

Membership Policy

Approved on 23 March 2023

Objective of the Policy

This policy aims to contribute to the good governance of Cairn and to ensure the proper accountability of its Board of Management by having a membership which is as wide as possible, subject to the criteria detailed below. It is intended that members should be empowered to participate in, and contribute to, the activities of Cairn.

Details of Membership

Cairn will provide information and advice regarding membership through newsletters and/or public advertisements, scheme visits and meetings. Where appropriate, it will also disseminate promotional material to relevant organisations and individuals with a background in an appropriately related profession or discipline, or with a community interest in Cairn.

Membership Criteria

As a national housing association, Cairn seeks a geographically balanced representative membership, with no particular group having an undue influence. It will comprise persons who have, in a personal or professional capacity, the requisite knowledge, skills and experience, or a community interest in the social housing sector, appropriate to achieving our approved business objective of being a leading and innovative provider of high quality housing, care and support services in Scotland.

We are keen to ensure that its membership is representative of the communities it serves. Therefore it welcomes applications for membership from:

- Tenants of Cairn and persons occupying a property, owned by us, by virtue of an occupancy agreement and;
- Persons who can make an active contribution to Cairn's activities

Former members of staff may apply for membership, but only after the expiry of 2 years from the date they left Cairn's employment to allow sufficient time for conflicts of interest to be avoided.

We seek to achieve equality of opportunity and to this end membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origins, gender, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

We welcome applications for membership from those who have in a personal or professional capacity experience of or a particular interest in:

- housing, social work and health
- finance, the law, business and commerce
- voluntary organisations and academic institutions

Membership is open to nominees of unincorporated bodies, societies, companies and local authorities. A corporate body may appoint a deputy to exercise its rights and powers at any general meeting.

Members' Responsibilities

The primary role of the member is to contribute to the good governance of Cairn and to ensure that the Board is accountable for its acts or omissions. Members' powers are usually exercised at general meetings, namely:

- the receipt of the annual accounts and balance sheet
- the appointment of the Auditor
- the election of the Board
- the application of surpluses for particular purposes
- amendment of the rules and dissolution of Cairn

In addition, the requisite number of members may apply to the Financial Services Authority by reference to the Scottish Housing Regulator to seek to:

- appoint an accountant or actuary to inspect Cairn's books
- appoint an Inspector to report on the affairs of Cairn
- or, by notice to the Secretary, call a Special General Meeting.

Member Participation

Members are entitled to be present and vote at any General Meeting of Cairn. Members are given at least 14 days' notice of such meetings. Members receive a copy of Cairn's annual report and accounts. Members are entitled to receive, on request, a copy of the annual return to the FCA.

Applications for Membership

An application form can be obtained from the Secretary of Cairn at the address below. Completed applications should be forwarded to the Secretary at the same address, together with £1. Following receipt, every application for membership will be considered by the Board at its next meeting. To enable us to monitor the equality and diversity of Cairn membership it would be helpful if you could also return the E&D Monitoring form along with your application, thank you.

An application for membership will only be approved where, at the Board's sole discretion, an applicant meets the criteria set out above and where admission to membership is within Cairn's rules and would advance our objective of having a balanced and representative membership, such that no particular group has undue influence. A tenant of Cairn, and persons occupying a property owned by Cairn, by virtue of an occupancy agreement, applying for membership will normally be considered to have the relevant community interest.

If the application is approved the applicant will be advised in writing within 14 days of the date of the decision. At the same time the applicant will receive a share certificate, a copy of our rules and details of how members can participate in the life of Cairn.

Where an application is unsuccessful, a written statement of the reasons for refusal will be given to the applicant within 14 days of the date of the decision. An applicant may appeal against the decision within 14 days of receipt of the statement of reasons by notice in writing to the Secretary of Cairn. In exceptional circumstances, the Board at its discretion may consider an appeal that is not in writing. The Board will consider the appeal at its next meeting or as soon thereafter as is practicable. Intimation of the Board's final decision, together with a written statement of reasons for refusal if relevant, will be given to the applicant within 14 days of the date of the final decision.

Termination of Membership

A Member will cease to be a Member if he or she:

- dies; or
- in the case of a body corporate, ceases to be a body corporate; or
- is expelled; or
- withdraws from Cairn; or
- in the case of a nominee of an unincorporated body, transfers his or her share to another nominee; or
- fails to attend 5 consecutive AGMs not having presented apologies; or
- fails to intimate a change of address as set out in Rule 10 of Cairn's approved Rules,

The £1 membership fee will not be refundable on termination of membership but will become the property of Cairn.

Review of Policy

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored regularly by the Board, to ensure that the objectives are being met. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years.