Membership Policy

Introduction

Ore Valley Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord with charitable status.

Purpose

Ore Valley Housing Association (OVHA) is a membership-based organisation. We will seek to recruit as members, individuals and organisations that have an interest in our work, and to make effective use of their skills, views and experience.

Scope

We recognise that our membership is an important means of enhancing and demonstrating our accountability to the local communities in which we operate. We will promote Membership through all appropriate channels as a way of providing opportunities for those interested to play an active part in our affairs.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure

- Information on membership is widely available to all interested parties
- OVHA complies with legislative and regulatory requirements

We will seek to ensure that we have a broad-based membership which reflects our constitution and the communities we serve. We will welcome applications for membership from tenants, service users, community groups and other residents of the towns and villages in which we are active.

We are committed to the principles of good corporate governance and sustainability and will endeavor to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures and practices.

In line with our commitment to inclusion and diversity, this policy can be made available in a variety of formats, including large print, translated into another language or other media. We will make some reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability.

Definition, eligibility and rights of Membership

The following groups are eligible to become members of the association:

- Tenants of OVHA
- Service users of OVHA services
- Staff members can apply to become a member however they are not eligible to become a committee member
- Other people who support the aims and objectives of OVHA
- Organisations sympathetic to the aims and objectives of OVHA

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

Anyone who is 16 years or older may apply to become a member.

No member can hold more than one share in OVHA. There is no interest, dividend or bonus on shares.

An organisation which is a member is free to appoint any person it considers suitable to act as its representative. A representative of an organisation cannot also be an individual member of OVHA.

Members are entitled to:

- Attend and vote at Annual or Special General Meetings of the Association
- Seek election to the Board of Management
- Vote at meetings on issues such as elections to the Board.

Members are also eligible for nomination on the Board of Management.

Promoting Membership

We will promote a broad representation of membership by various measures including:

- Promoting membership on our website, through social media and in press/publications.
- Making information available within our offices to all those who enquire about membership.
- Through our Annual Report
- Inviting applications from individuals with specific occupational skills/ backgrounds to meet identified skill gaps.
- Providing information on membership to tenants through our allocations process and our Newsletter.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Legal/Regulatory Framework

- Our Rules -sections 6–12 which covers membership of the Association
- Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Standard 1 - Ensures that housing associations have effective governance frameworks in place. This includes the establishment of clear, transparent, and inclusive membership policies
- Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Standard 2 – The RSL gives tenants, service users and other stakeholders information that meets their needs about the RSL, its services, its performance and future plans.
- Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Standard 5 – The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity. Data Protection Act 2018, which implements the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the UK, governs how housing associations handle personal data about members and applicants.
- The Equality Act 2010 applies to housing associations to ensure that membership and housing allocation policies do not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics.

Applying for Membership
Membership is made by application and will be considered by our Board of Management at their next available meeting. Our Board of Management will either accept and approve or reject your application for membership. All applications must be accompanied by the fee of £1. The fee will be refunded if the membership is not agreed.

Whilst our Board of Management will consider each application for membership, there is a general presumption that applications will be accepted, and it is only in exceptional circumstances that an application will be refused.

Once approved, we will write to you, as a new member, to confirm your membership and issue you a Share Certificate, a copy of OVHA's Rules and details of how you can participate in our organisation, including the AGM and how to stand for election to the Board. You will also receive an annual report and regular newsletters.

In the unusual event of an application being refused, we will write to you to explain the reasons for our Board of Management's decision and will refund your £1. The grounds for refusal, whilst not exhaustive, may be due to a conflict of interest or where you have acted and continue to act in a way that is contrary to the interests of OVHA.

You will have one opportunity to appeal against our Board of Management's refusal of your application. Your appeal should be made in writing, giving your reasons why the decision should be changed. Our Board of Management will consider your appeal at their next meeting. Their decision will be final.

Maintaining Membership
You should notify the Secretary in writing of a change of address within 3 months. This rule does not apply if you are a tenant and have moved home by transferring your tenancy or to another property owned and managed by us.

We will maintain a Register of Members in accordance with our Rules of the Association. The Register will contain details of the members' name and address, date of membership approval and membership number of each member.

Ending Membership
You can end your membership by giving the Secretary at our registered office notice in writing. In addition, your membership will end where:

- You are expelled in accordance with our Rules of the Association.
- You change your address but do not notify us of your new address within 3 months (see paragraph above).
- You fail to attend, submit apologies, exercise a postal vote or appoint a representative to attend and vote by proxy for five consecutive Annual General Meetings.
- We receive a complaint about your behaviour prejudicial to our interests and two-thirds of the members voting at a Special General Meeting agree to this. The conditions applying to

- Membership will also end if a member dies unless the member has nominated a person to whom the share should be transferred as outlined in our rules.

The membership fee of £1 is non-transferrable on termination of membership

Data Protection
Personal information collected during the membership process will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Association's Privacy Notice.

Monitoring and Review
This policy will be reviewed 5 years from the latest review date, or any change in legislation, which will be the date the policy is approved by the Board of Management, or earlier if deemed appropriate. In the event that this policy is not reviewed within the above timescale, the latest approved policy will continue to apply.

Created by	S Smith/M Elder
Review Date	Aug 2026
Next Review Date	Aug 2031
Date Approved – Policy Sub Committee	Sep 2026
Date Approved - Board	Oct 2026