



Rural Stirling

HOUSING ASSOCIATION



Quality property
management services

Group Entitlements, Payments, and Benefits Policy

Rural Stirling Housing Association, Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849 Venachar Limited, Incorporated under the Companies Act (Company Number SC447415Registered office: Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA	
Policy Name	Group Entitlements, Payments, and Benefits Policy
Policy Category	Governance
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Entitlements, Payments, and Benefits Policy

1. Introduction

Who the Policy Affects

- 1.1 This policy is aimed at all Group governing body members and everyone who works for the Group, whether employed directly or otherwise. For the remainder of this policy these will be referred to as “our people.”

About This Policy

- 1.2 We are a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a Scottish Charity. We are part of a sector that has a strong reputation for integrity and accountability to the people we exist to help and to our Regulators. We must ensure that the organisation upholds its reputation and that of the sector. Our people cannot benefit inappropriately from their connection with the organisation.
- 1.3 This policy describes the entitlements, payments or benefits that our people are able to receive. It also describes what is not permitted and the arrangements that we have in place to ensure that the requirements of this policy are observed.
- 1.4 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) requires us to have a policy that sets out what payments and benefits we permit and to ensure that these arrangements demonstrate transparency, honesty and propriety¹. We must ensure there is no justifiable public perception of impropriety.
- 1.5 Our Group Parent body Rural Stirling Housing Association (RSHA) is a Scottish Charity, all RSHA Board of Management Members must also ensure that they comply with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) guidance to Charity Trustees² and charity legislation.
- 1.6 This policy is based on the Scottish Federation of Housing Association’s (SFHA) Model Policy on Entitlements, Payments and Benefits, which has been endorsed by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). This Policy is intended to be a practical document that supports us in meeting all of the above requirements, ensuring that none of our people benefits improperly or inappropriately from their involvement with us, but also that they are not unfairly disadvantaged. We expect our people to act in good faith, and in applying the terms of the policy we will always take this into account.

¹ Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Framework (February 2019) section 3 available [here](#)

² Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator Guidance For Charity Trustees (-June 2016) section 2 available [here](#)

1.7 As someone who is affected by this policy, you are personally responsible for ensuring that you are familiar with and comply with its terms.

1.8 At all times, we expect a common-sense approach to be applied to the interpretation and application of this policy. If you are unsure about anything relating to benefits, payments or entitlements you should consult with the Chair or Chief Executive Officer (if you are a member of the Board of Management) or with your line manager (if you are a member of staff).

What this Policy Covers

1.9 This policy covers:

- Managing Your Interests
 - Registering and Declaring Interests
 - Entitlements, Payments & Benefits
- People Connected to You
 - Who Else You Should Consider When Declaring Interests
 - What You Should Consider
- Use of Our Contractors/Suppliers by Our People

Other Relevant Policies

1.10 The Code of Conduct is linked to this policy. Failure to comply with the terms of this policy will be regarded as a breach of the Code of Conduct.

1.11 You are also required to be familiar with and observe the terms of our Financial Regulations and our Anti-Fraud and Bribery policy. We prohibit any attempt to induce the organisation or our people to offer preferential services or business terms and we will at all times comply with the Bribery Act 2010.

1.12 Our policies relating to the following are also relevant to this document and must be complied with at all times:

- Adaptations
- Allocations
- Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy
- Appraisal, Support and Remuneration of the Senior Officer
- Board and Staff Expenses Policy
- Code of Conduct (Governing Board Members)
- Code of Conduct (Staff)
- Community Donations Policy
- Compensation Policy

- Employers in Voluntary Housing Statement of Terms and Conditions
- Financial Regulations
- Group Learning and Development Policy
- Procurement
- Reactive Maintenance Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Settlement Agreements Policy
- Schedule of Delegation

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and you are required to comply with all of our policies and procedures.

2. Managing Your Interests

Registering and Declaring Interests

- 2.1 In order to protect our reputation and demonstrate that we conduct our affairs with openness, honesty and integrity, we maintain a Register of Interests. You must record in this register any interests that you or someone connected to you (see Section 3) has which are relevant to our business. You will be required to confirm annually that your entry is accurate and up to date.
- 2.2 Where you have an interest in any matter that is being discussed or considered at a meeting, you must declare your interest and play no part in the discussion; you must withdraw from any part of a meeting where the interest arises.
- 2.3 The Code of Conduct also contains a section on Declaring Interests that you should comply with at all times.
- 2.4 An annual report will be made to our Board of Management on the entitlements, payments, benefits that have been recorded in the Register.

