



CONSTITUTION

Name and status

- 1 The name of the organisation shall be **Stop Social Housing Stigma** (SSHS).
- 2 SSHS is a campaign body aimed at fighting stigma in social housing. It is an unregistered body.

Objectives

- 3 The defined aims of SSHS are:
 - to present a positive image of social housing and its tenants in England;
 - to challenge the perception and the stigma that is attached to social housing and its tenants;
 - to encourage society to better understand the stigma that we see in the media associated with social housing tenants and the impact this has on our lives;
 - to inspire society to see social housing in a fairer, more balanced way;
 - to lobby politicians to recognise social housing tenants as their constituents and make it a clear political necessity that negative language and assumptions are challenged by them;
 - to have dialogue as appropriate with the social housing regulator, landlords, contractors and others about social housing stigma;
 - to challenge the social housing sector when their communications, language or behaviours perpetuate negative stereotypes about tenants;
 - to change the way the wider media communicates stories and news involving social housing tenants, our homes and communities;
 - to organise a tenant led campaign, delivered in partnership with sponsor housing providers, housing staff and other interested parties that can help us achieve our aims.

Commitment to equality and diversity

- 4 SSHS shall actively seek to eliminate discrimination, ensure equality of opportunity, value the diversity of human society and treat every individual with dignity and respect. No member or person or groups of people wishing to become members shall be treated less favourably because of any matter which causes them to be treated unfairly or with injustice. SSHS shall

maintain and implement an equality and diversity policy which complies with all relevant legislation and accords with current equality and diversity codes and best practice.

Membership

- 5 Subject to approval by SSHS's National Committee, persons and organisations who support SSHS's objectives and who are not under the age of 16 years are eligible for SSHS membership as follows:
 - **Full membership** of SSHS is open to any English social housing tenant who is identified on a tenancy agreement with a local authority, housing association, housing co-operative or other form of Registered Provider landlord.
 - **Supporter membership** of SSHS is open to any other person resident in England.
 - **Corporate membership** of SSHS is open to any organisation that has an interest in English social housing.
- 6 SSHS's National Committee may within their absolute discretion, and in accordance with any procedure agreed by the National Committee, admit or refuse to admit any person or organisation to SSHS membership.
- 7 SSHS shall keep a register of members that shall include the name and contact details of each full, supporter and corporate member and the date on which they became a member. SSHS shall usually require that all members provide an email address or another digital contact method within their contact details. SSHS shall advise members as they join that the organisation may not have sufficient resources to be able to communicate with the membership by any other means than by email or by some other digital contact method.
- 8 In respect of full members, the register shall also include the name of the Registered Provider landlord the full member has a tenancy agreement with.
- 9 It shall be the responsibility of each member to advise SSHS of any change regarding their membership details, including if they wish to terminate their membership.
- 10 Any communication to a member shall be considered to have been sent if it has been sent to the digital method of communication provided by the member.

- 11 The National Committee shall periodically review the SSHS membership in respect of geographical representation and representation of diverse groups.
- 12 SSHS shall ensure that its register of members is kept in accordance with the principles in the Data Protection Act 2018.

Termination of membership

- 13 A full or supporter member shall cease to be a SSHS member if:
 - they die; or
 - the member resigns in writing from the SSHS; or
 - they are expelled from membership; or
 - in respect of full membership, they cease to be a tenant of a Registered Provider landlord, in which case their membership can be transmuted to become a supporter member.
- 14 A corporate member shall cease to be a SSHS member if:
 - the corporate organisation ceases to exist; or
 - the corporate member resigns in writing from the SSHS; or
 - they are expelled from membership.
- 15 The date on which any member ceases to be a member shall be entered into the register of members. If a full or supporter member dies or if a corporate member ceases to exist, the membership shall only be registered as terminated if SSHS is made aware of these reasons for termination of membership.

Expulsion from membership

- 16 SSHS's National Committee may within their absolute discretion expel any person or organisation from SSHS membership. Examples of reasons why the National Committee may expel a member could include a member:
 - disrupting SSHS General or other meetings;
 - acting against SSHS's aims or interests;
 - bringing SSHS or the National Committee into disrepute.

Annual General Meeting

- 17 SSHS shall hold an Annual General Meeting, called by the National Committee, to which all full, supporter and corporate members shall be invited by the Secretary with at least 14 days' notice given the electronic means to the contact details in the member register. The Annual General Meeting shall be held by digital online means.

- 18 Proceedings at the Annual General Meeting shall not be invalidated by reason of accidental omission to send a notice to a member, or by non-receipt of such notice by the member.
- 19 Each full member shall be entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting. Each supporter and corporate member shall be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting.
- 20 The Annual General Meeting shall be held within six months of the anniversary of the starting date of this constitution.
- 21 The functions of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:
- Receive a report on SSHS's finances or of any finances being held on behalf of SSHS; and
 - Receive a report from the National Committee on SSHS's activities during the preceding year and plans for the coming year; and
 - Receive a report on membership of the National Committee; and
 - Consider any other matters relating to SSHS's activities as determined by the National Committee.
- 22 The National Committee shall determine the quorum and any Standing Orders necessary for the Annual General Meeting. Should there be a need for a vote at the Annual General Meeting, subject to the principle that each full member shall be entitled to one vote, the National Committee shall determine how voting shall take place. The National Committee shall also determine whether proxy voting shall be possible. Any question as to the acceptability of any votes shall be determined by the Chair whose decision shall be final.

