

Membership Policy

Version Number	Issue 2
Date Revision Complete	28 th November 2017
Policy Owner	Head of Business Services
Author	Governance & Admin Team Leader
Reason for Revision	Review of the Membership Policy has not been undertaken for several years. The previous policy did not promote open membership and therefore did not allow tenants to be members.
Data Protection	The Members register is held in line with Data Protection requirements.
Equalities Impact Assessment Is it required? Yes/No	No
Proof Read	Head of Business Services
Date Approved	29 th January 2018
Approved by	EMT
Next Review Due	January 2021
Effective Date	29 th January 2018
Internal References	Blackwood Rules Data Protection Policy
External References	
Comments	Appendix 1 – Application form

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Blackwood Homes and Care trades as Blackwood and will be referred to as this throughout this policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Blackwood is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) that owns and manages housing for social rent across Scotland. Our houses are accessible and affordable – we specialise in providing high quality housing for people with disabilities but we also provide general housing – we have houses in communities across 29 of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas. As well as being a landlord, we provide care and support, where appropriate, to our customers and to other people who have additional needs. We aim to maximise individual and personal independence and promote social inclusion. We are accountable to our all our customers (tenants and care service users) and to our members.
- 1.2 Blackwood is a Scottish Charity which is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). As a RSL, we are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and our care and support services are regulated by the Care Inspectorate.
- 1.3 Blackwood is a membership organisation. This policy describes who can apply to become a member and what the benefits and responsibilities of membership are. It also describes how Blackwood engages with and is accountable to its members. It is governed by a set of Rules (or constitution) which described the structure of Blackwood and sets out how the organisation is dependent on its members.

2. What Does Being a Member Involve?

- 2.1 Blackwood actively engages with all its customers. Scrutiny panels have been established in each of the Regions, where there are opportunities to review performance and provide feedback on Blackwood wider activities. A further opportunity on how to become involved with Blackwood is to become a member.
- 2.2 Blackwood is run by a Board which is made up of volunteers who are committed to ensuring that the organisation is run efficiently; that high quality services are provided to our customers and that the organisation is financially sound and meets all regulatory and legal requirements. Members of Blackwood elect members of the Board at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Only members of Blackwood can be elected to the Board and only members can vote in Board elections. Any member can stand for election to the Board, provided they can demonstrate that they have relevant skills, knowledge or experience to take on the responsibilities of being a Board member. Members can nominate other members for election to Blackwood’s Board. The only restriction for membership of Board is that only one person from a household can stand for Board membership.
- 2.3 Members of Blackwood are entitled to attend the AGM. At the AGM, Blackwood’s financial accounts are presented for approval and the Chair reports to members on the Board’s activities during the year.

- 2.4 All members are entitled to attend and vote at any other general meetings that are called in accordance with Blackwood's Rules. In certain circumstances, members can call for a general meeting to be held. All members have an equal vote. Blackwood will ensure that members receive sufficient notice of meetings and that information about the matters to be discussed is presented in a clear fashion. We will ensure that venues for meetings are accessible and that meetings are held at times and in locations which maximise the opportunities for members to attend.
- 2.5 From time to time, we may consult with our members about specific plans or proposals that the Board is considering.
- 2.6 Members will receive a copy of Blackwood's Annual Report, the Annual Charter Performance Report and will be invited to participate in members' events. Where appropriate members might also attend customer conferences or events. Blackwood will keep members informed about important issues affecting the organisation.
- 2.7 Members will, from time to time, be invited to take part in consultation exercises, being asked to share views on future innovation for Blackwood – perhaps through our social media site bespoke or for events such as the Blackwood Design Awards (BDA).
- 2.8 Members are expected to support Blackwood's aims, objectives and activities and to comply with our Rules.