Entitlements, Payments and Benefits

- 2.5 Many of the interests you will be required to declare can be classed as entitlements, payments or benefits.
- 2.6 As one of our people, you potentially could be offered benefits over and above that to which you are contractually entitled, such as gifts or hospitality from external parties. Such offers would be as a direct result of you being one of our people and cannot always be accepted. We require that any such offers are managed and recorded very

carefully to ensure the highest levels of probity in our organisation. Our people should not benefit – or be seen to benefit – inappropriately from their involvement with us.

2.7 Apart from payments that our people are entitled to by contract, statute or other agreement (e.g. salary, expenses), we will only make a payment to, or accept a payment from, someone affected by this policy in exceptional circumstances. **Appendix A** explains the payments we can and cannot make in more detail.

2.8 As we contribute to the economy of the area we work in and we have commercial and business relationships with many different companies, contractors, suppliers and service providers, you must ensure that we are fully aware of any connection that you or someone you are close to (see section 3) has with any of these businesses or organisations.

2.9 Some entitlements, payments and benefits we can never permit, and others we have additional requirements or conditions that must be met before we can permit.

2.10 **Appendix A** lists the entitlements, payments and benefits that fall under this policy, and states:

- Which could be permitted by the organisation
- Which will never be permitted by the organisation
- Which you require to declare in the register of interests
- Any other further requirements the organisation has before permitting

3. People Connected to You

Who Else You Should Consider When Declaring Interests

3.1 As well as considering your own actions, you must be aware of the potential risk created by the actions of people to whom you are closely associated. There are three groups of people that you need to consider, outlined in **Table A**:

Table A

Group 1 Members of your household	Group 2 People closely associated with you	Group 3 Others you need to consider
Anyone who normally lives as part of your household, whether they are related to you or not, including spouses/partners who work away from home and sons and daughters who are studying away from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, parents-in-law and their partners • Sons and daughters; stepsons and step-daughters and their partners • Brothers and 	<p>Other relatives (e.g. uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews & their partners)</p> <p>Other friends (e.g. someone you are acquainted with socially, neighbours, business contacts/associates)</p>

	sisters and their partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partner's parent, child, brother or sister • Grandparents, grandchildren and their partners • Someone who is dependent on you or whom you are dependent on • Close friends 	
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3.2 If you become aware of any action or involvement relating to **anyone** in the table then you should declare and manage this as soon as possible.

3.3 However, we recognise that you will not always be closely acquainted with or in regular contact with all of the people listed and we do not expect you to go to unreasonable lengths to identify actions or involvement that are covered by this policy.

3.4 Please note, we do expect you to be familiar with the actions of members of your household (Group 1) and of any other people listed in the table above with whom you are closely associated and/or in regular contact and you must take steps to identify, declare and manage these.

3.5 **You are not expected to be aware of the actions of people in groups 2 and 3 that you do not have a close association and/or regular contact with.** We do not expect you to research into the employment, business interests and other activities of all persons with whom you are closely connected.

3.6 In relation to 3.4 - 3.7 above, when considering actions you should do so from the point of view of a reasonable and objective observer and a common sense approach should be adopted at all times.

What You Need to Consider

3.7 The following are the actions and involvement by those to whom you are closely connected that, should you become aware, we would expect you to notify us by making a declaration in the register: :

- A significant interest in a company or supplier that we do business with or which is on our approved list. A significant interest means ownership (whole or part) or any shareholding in a business that distributes profits.

- Where the individual may benefit financially from a company we do business with or is on our approved list
- Involvement in the management of any company or supplier that we do business with or which is on our approved list
- Involvement in tendering for or the management of any contract for the provision of goods or services to us.
- Application for employment with us.
- Application to join our Board of Management or any of our subsidiaries
- Application to be a tenant or service user of the organisation
- If they are an existing tenant or service user of the organisation

4. Use of Our Contractors & Suppliers

4.1 In order to help us maintain our excellent reputation, where possible you should avoid using the organisation's contractors/suppliers for your own personal purposes. We have made a list available to all of our people which outlines the contractors and suppliers that fall under the terms of this policy. This is included at **Appendix B**.

