

Membership Policy

Version Number	3
Date Revision Complete	January 2025
Department	Governance & Transformation
Author	Head of Governance & Transformation
Reason for Policy creation/revision	Regular scheduled review
Data Protection Impact	DP considered. Member's data will be treated in accordance with our DP Policy and the membership register will be kept in line with our Rules.
Equalities Impact	No EIA required - existing policy with minimal changes. Membership is freely open to all customers of Hanover.
Proofread by	Strategic Finance Director
Date Approved	23 January 2025
Approved by	Board
Next Review Due	January 2028
Audience – Training & Awareness Approach	Policy will be briefed out to managers and the website section on Membership updated to reflect.
Effective Date	29 th January 2018
Internal References	Hanover Rules Data Protection Policy
External References	SHR Regulatory Framework
Comments	



MEMBERSHIP POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd, known as Hanover, is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) that provides and manages a range of housing and services, mainly for older people. We currently manage more than 4,600 homes throughout Scotland. We provide a range of housing and tenure types to meet the different support needs of older people, allowing them to retain their independence within a local community and enjoy as much privacy or company as they wish.
- 1.2 Hanover is a Scottish Charity which is registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). As a landlord, we are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and our care and support services are regulated by the Care Inspectorate.
- 1.3 Hanover 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 Hanover engages with and is accountable to its members. It is governed by a set of Rules (or constitution) which described the structure of Hanover and sets out how the organisation is dependent on its members.
- 1.4 Our Membership Policy also ensures that our process for Membership is compliant with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Regulatory Framework.

2. What Does Being a Member Involve?

- 2.1 Hanover actively engages with all its customers. Hanover provides a variety of opportunities for customers to influence our decision-making and be actively involved as per our Customer Engagement Plan. These are designed around customer needs and preferences, using a codesign framework to ensure meaningful participation. A further opportunity on how to become involved with Hanover is to become a member.
- 2.2 Hanover 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 in good financial health and meets all regulatory and legal requirements. Members of Hanover elect members of the Board at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Only members of Hanover 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 Hanover'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 Hanover are entitled to attend the AGM. At the AGM, Hanover's financial statements are presented for approval and the Chair reports to members on the Board's activities during the year. The Chief Executive also reports on key highlights of the year, particularly in relation to our Strategy and Business Plan.
- 2.4 All members are entitled to attend and vote at any other general meetings that are called in accordance with Hanover's Rules. In certain circumstances, members can call for a special general meeting to be held. All members have an equal vote. Hanover 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 or electronic link to Hanover's Annual Report, which will include an update on Hanover's Performance as submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and will be invited to participate in members' events. Where appropriate members might also attend customer conferences or events. Hanover 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 specific topics for Hanover.
- 2.8 Members are expected to support Hanover's aims, objectives, and activities and to comply with our Rules.

3. Who Can Join Hanover as a Member?

- 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 Hanover if they want to participate in a more active way in the running of Hanover. 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 Engagement Plan. 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 Hanover'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:** Hanover provides housing and services 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 Hanover.
 - 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 Hanover membership application form (found on the website) and be accompanied by payment of £1. Applications must be submitted to the Secretary and can be done in 2 ways:
- By sending in an application via post to our Head Office (address can be found on our website)
 - By sending in an application to the company secretary email address – companysecretary@hanover.scot
- 6.2 All applicants must confirm on the application form that they have read and will comply with the Membership Policy. All applications must be approved by the Board before being recorded in the Membership Register.
- 6.3 Please note, in accordance with Data Protection Regulations, as outlined in our Data Protection Policy, the information submitted on the application form will only be used for the purposes of Membership of Hanover, in accordance with this policy. Information submitted will not be passed on to any third party or be used for any other purpose in Hanover without the express permission of the applicant.
- 6.4 We will not admit into membership any individual or body which has or is likely to have any interest which conflicts with those of Hanover. We will also not admit anyone where it is not in the interest of Hanover 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.
- 6.5 Hanover will not consider or approve any membership applications during the fourteen days preceding the AGM or any other general meeting of the membership.
- 6.6 Former employees of Hanover are eligible to apply for membership. Former employees are not eligible to apply for Board membership within 24 months of leaving the organisation.

7. Equalities and Diversity

- 7.1 We welcome and encourage applications for membership from all sectors of society. Hanover 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 Hanover's Rules if:

- A member fails to attend or submit apologies for 5 consecutive AGMs or;
- A member is found to have breached Hanover's Rules or;
- A member is found to have acted in a way that could be seen to be damaging to Hanover, or which brings Hanover 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 Hanover or any of its associated organisations or companies.