



Entitlements, Payments & Benefits Policy

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Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance:	5.1, 5.4

Ardenglen Housing Association can provide this procedure on request, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.

1. Introduction

Who the Policy Affects

1.1 This policy is aimed at people who are:

- Board Members and the governing body of any of our subsidiaries
- Everyone who works for us or any of our subsidiaries

1.2 For the remainder of this policy the above will be referred to as “our people.”

1.3 The Ardenglen Group (‘the Group’), comprising Ardenglen Housing Association as the parent and Ardenglen Developments as a subsidiary, is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

1.4 Regulatory Standard 5 states that an RSL must “*conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity*” To ensure this, the Group has clear policy and procedures in place which make sure the organisation acts with transparency, honesty and propriety and avoids any public perception of improper conduct.

About this Policy

1.5 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 Ardenglen upholds its reputation and that of the sector. Our people cannot benefit inappropriately from their connection with Ardenglen.

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 As we are a Scottish Charity, all our Board Members must also ensure that they comply with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) guidance to Charity Trustees² and charity legislation.

¹ Scottish Housing Regulator (April 2012) Regulatory Framework p28 section 5.13 available [here](#)

² Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (Aug 2013) Guidance For Charity Trustees section 3 available [here](#)

- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 As someone who is affected by this policy, you are personally responsible for ensuring that you are familiar with and comply with its terms.
- 1.11 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 (if you are a member of the governing body) or with your line manager (if you are a member of staff).

What this Policy covers

- 1.12 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

- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 You are also required to be familiar with and observe the terms of our Anti-Bribery and Anti-Fraud 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.
- 1.15 Our policies relating to the following are also relevant to this document and must be complied with at all times:
- Allocations
 - Repairs and Improvements
 - Adaptations
 - Procurement
 - Training
 - Expenses
 - Recruitment
 - Sale of our Property
 - Decoration Allowances/Prizes

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 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 Interest

- 3.1 Someone ‘closely connected to you includes family members and persons who might reasonably be regarded as similar to family members even where there is no relationship by birth or law.
- 3.2 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 connected. Who you should consider, and our expectations of you to identify and declare such actions are outlined in Table A below:

Table A

Group	Required Response
<p>1. Members of your household</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who normally lives as part of your household (whether related to you or otherwise) • Those who are part of your household but work or study away from home 	<p>We expect you to be aware of and declare any relevant actions of all people in your household. You must take steps to identify, declare and manage these.</p>
<p>2. Partner, Relatives and friends</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your partner (if not part of household) • Your relatives and their partners • Your partner’s close relatives (i.e. parent, child, brother or sister) • Your close friends • Anyone you are dependent upon or who is dependent upon you • Acquaintances (such as neighbours, someone you know socially or business contacts/associates) 	<p>Where you have a close connection and are in regular contact with anyone within this group, we expect you to be aware of and declare any relevant actions. Under these circumstances, you must take steps to identify, declare and manage these actions.</p> <p>Where you do not have a close connection and regular contact with someone in this group, we do not expect you to be aware of or to go to unreasonable lengths to identify any relevant actions. However, if you</p>

	happen to become aware of relevant actions by such individuals, then these should be declared and managed as soon as possible.
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What You Need To Consider

3.3 The following are the relevant actions /involvement by those to whom you are closely connected that you should consider, declare and manage as per our expectations outlined in Table A:

- A significant interest in a company or supplier that we do business with. A significant interest means ownership (whole or part) or a substantial shareholding in a business that distributes profits, but does not include where an individual has shares in large companies such as banks, utility companies or national corporations, i.e. where owning shares would not give the individual any significant influence over the activities of that organisation.
- Where the individual may benefit financially from a company with which we do business
- Involvement in the management of any company or supplier with which we do business
- 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 or any of its 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 and Suppliers

4.1 In order to help us maintain our excellent reputation, it is important that staff and Board members do not use their position to gain benefits which other members of the public cannot access.

4.2 At the same time we do not want to see staff and Board members face unreasonable restrictions which put them at a disadvantage compared to other members of the public.

4.3 Where, in their personal/home life, you as a staff or Board member need a service from a contractor, if it causes no disadvantage or inconvenience to you to avoid using one of the Association’s contractors then we would ask that such use is indeed avoided. But the Association does not want to unreasonably restrict your choice of contractor.