4.2 We recognise that there could be certain circumstances where it might not be possible for you to avoid the use of all the contractors/suppliers on this list, such as where market conditions in your local area make it difficult to obtain a reasonable selection of potential contractors or suppliers. Under such circumstances you could be permitted to use those contractors/suppliers outlined at Appendix B, provided you are able to demonstrate that you received no preferential treatment in terms of price, quality or any other aspect of service delivery due to your involvement with us.

4.3 Approval to use those contractors listed at Appendix B is at the discretion of the approving officer (in accordance with our scheme of delegation). In order to be granted approval, you will be required to demonstrate that there is no reasonable alternative contractor/supplier providing the service required in your local area, and that you will receive no preferential treatment in terms of service or cost (which you will be required to demonstrate through quotations and receipts)

4.4 If you are looking to purchase goods or services from any contractor/supplier on this list then you must make a declaration in the register outlining:

- That you have received approval from the appropriate approving officer prior to the commencement of works
- That you received no preferential treatment in terms of service or cost (which you will be required to demonstrate through quotations and receipts).
- Where you inadvertently use a contractor on the list at Appendix B in an emergency situation, you must notify the approving officer as quickly as possible thereafter and enter an appropriate declaration in the register.

4.5 Any contractor/supplier not included on the list at Appendix B can be used without the need for any declaration/further action. Appendix B represents the majority of the

contractors/suppliers that we use, but does not include any of our contractors/suppliers that:

- Only provide services of a small value (e.g. local window cleaners or sandwich shops) or
- Have such a large national or local standing that no favour could ever realistically be gained (e.g. utilities, BT, banks or national chains)

4.6 Guidance for approving officer: The approving officer will have an appropriate level of seniority, in accordance with our scheme of delegation. In making your decision you should consider the level of potential reputational risk or any potential conflicts of interest that may arise by granting approval and, if granting approval, consider the steps required to mitigate against future conflicts of interest, such as ensuring that the individual is not involved in any transactions with or decisions about the contractor/supplier in question on behalf of the organisation. You should maintain a clear audit trail of every approval to use any of our contractors listed at Appendix B. The total number of our people to use contractors and suppliers, including the reasons for approval, and confirmation that no advantage was gained due to an individual's role within the organisation should be formally reported annually to our Board of Management.

5 Equality & Diversity

5.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion/faith, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other grounds. Our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

5.2 This policy and any other association publication is available in other formats e.g. other languages, Braille, large print, audio.

6 Data Protection

6.1 The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current General Data Protection Regulations and our own Data Protection policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in the transparency statement that has been issued to you.

7. Review

- 7.1 Our Rules require the Board of Management to set our policy on payments and benefits and keep it under review. This policy has been approved by our Board of Management and is consistent with the requirements of our Codes of Conduct for Board of Management Members and for Staff. These Codes have been confirmed by the Scottish Housing Regulator as meeting their regulatory requirements.
- 7.2 We will review and update this policy at least every 3 years.

Appendix A – Entitlements, Payments and Benefits

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
HUMAN RESOURCES AND RECRUITMENT		
<p>All entitlements arising from your contract of employment with us or one of our subsidiaries, including (but not restricted to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of salary to staff • access to car or travel loans or salary advances where specified in the employment contract; • pension and/or private health care provided as part of the remuneration package; • performance related pay or bonus awarded in accordance with contractual terms; • books and equipment in connection with employment or training in accordance with agreed policies and/or contractual terms • Reimbursement of professional fees 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Any entitlement in the terms of your contract is always permitted without the need to record in the register of interests. There are Human Resource processes in place for this purpose.</p>
<p>Payment to a member of the Board of Management for their role as a Board of Management member, in accordance with the terms of their letter of appointment</p>	<p>No</p>	

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
<p>All payments made in accordance with the terms of our expenses policy including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • payment of permitted out of pocket expenses • reimbursement of travel costs 	Yes	<p>Entitlements in connection with your role as one of our people are set out in our expenses policy are always permitted and do not need to be declared provided claims are made in accordance with our procedures.</p>
<p>Provision of a loan by the organisation to one of our people</p>	No	<p>This is not permitted unless in connection with the contractual terms of employment. We cannot make any other loans to individuals.</p>
<p>Redundancy or Voluntary severance payment to an employee</p>	Yes	<p>We can make redundancy payments to an employee in line with terms their contract</p> <p>Or</p> <p>We can make a voluntary severance payment to an employee which is outside the terms of their contract of employment provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It arises directly from a decision to terminate the employee's contract of employment • Payment is approved by the Board of Management • That the total sum of the non-contractual payment and benefit does not exceed, in the opinion of our employment adviser, the total cost of a successful application by the employee to a Court or Tribunal (including the likely level of compensation that might be awarded by a court or tribunal)