3. Who Can Join Blackwood?

- 3.1 We are committed to developing a broad and diverse membership that reflects and supports the work that we do and the communities that we serve. Our membership is drawn from:
 - 3.1.1 **Customers:** We encourage customers – and prospective customers - to become members of Blackwood if they want to participate in a more active way in the running of Blackwood. We communicate regularly with all our customers and provide information about performance and service delivery in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter – our approach is described in our Customer Participation Policy. We also consult with customers about changes in service delivery that affect them and about rent increases. In addition, customers who are also members receive regular information about Blackwood's wider activities and are consulted about issues such as proposals to change our Rules.
 - 3.1.2 **People who have an interest in our work:** Blackwood provides housing, care and support for people with a wide range of needs. We welcome applications for membership from people who have an interest or expertise in any aspect of our work and who want to support what we do. This might be either because of personal experience or through employment or research activities. We welcome applications from people who live or work in the communities we are active in, who want to support our work and help us achieve our goals. We would also welcome applications from people who have relatives or friends who receive services from Blackwood.
 - 3.1.3 **Organisations which support our work:** Much of our work depends on partnerships with other organisations, often (but not only) in the voluntary or third sector. We welcome applications for corporate membership from organisations which share our values and want to support our activities. Corporate members will nominate an

individual to exercise their voting rights at general meetings. Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) cannot join as a group, but individual tenants who are part of the RTO can become members.

4. Promoting Membership

4.1 We will ensure that all new customers are provided with information on membership. We will ensure that our communication methods support members and potential members to participate effectively and we will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity. We will highlight membership opportunities on our website and in our regular newsletters and reports. We will advertise membership opportunities in all our existing and new developments and wherever we provide services.

5. Register of Members

5.1 We will maintain a register of members in accordance with our Rules. Anyone may inspect our summary membership register which will show the names of all shareholding members who have given consent (but not the addresses of individual members). New members will have their names added to the Register within seven days of their application being approved.

5.2 New members completing the application form should be aware that they are in turn providing their consent to their details being made available to anyone who requests to inspect our summary membership register.

6. Applications for Membership

6.1 Applicants must be aged sixteen or over. Applications for membership must be made using the Blackwood membership application form and be accompanied by payment of £1. Applications must be submitted to the Secretary and all applications must be approved by the Board before being recorded in the Membership Register.

6.2 Please note, in accordance with Data Protection Regulations, the information submitted on the application form will only be used for the purposes of Membership of Blackwood, in accordance with this policy. Information submitted will not be passed on to any third party, or be used for any other purpose in Blackwood without the express permission of the applicant.

6.3 We will not admit into membership any individual or body which has or is likely to have any interest which conflicts with those of Blackwood. We will also not admit anyone where it is not in the interest of Blackwood to do so in line with our policies and procedures. In the event of an application being received from an individual or corporate body which, in the opinion of the Board, does not meet the terms of this policy, the Board may refuse the application and, within seven days, return the £1 paid by the applicant. An applicant may ask the Board to review its decision to refuse their membership application by writing to the Secretary within seven days – if making a written request for review is difficult for the applicant, the Secretary may agree to the submission of the review request in an alternative way. Reviews will be considered by the Board, whose decision will be final.

6.4 Blackwood will not consider or approve any membership applications during the fourteen days preceding the AGM or any other general meeting of the membership.

6.5 Former employees of Blackwood are eligible to apply for membership. Former employees are not eligible to apply for Board membership within 24 months of

leaving the organisation. Any applications received from former employees for Board membership will be considered under the Board Recruitment and Succession Policy.

7. Equalities and Diversity

7.1 We welcome and encourage applications for membership from all sectors of society. Blackwood will monitor applications for membership as part of our commitment to promoting equalities and diversity. We may carry out activities to promote membership to specific groups or communities that the Board identifies as being under-represented.

8. Ending Membership

8.1 Members can end their membership at any time by writing to the Secretary. Membership can also be ended in accordance with Blackwood's Rules if:

- A member fails to attend or submit apologies for 5 consecutive AGMs or;
- A member is found to have breached Blackwood's Rules or;
- A member is found to have acted in a way that could be seen to be damaging to Blackwood or which brings Blackwood into disrepute.

8.2 Members who resign their membership or have their membership ended in accordance with the Rules will not be entitled to receive a refund of their £1 share.

8.3 Former members whose membership has been ended in accordance with Rule 11 will not be eligible to make an application to re-join Blackwood or any of its associated organisations or companies.

**Application for Membership of
Blackwood Homes and Care**

Name of Applicant	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	

Please provide a short paragraph on why you wish to become a Member of Blackwood.

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By signing this form, I hereby confirm my willingness to be considered as a member of Blackwood Homes and Care. I also confirm that I have read and understood Blackwood's Membership Policy and that my application confirms my willingness to support the work of the Board.

Signature	
Date	

Please return your completed form along with the £1 membership fee to the Secretary, Blackwood, 160 Dundee Street, Edinburgh, EH11 1DQ