

The review of this policy has been deferred and it remains current.
October 2019



Membership Policy

Approval date – November 2015
Review date – November 2018

This policy applies to

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Link Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Living | <input type="checkbox"/> Link Property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horizon | <input type="checkbox"/> Larkfield | <input type="checkbox"/> West Highland | <input type="checkbox"/> Lintel Trust |

Policy Summary

This policy outlines the requirements to become a Link member, the application process and the cessation of membership.

Equalities

This policy fully complies with Link's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Privacy

This policy complies with Link's Data Protection Policy.

Policy Owner

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Approved by

Link Group Board

1. INTRODUCTION

Link Group Limited [Link] is the parent organisation of 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 a Co-operate and Community Benefits Society, a Scottish Charity and is a Registered Social Landlord [RSL].

The policy relates to membership of Link only. RSL subsidiaries have their own membership policies. Non-RSL subsidiaries are managed by Board whose members are appointed by Link.

2. PRINCIPLES

Membership of Link is open to any individual who:

- Is, or may be, affected by its activities and/ or;
- Is committed to Link's overall objectives and 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. Partner organisations must also demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity and the removal of all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

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

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 and service users with every opportunity and encouragement to take part in its activities. Link 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.

4.2 Application Process

Applications for membership may be made direct to Link or through any subsidiary. The Board may reject applications should it be satisfied that any of the conditions for membership contained in this policy statement have not been met. 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 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 fee is not refundable on termination of membership.

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 of this policy lies with the appropriate directors and managers of the Link group of companies. All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed.

The policy will be implemented using the following approaches:

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

5. MONITORING, PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The following areas will be subject to monitoring:

- Risk management
- Provision of training and/ or information to staff

- Compliance with policy requirements and procedures

These will be monitored by appropriate managers within each company and/ or function, and reported to the relevant director. If any significant issues of concern arise, these will be dealt with by the director who will report such matters to his/ her Board.

Any matter which demonstrates a serious failure of internal controls should also be reported immediately to the Chief Executive.

6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Link welcomes complaints and positive feedback, both of which provide information which helps us to improve our services. We use a complaints handling procedure (CHP) developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The CHP allows for most complaints to be resolved by front line staff within a five day limit (first stage), or if the complaint is complex, a detailed investigation will be made by a manager within a 20 day limit (second stage). At the end of the second stage our response will be made by a director. If the customer remains dissatisfied he/ she may then refer the matter to the SPSO.

The SPSO does not normally review complaints about our factoring service. If a factoring customer is dissatisfied after using the CHP, the complaint may be referred to the Homeowner Housing Panel.

Anyone receiving care or support service from us has the right to complain either direct to the Care Inspectorate or to us.

At each stage Link will advise the customer how the complaint should be taken forward, and advise which agency would be most appropriate to consider the case.

7. POLICY AVAILABILITY

This policy is available on request free of charge from Link. A summary of this policy can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

8. POLICY REVIEW

Link undertakes to review this policy regularly, at least every three years, with regard to:

- Applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance
- Changes in the organisation
- Continued best practice