

Paragon Housing Association Limited

POLICY:	MEMBERSHIP POLICY
POLICY AREA:	GOVERNANCE
DATE APPROVED:	SGM 31st October 2018
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the aims of the Association in respect of membership categories in which membership can be held and guidance on the definition of categories. This policy was updated in 2018 to reflect the adoption of new rules based on the SFHA Model Rules 2013 (as amended 2015).

At all times the approved Rule of the Association shall have precedent over the Membership Policy.

Members

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.

The Association shall encourage membership take up in the categories specified below. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the membership reflects a wide representation of those communities which it serves.

Membership Categories

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:-

- Tenants of the Association;
- Service users of the Association;
- Other persons who support the objects of the Association.
- Organisations sympathetic to the objects of the Association.

Membership of the Association shall be held in accordance with the rules set out in the Association's Rule Book and the terms and conditions regulating membership shall be those specified in it and in accordance with the definitions set out below.

Applying for Membership

If you are applying for membership you must send a completed and signed application form and the sum of one pound (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 under Rule 7.2.1 to 7.2.3 :-

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- 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

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.

Change of Address

The rules of the Association set out the steps that require to be taken where there is a change of address by a member.

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 Membership

The rules of the Association clearly set out how your membership can be ended.

The relevant Rules are as follows.

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:-

- You resign your membership giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary at the registered office.
- The Committee reasonably believes that you have failed to tell the Association of a change of address as required by Rule 10 or;
- 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;
- 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:

- the complaint must be in writing and must relate to behaviour which could

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harm the interests of the Association

- the Secretary must notify the Member of the complaint in writing not less than one calendar month before the meeting takes place
- the notice for the special general meeting will give details of the business for which the meeting is being called
- 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
- the Members can vote in person or through a representative by proxy
- 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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Share Capital

The share capital of the Association will be raised by issuing one-pound shares to Members. Shares cannot be held jointly. Joint tenants of the Association may each become individual Members.

There is no interest, dividend or bonus payable on shares.

You cannot sell your share but you can transfer it if the Committee agrees.

If you die or end your membership or have your membership ended, or you are a representative of an organisation which no longer exists, the Committee will cancel your share (except in those circumstances outlined in Rules 17.2 and 17.3) and the value of the share will then belong to the Association.

You can nominate the person to whom the Association must transfer your share in the Association when you die, as long as the person that you nominate is eligible for membership under these Rules and in terms of the Association's membership policies. On being notified of your death, the Committee shall transfer or pay the full value of your share to the person you have identified. Your nomination must be in the terms required by the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

If you die or become bankrupt and your personal representative or trustee in bankruptcy seeks to claim your share, the Committee (to the extent that your personal representative or trustee in bankruptcy has right) will transfer or pay the value of your share in terms of your representative's or trustee's instructions.

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the membership reflects a wide representation of those communities which it serves. It will be reviewed every 5 years and when any constitutional changes are proposed.

To reflect the spirit of membership involvement, any proposed amendments to this policy shall be subject to ratification by the membership by way of a resolution to a general meeting. A simple majority shall be required.