Special General Meetings

- 23 The National Committee may call a Special General Meeting if there is a need to do so. All members shall be entitled to attend a Special General Meeting and all full members shall be entitled to vote. The operations of a Special General Meeting shall be similar to the Annual General Meeting with the National Committee determining its quorum and any Standing Orders necessary.

National Committee membership

- 24 Any SSHS member may be entitled to membership of the National Committee, but the committee may not include more than one Supporter Member from a particular organisation or more than one representative from a Corporate Member.

- 25 The National Committee shall consist of not less than five committee members and not more than fifteen committee members (excluding any co-opted committee members).
- 26 Until or unless the National Committee deem otherwise, all full member National Committee members shall be required to ask their landlord to make a financial contribution to SSHS to cover the National Committee member's expenses. The amount requested shall be determined by the National Committee. If the landlord does not agree to make the contribution, this shall not bar the full member from being a National Committee member.
- 27 The founding National Committee members shall be those who are signatories to this constitution. The National Committee members shall subsequently select additional and replacement committee members who they consider will be best placed to enable SSHS to achieve its objectives.
- 28 In determining the selection of National Committee members, the National Committee shall particularly consider and report to the Annual General Meeting how the membership of the National Committee best reflects the SSHS membership, particularly considering geographical representation and representation of diverse groups.
- 29 The National Committee shall also periodically consider whether there is a need for maximum terms of office for National Committee members and if so, how those terms of office would be enacted.
- 30 The full National Committee members may also co-opt up to three suitable Supporter Members or representatives from Corporate Members to serve on the National Committee and may remove such persons. A person co-opted may take part in the deliberations of the National Committee but may not vote at meetings.

Termination of a National Committee member's appointment

- 31 A National Committee member's appointment shall be terminated if:
 - They cease to be a member of SHSS; or
 - They absent themselves from three consecutive meetings of the National Committee in one 12 month period without special leave of absence from the National Committee; or
 - They fail to sign the National Committee member Code of Conduct within one month of being asked to do so unless the National Committee considers that there is a reasonable cause for the delay; or
 - The National Committee holds a majority vote to terminate a National Committee member's appointment.

Avoidance and declaration of conflicts of interest

- 32 National Committee members shall seek to avoid conflicts of interest between their personal activities and their role as a committee member. Where a conflict cannot be avoided, National Committee members are expected to report the conflict to the Chair. The National Committee will determine whether SSHS should hold a conflict of interest register.

National Committee meetings

- 33 The National Committee shall meet once a month at such times and places as the committee shall decide. Seven days' notice of the date, place or digital link for meetings shall be provided in writing.
- 34 The quorum for National Committee meetings shall be one third of the National Committee members. As soon as a National Committee member has digitally linked to a meeting, they will be counted towards the quorum for the meeting.
- 35 Minutes of National Committee meetings shall be posted to the SSHS website and circulated to all National Committee members.
- 36 Any National Committee member may make a proposal to a committee meeting, but for it to be voted on by the full members present, the proposal shall need to be seconded by another full member.

Officers

- 37 SSHS shall have a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer who shall be elected by the National Committee at its first meeting after the AGM or at the first National Committee meeting following a position becoming vacant. The offices can only be filled by full SSHS members.
- 38 The National Committee may vote by simple majority to remove any of its officers at any of its meetings.
- 39 The Chair shall chair all National Committee meetings and the AGM (or the Vice Chair in their absence). The Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence) shall also be the first point of contact for SSHS.
- 40 The Secretary shall ensure that meetings are properly called and minuted. The Secretary shall also be responsible for maintaining the register of members.
- 41 Agendas for National Committee meetings will be set by the Chair following liaison with the Vice Chair and Secretary as necessary.

- 42 The Treasurer will maintain a record of all income and expenditure of SSHS. All monies raised will be held in Stop Social Housing Stigma bank account and may only be used to achieve SSHS's objectives.

Changes to this constitution

- 43 Until the first Annual General Meeting held following adoption of this constitution, this constitution may be amended by a majority vote in the National Committee. In so doing, the National Committee shall publicise any changes made to the membership.
- 44 Following the first Annual General Meeting held following adoption of this constitution, this constitution can only be amended at an Annual or Special General Meeting. Proposed changes to the constitution need to be proposed and seconded by two full members and should be forwarded to the Chair, Secretary or Vice Chair at least 21 days prior to any General Meeting being held to consider changes.
- 45 Changes to the constitution shall require a two third majority vote at a General Meeting.

Dissolution

- 46 SHSS can only be dissolved at a General Meeting called for that purpose. All members will be notified of a proposal to dissolve SSHS at least fourteen days prior to the meeting. A proposal to dissolve SSHS shall take effect only if agreed by two-thirds of the full members present at the meeting.
- 47 Any assets (financial or otherwise) remaining, after the payment of all debts and liabilities, shall be disposed of by way of a gift to:
- another body that supports the interests of tenants of Registered Provider landlords; or
 - a charity which has, among its objects, the provision of housing or relief of homelessness.

SSHS Founding Members

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