



LINK GROUP
MEMBERSHIP POLICY

APPROVED: MARCH 2008

EFFECTIVE DATE: 19TH MARCH 2008

REVIEW DATE: MARCH 2013

POLICY: MEMBERSHIP**1. INTRODUCTION**

Link Group Limited (“Link”) is the parent organisation for a number of wholly-owned subsidiaries which provide housing, care & support, factoring, regeneration and development services. Link owns the housing stock and provides core services to the subsidiaries.

Link is an Industrial & Provident Society, a Scottish Charity and a Registered Social Landlord.

This policy relates to membership of Link only. Subsidiaries are managed by boards whose members are appointed by Link.

The relationship of Link with its subsidiaries is determined in separate Independence Agreements. Among other functions Link acts as Company Secretary for the subsidiaries. The Board of Link has the power to appoint Board Members to fill vacancies on the boards of subsidiaries between annual general meetings. In terms of the Independence Agreements appointments to the subsidiary boards, if proposed by the subsidiary, must be referred to Link for approval

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that:

- Link complies with legislative requirements
- Membership of Link is available to all interested parties
- The application process and requirements of membership are clear

3. PRINCIPLES

Membership of Link is open to any individual

- who is or may be affected by its activities and/or
- who is committed to Link's overall objectives & values, and to developing, promoting and implementing them.

Membership is open to representatives of partner organisations with which Link or any of the subsidiaries operates, such as tenants', residents' and proprietors' associations, which meet the requirements above. Partner organisations must also demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity and the removal of all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

4. APPROACH AND METHOD

4.1 PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Link wishes to encourage individuals from the communities, groups and partners with which Link works to become members.

Link therefore particularly welcomes applications from:

- tenants of properties managed by subsidiaries
- service users of Link subsidiaries
- residents of the areas within which Link operates
- people who can make a positive contribution based on their community, business or professional experience or skills
- members of tenants', residents' and proprietors' associations operating in neighbourhoods where Link manages properties

Link and its subsidiaries are committed to providing tenants & service users with every opportunity and encouragement to take part in its activities. Link Housing Association has a Tenant Participation Strategy as a key feature of its housing management service. LinkLiving operates a separate policy for involving service users in the review and development of its policies and practice. Linkwide encourages Group tenants and members of the neighbouring communities to become involved in wider action projects.

4.2 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for membership may be made direct to Link or to any subsidiary. If made to a subsidiary, the board of that subsidiary will consider the application. The board may recommend applications to the Link Board for approval, or may reject applications should it be satisfied that any of the conditions of membership contained in this policy statement have not been met. Direct applications will be referred by the Secretary to the Link Board for consideration.

Applications must be accompanied by a fee of £1, and if successful a certificate of membership will be issued.

4.3 CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of Link will cease when a member:

- resigns by giving written notice to the Chair, Chief Executive, or Secretary
- becomes a Link employee or of any other organisation within the Group
- is expelled in accordance with the Rules
- changes address, but does not notify Link of the new address
- dies

The £1 membership is not refundable on termination of membership.

4.4 MEMBERS' REGISTER

A general register of members of Link is maintained by the Company Secretary. The register is available to the public on request, and contains members' names and addresses.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Link Group Board, in its formal approval of the policy, acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation and monitoring of this policy lies with the Directors and Managers of Link. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is applied as instructed.

The policy will be implemented through:

- Devising procedures for compliance with the policy
- Initiating staff training sessions to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations
- Monitoring adherence to policy requirements

6. MONITORING, PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The following areas will be subject to monitoring on a continuing basis:

- Provision of training to staff
- The need for review of procedures

These areas will be monitored by the Senior Management Group who will report to the Link Group Board as required.

Audits of policy compliance may be conducted by the Internal Auditor and/or the Strategy, Planning & Risk Manager. The results of audits will be reported to the Audit Committee.

7. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

Complaints and appeals about Link's operation of this policy will be processed by Link's Chief Executive. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the case will be referred to the Chair of the Link Group Board, or to any sub-committee specifically delegated to review the appeal. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, it may be possible to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Summary reports of complaints which are disposed of by the Chief Executive will be made at least annually to the Group Board.

8. POLICY AVAILABILITY

This policy is available on the Link Group website, to the Board on the Link Group extranet and to staff on the Link Group intranet.

Copies are also available on request and free of charge from Link. A summary of this policy can be made available in a number of other languages and other forms if required.

9. POLICY REVIEW

Link undertakes to review this policy regularly with regard to:

- applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance
- changes in the organisation
- continued best practice.

10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The operation of this policy will always be in accordance with Link Group's Policy on Equality & Diversity.

Effective Date	Review Due	Approved by
March 2008	March 2013	Link Group Board