- 4.4 However, it is extremely important that where you wish to use one of the Association's contractors you take some particular steps which will help protect both you and Ardenglen.
- 4.5 A staff or Board member should only utilise the services of one of the Association's contractors (as listed at Appendix B) for their own personal needs if:
- The normal commercial rates are paid for this service and no preferential treatment, financial or otherwise, is received
 - You report your proposed course of action to the Chief Executive before committing to use the contractor in question and follow any advice offered. In emergency situations you should comply with this policy retrospectively as soon as is practicably possible
 - You make a written declaration that you have not received any advantage or preferential treatment (financial or otherwise) from the contractor or supplier arising out of their connection to the Association: written quotes should be provided where these would normally be sought for the type of work in question, and in ALL cases receipts should be provided
 - You record the transaction or agreement in the Register of Payments and Benefits and keep the entry up to date.
- 4.6 Examples of situations that might arise in this context include engaging the factoring service offered by the Association or buying goods or services from a connected business such as an architect or building contractor.
- 4.7 Appendix B lists the contractors to whom this policy applies. You will see that it does not include low value services such as sandwich shops, other high street stores and national chains, utility companies, banks and national telecoms providers etc.
- 4.8 In the event of becoming involved in a dispute with the Association arising out of such a transaction or agreement, you must immediately notify the Chair and/or Chief Executive and withdraw from any discussions relating to the service involved.
- 4.9 In the case of Board members, if the dispute cannot be resolved through the normal complaints procedure and you remain dissatisfied, you should resign from the governing body in order to pursue the complaint independently.

5. Training

- 5.1 The Association through its Internal Management Plan is committed to training and developing staff and Board members to their full potential in order to deliver a high quality of service in all areas of its business.

5.2 The induction programme includes an overview of this policy, including responsibilities for the promotion and delivery of openness and confidentiality as relevant to their job descriptions. Board members and staff will receive updates on these issues and specific training as required.

6. Equalities and Diversity

6.1 This policy will be implemented in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy and is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to assess the likely or actual effects of the policy to our customers in respect of their disability, age, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation or gender identity to ensure equal and fair access for all.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1 The Association will use appeals, complaints, comments or suggestions from users of this policy to monitor its effectiveness. These will also be used to prompt a review of the policy where necessary.

8. Review

8.1 This Policy will be approved by the Management Committee. It will be reviewed every three years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, or monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in Policy is required sooner.

9. Distribution

9.1 This policy will be made available to every employee and Board member and will be made freely available to any tenant or interested party.

10. Legal Framework

- Scottish Housing Regulator
- Rules of Ardenglen Housing Association

11. Related Policies

- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Allocation Policy
- Maintenance Policy
- Standing Orders
- Declaration of Interest
- Payment of Expenses to Board members
- Financial Regulations
- Committee Code of Conduct
- Terms and Conditions

--- END OF POLICY ---

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 	Yes	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.
Payment to a member of the governing body for their role as a governing body member, in accordance with the terms of their letter of appointment	No	<p>[Such payments will only be permitted if they are in accordance with the conditions set out in Section 67(3) of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005³</p> <p>The payment must be recorded in the register of interests within five days of the appointment being confirmed and the register must be kept up to date]</p>
<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	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.
Provision of a loan by the organisation to one of our people	No	This is not permitted unless in connection with the contractual terms of employment. We cannot make any other loans to individuals.

³ Legislation.Gov.Uk (2005) Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 Section 67 (3) available [here](#)

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
Redundancy or Voluntary severance payment to an employee	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 Governing Body • 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 and associated costs to the organisation to participate in the tribunal) • 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 Chair 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 Governing Body or to anyone who is related to a member of the Governing Body	No	This cannot be permitted.

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
Appointment of one of our staff members to the Governing Body	No	This cannot be permitted in accordance with the Rules of the organisation.
Nominations to join the Governing Body from people who are connected to a serving member.	Yes	This can be permitted in accordance with the Rules of the organisation.
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 Governing Body 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 Housing Services Manager. 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>
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.	Yes	<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>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
TRAINING AND EVENTS		
Attendance at training events or seminars (e.g. SFHA Conferences) or openings/similar events hosted by other RSLs	Yes	There is no requirement to declare and record in the register of interests.
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	Yes	<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>
Attendance by you at events to mark awards, achievements or other significant milestones relevant to our business.	Yes (where not exceeding £500)	<p>The Governing Body 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 Governing Body 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 • 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</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		<p>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> <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 Governing Body 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</p>

EXAMPLE	CAN THIS BE PERMITTED?	FURTHER ACTION NECESSARY BEFORE THIS WILL BE PERMITTED?
		countersigned by the Chair or Director
Our people seeking donations from our contractors/suppliers when fundraising for charity	Yes	<p>This is permitted provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval is gained from the Director 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 separate policy that sets out our approach to supporting other charities.</p>
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 and our normal policy would be applied.
Sale of our interest (whole or part) in a property to someone affected by this policy via LIFT, HomeBuy; 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. 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 Governing Body 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?
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)	<p>This cannot be permitted in almost all cases.</p> <p>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:</p> <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