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		<p>and associated costs to the organisation to participate in the tribunal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment does not exceed the equivalent of one year's salary for the employee • That this payment is instead of (rather than additional to) any redundancy entitlement
An offer of employment (temporary or permanent) to someone who is closely connected to a member of staff	Yes	<p>This is permitted as long as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an open recruitment exercise in accordance with our policy that you have not played any part in and • You have no direct or indirect line management or supervision responsibility for the post and • The offer of employment complies with our policy and is approved by the Board of Management and • You record your connection to the successful applicant in the register within five days of their acceptance of the offer.
The offer of employment to someone who is, or has been in the last twelve months, a member of our Board of Management or to anyone who is related to a member of the Board of Management	No	This cannot be permitted.
Appointment of one of our staff members to the Board of Management	No	

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
Nominations to join the Board of Management from people who are connected to a serving member.	No, in almost all cases.	Where the connection is a Group 3 connection the circumstances of each case will be considered by Committee before a decision is made. Merely being an acquaintance of an existing Committee Member will not prohibit a nomination.
OUR PEOPLE AS TENANTS OR SERVICE USERS		
The offer of a tenancy or lease in one of our or any of our subsidiaries' properties to one of our people or to someone closely connected to them.	Yes	<p>This is permitted as long as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is in accordance with our published allocations policy and • Neither the applicant or anyone connected to the applicant is involved in any way or in any part of the allocation process and • The offer is approved by the Board of Management in advance and • The tenancy is recorded as an interest in the appropriate register within five days of the tenancy commencing
Where one of our people (or someone connected to one of our people) is a tenant and receives a repair, improvement or adaptation to their home	Yes	<p>Repairs carried out in accordance with our policy do not need to be recorded.</p> <p>Adaptations must comply with our policy and be approved by the Board of Management. The adaptation should be recorded in the register of interests within five days of approval.</p> <p>Improvements must be carried out as part of an approved programme and in accordance with our policy. The person affected should declare their interest if/when the programme is being discussed and the improvement recorded in the register of interests within five days of completion</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
<p>Where one of our people (or someone connected to one of our people) is a tenant and receives payment of a decoration allowance, tenant reward/incentive as part of an agreed scheme or prize.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Payment of decoration allowances or incentive/reward payments must be made in accordance with our policies and procedures and recorded in the register within five days of receipt.</p> <p>Prizes or awards in competitions open to all tenants in the same community (e.g. garden competitions) can only be given if the selection process for giving the award/prize has been carried out by someone who is independent. Receipt of the award and the circumstances surrounding it must be recorded in the register within five days of receipt.</p>
TRAINING AND EVENTS		
<p>Attendance at training events or seminars (e.g. SFHA Conferences) or openings/similar events hosted by other RSLs</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>There is no requirement to declare and record in the register of interests.</p>
<p>The organisation paying for accommodation in connection with attendance at relevant conferences or events that you are attending on behalf of or in connection with your role with us or our subsidiaries</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Accommodation that is part of a conference or training package does not need to be recorded in the register, but attendance will be recorded on the relevant individual training plan.</p> <p>Residential conferences are important in ensuring that our people have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to make an effective contribution to our activities.</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
Attendance by you at events to mark awards, achievements or other significant milestones relevant to our business.	Yes (where not exceeding £500)	<p>The Board of Management must approve attendance prior, and will only do so if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation or one of our people (because of their role with us) has been nominated for an award; or • attendance is in recognition of achievement of or in pursuit of appropriate business development; or • we can demonstrate that attendance or participation is directly related to furthering our aims and objectives. <p>Where we ask you to represent us at such an event, this should be recorded in the register along with any associated costs (including travel, accommodation and the costs of attendance at the event) within five days of attendance.</p> <p>The total cost should not exceed £500 per person and we will make all arrangements in advance.</p> <p>Where costs would exceed £500, you will not be permitted to attend unless there is a clear, viable business case for attending. In such a case, specific approval of the Board of Management would be required.</p>
GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY		
Gifts received from tenants and external sources	Yes (not exceeding a value of £25)	<p>Small gifts (e.g. a box of chocolates, pens, folders, paperweights) can be accepted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value does not exceed £25 • you do not receive more than one such gift from the same source in a 12 month period

