



Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

Policy name	Membership
Policy category	Corporate (Governance)
Policy number	CS20
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This review	September 2023
Next review	September 2026
Equalities impact assessment required	No
Links to other documents	1. Rules of the Association
Consultation	n/a

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd (BHA) is a membership organisation and seeks both to recruit as member, individuals with an interest in the work of the organisation and to make effective use of their skills, views and experience. Members of the Association are entitled to vote at General Meetings of the Association, to seek election to the Board and to vote in such elections. The formal requirements and procedures associated with membership are set out in our Rules.
- 1.2 We are a membership organisation and aim to attract people from our customers, the groups, and communities we serve to become members of the association. The Association seeks to establish a wide and active membership.
- 1.3 Members of the Association are those individuals or organisations who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members. No member can hold more than one share. Membership is open to organisations as well as to individuals. 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 the Association. A person cannot apply for membership if he/she is under the age of 16.
- 1.4 The aim of this Policy is to promote good governance of the Association and to ensure the proper accountability of our Board by having a membership that is both open and widely reflects the communities that we serve.

2. PROMOTION AND PARTICIPATION OF OUR MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The Association will promote membership and encourage participation of members by circulating information on membership to customers, our service users, local community and representative groups and housing advice agencies. Information on membership will be disseminated through our local media, annual report, newsletters, customer meetings, surveys, MyBHA Portal and social media.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 Where possible, we will seek to ensure that the Association has a broad-based membership which reflects its constitution and the communities it serves. Our membership is an important means of enhancing and demonstrating our accountability to the local communities where we operate. We will actively promote membership through appropriate channels as a way of providing opportunities for interested parties to play an active part in the affairs of the organisation. We will seek to ensure that no individual or group is excluded from access to membership in fulfilment of our equality objectives. The list of members will be updated annually prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.2 We will attempt to ensure a wide representation in our membership from the communities we serve. We will particularly welcome applications from Tenants, Tenants Associations, and community groups.
- 3.3 We will seek to ensure that all sections of the community are represented in the membership, particularly those which are currently underrepresented. We will therefore particularly welcome applications from:
 - Individuals with direct or indirect experience of disability.

- Members of underrepresented groups or communities.
- Younger people.

3.4 We will not only encourage wide membership but also an active, informed, and participative membership. We will therefore:

- Publicise general meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting.
- Circulate information to members so they can make informed decisions at general meetings.
- Make every effort to hold general meetings at times and at locations suitable for the membership.
- Keep members informed on all major developments affecting our business and our services.
- Make a copy of our annual report and our audited accounts available to all our members.
- Provide information, support and training to tenant members who are interested in becoming more actively involved in decision making, in accordance with our Customer Engagement Strategy.
- Promote the opportunities for members to seek election to the Association's Board, in line with our Policy and Procedures on Recruitment of Board Members.

4. CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Association seeks to ensure broad representation in our membership of the groups and communities that we serve. Membership of the Association can come from the following categories:

- Tenants of the Association.
- Service Users of the Association.
- Other persons who support the objects of the Association.
- Organisations sympathetic to the objects of the Association.

4.2 Bridgewater Housing Association seeks to ensure that its membership reflects the communities it serves and that all sections of the communities are represented. Membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

4.3 The Association also seeks to recruit as members those with a demonstrable interest in the work of Association and in its governance. To this end, the Association welcomes applications from those with experience or interest in:

- Housing management
- Development and asset management
- Business growth and diversification
- Financial and Business management
- Governance
- Health and social care issues
- Working in the local community
- ICT and social media

5. APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 To apply for membership you must be 16 or over. Applicants should complete a membership form. The completed form should be sent with £1.00 to the Company Secretary at our registered office, Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd, India of Inchinnan, Greenock Road, Inchinnan, PA4 9LH or can be e-mailed to admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk or can be sent from the MyBHA Portal if you are a tenant or owner.
- 5.2 Applications for membership shall be considered by the Governing Board as soon as reasonably practicable after its receipt by the Association. An application for membership will not be considered by the Board within the period of fourteen days before the date of a general meeting. The Board has the power in its absolute discretion to accept or reject the application.
- 5.3 If the Board approves an application, membership of the Association is immediate, and the name and other details of the new member will be included in the Register of Members within seven working days. You will then be issued one share in the Association. No member can hold more than one share in the Association.
- 5.4 Whilst it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Board has the absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership, and the following shall constitute grounds for refusal of an application for membership: -
- Where membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies.
 - Where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest, may adversely affect the work of the Association.
 - Where the Board considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interest of the Association.
 - If the applicant is a current member of staff or is a former staff whose leaving date is within 12 months of the application, as this is a conflict of interest.
- 5.5 Where an application is unsuccessful a statement of the reasons for refusal will be given and the £1 fee refunded.
- 5.6 If a member changes their address, they must let the Association know by writing to the Secretary at our main, registered office within three months. This requirement does not apply if you are a tenant of the Association and have moved home by transferring your tenancy to another property owned and managed by the Association.

