cast their vote by proxy

Membership of Williamsburgh Housing Association does not give anyone help or priority in either being allocated a tenancy with the Association or receiving repairs or other services.

Membership Promotion

We wish to ensure that we have as wide a membership as possible from our communities and customers to support and enhance our accountability to those we provide services to.

We aim to ensure that all sections of our communities are represented in our membership, particularly those that have historically been under-represented or difficult to engage with.

In order to achieve a diverse and representative membership we will proactively promote and encourage membership by;

- Utilising social media and WHA's website to provide information on becoming a member
- Publishing information on membership in WHA's newsletters and other appropriate publications
- Making information on membership and its benefits in WHA's office
- Providing information on membership to new tenants and factored owners
- Inviting applications to identified individuals with specific skills, knowledge or experience required to meet any highlighted skills gaps
- Promotion campaigns targeted at groups identified as being underrepresented in the membership

- Utilising opportunities to circulate information on membership to any other interested party, group or organisation, including owner occupiers, commercial factored owners, community groups, housing advice agencies and potential future residents.

In order to ensure fair and equal access to membership, WHA will produce information material in a range of languages and formats as appropriate.

Membership Applications

Application forms are available on our website or are available from the Registered office of WHA. The completed form should be sent with £1 to the office.

To ensure that applications are legitimate, WHA may:

- Record and number application forms when we issue them
- Reject bulk applications (i.e. the return of more than two applications at the same time, except for applications submitted by members of the same household)

The Management Committee will normally consider completed applications as soon as reasonably practical following receipt. However, applications for membership will not be considered with-in a 14-day period preceding the date of an Annual or Special General Meeting.

Where the Management Committee feel it appropriate, it can request an interview between the applicant and the Chairperson before making its final decision.

If approved, the applicant will immediately become a member, and their details recorded in the Register of Members with 7 days. A share certificate and copy of the Association's Rules will be issued within 14 days of approval.

Refusing a membership application

Although we are committed to encouraging as wide, diverse and representative membership the Management Committee has absolute discretion when it is considering applications for approval and will refuse applications where;

- Membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies
- A conflict of interest may exist, which even allowing for disclosure, may adversely impact on the Association's work
- The Management Committee has sound reason for believing that approving the membership application would not be in the best interest of WHA.

However, to encourage and to as wide and equal access as possible to membership, applications will only be refused in exceptional circumstances. In the event that an application is refused, the £1.00 share fee will be returned and the applicant informed in writing within 7 days of the Management Committee's decision and advising of;

- The reasons for refusal
- Their right to appeal the decision
- The appeals process

An appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 days and will be considered by the Management Committee at its next meeting. The decision made will be final.

The Responsibilities of Membership

Members are required to:

- Inform WHA of a change of address by writing to the WHA's Secretary within 3 months (NB This does not apply to tenants of the Association that have had an internal transfer to another property owned by WHA)
- Submit apologies if you are unable to attend an Annual or Special general Meeting

Register of Members

WHA will maintain a Register of Members that for each member will record their:

- Names and addresses
- Date of membership approval
- Membership number
- Date membership ended, if applicable

Ending Membership

A member may end their membership by writing to the WHA's Secretary giving 7 days' notice.

The Management Committee may cancel a membership where;

- The member has failed to inform WHA of a change of address
- WHA receives a complaint about the behaviour of a member, in particular where the behaviour is detrimental to the interests of the WHA.

Where such a complaint is received a minimum of two-thirds of the members present at a Special General Meeting or voting by proxy must agree to end the membership.

Complaints about the behaviour of a member must be made and dealt with in accordance with WHA's Rules.

Where a membership is ended by a vote at a Special General Meeting, the membership shall end immediately. Any future application from membership from the individual will need to be approved by two-thirds of members voting at a general meeting.

Shares cannot be sold and in the event of your membership ending your share will be cancelled and the value of the share will belong to the Association. However, with the Management Committee's approval, a member can nominate an individual to whom the Association must transfer their share in the event of their death, so long as that

person is eligible for membership under WHA's Rules and the nomination is made in the manner required.

If a member dies or becomes bankrupt and the personal representative or trustee claims the share, the Management Committee will transfer or pay the value of the share to the third party.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Management committee every three years unless there are changes to legislation, regulatory requirements or WHA rules which affect its contents during the three-year period.

Appendix 1: Membership Application form

I wish to become a member of Williamsburgh Housing Association Ltd and enclose £1.00 for my share certificate. I am over 16 years of age.

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mx)

Address:

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Occupation:

WHY DO YOU WISH TO JOIN WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

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ARE YOU A TENANT OF THE ASSOCIATION: YES/NO

Once my membership is accepted, I consent to my name and address being retained on a Register of Members which can be available for public inspection under Rule 81.

Signature: **Date:**

Please return to:

Williamsburgh Housing Association Ltd
Ralston House
Cyril Street
Paisley PA1 1RW

Please provide proof of residence i.e. Council Tax form, utility bill or any other appropriate official document. If you are posting your application, you are required to send an original of your proof of residence. This will be returned to you once it has been checked.

If you are a tenant of the Association, or are declared as part of their household, proof is not required.

----- FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Note of proof of residence provided.