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you record receipt of the gift in the register <p>You should not normally accept other gifts and should decline any gifts with a value of more than £25 unless to do so would cause offence or otherwise damage our reputation. In these cases you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the donor that the gift will be donated to charity or will form part of our annual charity fund raising activities • Record the gift and the action taken in the register within five days <p>You should not regularly accept gifts from the same source and never more than once from the same source within a 12 month period.</p> <p>You should also record any offers that you decline and the reasons for this, in the register within five days.</p>
<p>Gifts given from us to one of our people or received by one of our people from external sources to mark special occasions.</p>	<p>Yes (not exceeding a value of £25)</p>	<p>Gifts from the organisation to our people can be permitted in cases where it is to mark a special occasion or significant event including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family events (e.g. marriage, milestone birthday, birth of a child), • Retirement • Leaving the organisation <p>These must be recorded in the relevant register and the value of such gifts will not normally exceed £25.</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		<p>Please note, that this does not include collections by our people using their own personal funds to mark special occasions. These are always permitted with no requirement to declare.</p>
<p>Hospitality associated with our business and that of its partners</p>	<p>Yes (when not exceeding a value of £50)</p>	<p>Modest hospitality, such as a sandwich lunch or networking event, is permitted and does not need to be recorded</p> <p>All other hospitality up to a value of £50 is permitted but must be recorded in the register, along with an estimation of the value of hospitality received, within five days of attendance.</p> <p>You should not accept invitations with a value that is greater than £50, unless you have prior approval from the Board of Management The type of hospitality offered will also be taken into consideration, e.g. we will not normally accept invitations to sporting events, concerts, golf tournaments etc.</p> <p>In this case, the reason for acceptance must also be included in the register and countersigned by the Chief Executive Officer.</p>
<p>Our people seeking donations from our contractors/suppliers when fundraising for charity</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This is permitted provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval is gained from the Chief Executive Officer prior to making any approach • Any donations received are recorded in the register <p>We recognise our social responsibility and promote charity fundraising by the organisation and our people. We have a</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		separate policy that sets out our approach to supporting other charities and community groups.
PROCURING GOODS/SERVICES		
Sale of a property under Right to Buy to someone affected by this policy	Yes	This is permitted with no requirement to declare in the register. The normal process for valuation and sale should be followed..
Sale of our interest (whole or part) in a property to someone affected by this policy via LIFT, Home Buy; Help to Buy or other LCHO scheme	Yes	<p>This is permitted, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our policy and procedures are followed • The prospective purchaser should play no part in the processing of the transaction by the organisation • It is declared and recorded in the register within five days of the missives being concluded confirming the process followed.
The organisation entering into a contract with an organisation where one of our people, or someone connected to them has significant control.	No (in almost all cases)	<p>This is not permitted in almost all circumstances where the person has significant control. We could only consider this where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person affected by this policy is not involved in any part of the procurement process or decision • The appointment is approved by the Board of Management which is satisfied that the appointment is reasonable in the circumstances • There is no reasonable alternative (e.g. because of geography or the specialist nature of the goods/services) <p>In such rare circumstances, the appointment would be recorded in the register along with details of the process followed.</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		Where one of our people has a significant interest (including any shareholding) in an organisation but this falls short of “significant control” this will still be declared. The Board of Management will then consider, in each case, whether entering into a contractual arrangement with that organisation would be appropriate given the particular circumstances and how such an arrangement may be perceived externally.
The purchase of land or other assets from anyone who is, or has been in the last twelve months, one of our people or who is connected to one of our people	No (in almost all cases)	This cannot be permitted in almost all cases. The only exception would be if you were referred to us under the Scottish Government’s Mortgage to Rent scheme, where this would be permitted provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our policy and procedures are followed • The prospective seller plays no part in the decision to purchase the property or the processing of the transaction by the organisation • It is declared and recorded in the register within five days upon conclusion
The purchase of goods/services from our suppliers/contractors by one of our people	Yes	This should normally be avoided, and will only be potentially permitted if the procedure identified in Section 4 is followed