

Servite Housing Association

Membership Policy

Policy Guardian:	Chief Executive
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Diversity compliant:	Yes
Data Protection compliant:	Yes
Health & Safety compliant:	N/A

Introduction

Servite Housing Association (“Servite”) seeks as broad and as representative a membership across its area of operations as it can secure. Tenants and other local people in the area with an interest in our work are encouraged to become members of Servite. Local community groups and organisations also have a role to play as members. The contribution of local people is invaluable in terms of their skills and local knowledge. Servite will publicise separately other informal mechanisms for the involvement and participation of local people in its management and work.

Servite aims to provide high quality housing and housing services for the community in the area within which it works and this Membership Policy aims to reflect this.

This policy sets out how applications for membership of Servite will be dealt with by our Corporate Services Department and criteria for approval by the Management Committee. The policy complies with Data Protection legislation. It relates to regulatory Performance Standards: Guiding Standards GS 1.2, GS 2.1 and GS 2.2.

Membership

Those people entitled to join Servite are detailed in this section. Membership of the organisation is reflected in the membership of the Management Committee, which is covered by a separate policy.

Servite’s membership policy is governed by the provisions of the Association’s rules (rules 7 – 14) Those eligible to join include people whose only or principal home is within Servite’s area of operation and/or who have an interest in our work.

There are two main restrictions attached to membership:

- (a) No more than two persons per household may be members of Servite at one time. This includes owner occupiers and people in private rented accommodation. Individuals representing an organisation which is a member of Servite may not be individual members in their own right. Representatives of organisations who are already individual members will have their individual membership suspended whilst they represent the organisation
- (b) Members or representatives of member organisations should be 18 years of age or over, unless they are a tenant of Servite in which case they may become a member or a representative at the age of 16.

Promotion of Membership

Servite will aim to promote membership to people and organisations in the following ways:

- a) Encouraging new tenants to join at the point when they sign their tenancy agreement.
- b) Producing leaflets about the organisation that encourage membership .
- c) Liaising with tenants and residents’ organisations, where Servite has an interest, to encourage membership.
- d) Promoting membership in the organisation’s regular Newsletter
- e) Promoting Servite in the local media.

f) Appealing to or inviting applications from individuals with specific occupational skills/backgrounds to meet skill gaps. For example, (but not exclusively) we would welcome applications from those with skills or experience in:

- Financial Management
- Housing Management
- Building and Maintenance
- Community Care Issues
- Working in the Local Community
- Business strategy or management skills
- Legal expertise
- Human Resources
- Press/Media or public relations

Equality of Opportunity

Servite will strive to ensure its membership reflects the communities it serves.

Membership will be open to all those entitled to join regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, age and sexuality.

Procedure for Applying for Membership

Individuals or organisations should apply to join as members using the Membership Application form, which should be completed and returned to the registered office, accompanied by the sum of £1.00.

Applications for membership will be considered by the Committee and each application will be considered on its own merits. Applications submitted will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee following receipt. If an application is received less than seven days before the next scheduled Committee meeting, it will be up to the Committee to decide whether they consider the application at that meeting. If it is not considered, the application will be considered at the next subsequent meeting.

No applications for membership will be considered within the 14 days preceeding the date of a general meeting of the organisation.

Approval of Membership

If an application for membership has been approved by the Committee, the member will be informed in writing. Their name will be included in the Register of Members within seven working days of the meeting.

Upon having their membership approved, members will receive:

- A share certificate
- A copy of Servite's Rules
- A letter highlighting Members' obligations to the organisation
- Details of how members may stand for the Committee
- A copy of the latest Annual Report

- A copy of the latest Newsletter, and any other material the organisation feels will be useful for a new member.

During the period of membership a member of Servite should expect to receive:

- Regular Newsletters
- The Annual Report
- The Annual Accounts
- Invitations to key events
- Invitations to the Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meetings, which will be sent 14 days in advance.

Members attending Annual or Special General Meetings are entitled to vote in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Rules. Members are entitled to stand for election to the Committee and to nominate and vote in the election of Committee Members.

If an application for membership has been unsuccessful, the applicant will be informed in writing giving the reasons for the refusal and the money returned along with the application. This will be done within 10 working days, of the decision being made. Membership will only be refused in exceptional circumstances, as long as the application is made in accordance with the organisation's rules. The Committee however, reserves the right to refuse membership should they consider it in the interests of Servite to do so. A full record will be kept of all occasions when membership has been refused.

Reasons for membership refusal might include where Servite believes the applicant has a conflict of interest or where a person has acted and continues to act in a way that is contrary to the interests of the organisation.

Appeals

A person whose application for membership has been refused may appeal the decision.

Appeals should be made in writing and state if a personal hearing is being requested. Appeals should be made within 10 working days of the applicant being informed of the refusal of the application for membership.

At the appeal, the appellant may be accompanied by an individual of choice. Such person will have the right to speak on behalf of the appellant. The appellant should state the reasons why the application for membership should be reconsidered. Appeals will be heard by a small panel of the Committee and their decision will be final.

Appellants will be informed of the outcome of the decision of the Appeals Panel in writing, within 14 working days of the appeal being heard.

If the appellant has been unsuccessful, no further application for membership from that person will be considered for a period of 12 months or other period of time as may be determined by the Committee. An applicant will be entitled to reapply at that time and the application will be considered afresh.