6. MEMBER PARTICIPATION

- 6.1 The Association wishes to ensure its members are informed and can actively participate in the organisation. To this end the Association will:
- Invite members to participate at general meetings in accordance with our Rules.
 - Where information is particular format or language is required, the Association will provide or assist in the provision of this.
 - Make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for membership, ensuring accessibility for all to attend.
 - Keep members informed of all major developments affecting the Association through the issue of Newsletters, MyBHA Portal, social media and our Annual Report.
 - Actively promote the opportunity that exists, through election, for serving on the Board.

7. ENDING MEMBERSHIP

7.1 Membership of the Association will end, and the Board will cancel your share and record the ending of your membership in the Register of Members if:

6.1.1 The member resigns giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary at our main registered office.

6.1.2 The Board reasonably believes that the member has failed to tell the association of a change of address as required by our Rules.

6.1.3 For five annual general meetings in a row, the member has not attended, submitted apologies, exercised a postal vote, or appointed a representative to attend and vote on your behalf by proxy.

6.1.4 The Association receives a complaint about a member's behaviour and two-thirds of the members voting at a special general meeting agree to end the membership. The following conditions apply to this procedure:

- The complaint must be in writing and must relate to behaviour which could harm the interests of the Association.
- The Secretary must notify the member of the complaint in writing not less than one calendar month before the meeting takes place.
- The notice of the special general meeting will give details of the business for which the meeting is being called.
- The member will be called to answer the complaint at the meeting. The members present will consider the evidence supporting the complaint and any evidence the member decides to introduce
- The members can vote in person or through a representative by proxy.
- If the member receives proper notice but does not go to the meeting without providing a good reason, the meeting will go ahead without the member and the Members will be entitled to vote to end the individual membership.

7.2 If the membership is ended in accordance with the above, the member will immediately cease to be a member from the date that the resolution to end the membership was passed and any further application for membership by that individual member will need to be approved by two-thirds of the Members voting at a general meeting.

8. REPRESENTING AN ORGANISATION

8.1 An organisation which is a member is free to nominate any person it considers suitable as its representative to the Association. That person will represent all of the organisation's rights and powers at general meetings.

8.2 To confirm the identity of a representative, the organisation must send the Association a copy of the authorisation or appointment of an individual as a representative. This should be signed by a Director, Secretary, or authorized signatory of the organisation which signature must be witnessed, or in the case of a local authority, by the Chief Executive, or properly authorised Officer of the local authority.

- 8.3 An organisation can change the identity of the person entitled to represent that organisation at any time by confirming the identity of the new representative in terms of the Association's Rules and withdrawing the authority of the original representative.
- 8.4 If you are a representative of an organisation which is a member, you cannot be a member as an individual yourself. If you are already a member as an individual when you start to represent an organisation which is a member, the Association will suspend your membership as an individual, until such time as you are no longer a representative of an organisation which is a member.

9. SHARES

- 9.1 The share capital of the Association will be raised by issuing one-pound share to members. Shares cannot be held jointly. Joint tenants of the Association may each become individual members. There is no interest, dividend, or bonus payable on shares.

10. TRANSFERRING SHARES

- 10.1 Members cannot sell their share, but can transfer the share if the Board agrees.
- 10.2 If members die or end membership or have membership ended or are a representative of an organisation which no longer exists, the Board will cancel the share (except in where membership is transferred in accordance with our Rules in the following paragraph) and the value of the shares will then belong to the Association.
- 10.3 Members can nominate the person to whom the Association must transfer a share in the Association when a member dies, as long as the person nominated is eligible to become a member under the Association's rules and membership policy. On being notified of the member's death, the Board shall transfer or pay the full value of the share to the person identified to take the transfer.
- 10.4 If a member dies or becomes bankrupt and the member's personal representative or trustee in bankruptcy seeks to claim your share, the Board will transfer or pay the value of your share in terms of the instructions provided by the representative or trustee.

11. PRIVACY

- 11.1 The Member's details will be kept in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Customer Privacy Notice. In accordance with our Rules and in accordance with the regulations on Data Subject Access Requests, the member can view their own data held on our main Register. A second register with names, addresses and start/end date of membership is available for a member to view within 7 days of a request. The member can view in the office only and with the supervision of a member of staff.

12. POLICY AVAILABILITY

- 12.1 This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio, or other non-written format and in a variety of languages, on request.

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, operational requirements, or board member feedback.