Should an appellant remain aggrieved at the refusal of the application, a complaint can be made to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh EH3 0BR

TELEPHONE
0800 377 7330

FAX
0800 377 7331

TEXT
0790 049 4372

EMAIL
ask@spsso.org.uk

Register of Members

Servite will maintain a register of members in accordance with its Rules. The register will list the name, address, date of membership, and membership number of each member.

A second copy of the register will be available for inspection by any member or person with an interest in the funds of the organisation.

A request to inspect the register must be in writing sent to Servite's Secretary, stating the reasons for inspection. The person requesting the inspection will be informed in writing if the request has been granted, and specifying the arrangements for the inspection. The inspection itself will take place in Servite's offices, at a mutually convenient time and date, with staff in attendance.

Ending Membership

A member's membership of Servite may be brought to an end in the following ways:

- (a) Writing to the Secretary at the registered office giving one month's notice of intention to resign,
- (b) The committee being satisfied that a member has failed to inform the organisation of a change of address within three months of moving.
- (c) If the member has failed to attend or submit apologies for five Annual General Meetings.
- (d) If the member has ceased to fulfil the membership criteria
- (e) If as a result of a complaint, two-thirds of the members vote at a Special General Meeting to expel the member

Expulsion under clauses (b) and (c) above will not be effected until the Committee has made all reasonable endeavours to trace the defaulting member and/or to ascertain the reason for his non attendance at Annual General Meetings.

If the Committee is satisfied that the defaulting Member has failed to advise of change of address or to attend or submit apologies for five Annual General Meetings for reasons considered by the Committee as excusable then the membership of the defaulting Member will not be brought to an end.

Examples of what might be "excusable" are:-

- Failure of Servite to serve notice at the correct address according to its records.
- Failure of the administration by Servite in any way.
- If the Committee is satisfied that the Member has not understood his obligations in regard to these matters.

This list is illustrative only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Monitoring

Servite will collate in April of each year membership data to ascertain whether the membership is representative of the communities we serve and the route by which membership was requested. The Committee will be presented with and consider a report on the membership data and decide upon any action to increase membership and/or encourage representation from specific parts of the community.

Data Protection

Servite regard privacy as important and any personal information given to us will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Any information provided will only be used for the reasons specified, and it will not be shared with any third party without consent unless required by law.

Servite Housing Association Ltd

Application for Membership

Servite Housing Association (Servite) is an Industrial and Provident Society registered with the Financial Services Authority and is Registered with Communities Scotland. Servite is also a registered charity with Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Servite seeks members from across all sections of the community in which it operates.

Membership is open to members of the public whose main or principal home is within our area of operation and/or who have an interest in our work. Applicants must be aged 18 years or over, unless they are Servite tenants, in which case they may apply at the age of 16 and above.

To apply for membership, fill in the box below and send it with £1.00 to the Secretary at the Registered Office. Applications will be considered by the Management Committee.

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NAME	_____
ADDRESS	_____ _____
TELEPHONE	_____ E-MAIL
DATE OF BIRTH	_____
I hereby apply to become a member of Servite Housing Association. I enclose the sum of £1.00.	

Completion of the undernoted section would be appreciated. The information is required for statistical purposes to monitor whether the organisation membership is representative. Completion will not affect consideration of your application.

AGE: _____

ETHNICITY: *Please enter appropriate number
See over for Code numbers*

REGISTERED DISABLED: YES/NO

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF DISABLED: YES/NO

EMPLOYMENT: _____

VOLUNTARY WORK EXPERIENCE: _____

DATE: _____

How did you become aware that you are entitled to become a member of (Organisation) – Please Tick

- Through a member of staff
- On Tenancy Sign-up
- Through a public meeting
- From the organisation's newsletter or other publication
- Other

ETHNIC ORIGIN - How would you describe your ethnic origin?

	Code
Black – Caribbean	1
Black – African	2
Black – Other	3
Indian	4
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	7
White	8
None of the above	9

Servite Housing Association Membership – Change of Circumstances

Please complete this form and send it to the organisation's registered address if your circumstances are to change in a way that will affect your membership.

Name: _____

Date Change Effective From: _____

Address _____

Membership No: _____ **Certificate No:** _____

Reason for Change of Circumstances:

Change of address

Wish to resign membership

Forwarding Address: _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Dear Member,

MEMBERSHIP OF SERVITE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Following your recent application to Servite Housing Association I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted into the organisation's membership.

Please find enclosed with this letter the following:

- A share certificate
- A copy of Servite's Rules
- Details of how members may stand for the Committee
- A copy of the latest Annual Report
- A copy of the last set of Annual Accounts
- A copy of the latest Newsletter.

The share certificate is proof of your membership, subject to any conditions laid down in our Rules, a copy of which are enclosed. Please keep your membership certificate in a safe place as you may be asked to present it at General Meetings and you may have to quote your membership number in correspondence with us.

Servite Housing Association is keen to keep in touch with our members and involve you with our work. We will send you regular newsletters and copies of our Annual Report and Annual Accounts, as well as inviting you to General Meetings, in which you are entitled to take part and vote.

Please note that it is important that you tell us if you move house (unless you are one of our tenants moving between two houses that we manage,) Please write to the secretary at this address within three months of your move or the Association may cancel your share. (See rule 12 of our Rules) We may also cancel your share if you fail to attend and submit apologies for five annual general meetings.

Should you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact our registered office at 118 Strathern Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary