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Policy Name	Employment Reference Policy
Policy Author	Director / EVH Model Policy
Approved by Sub Committee	N/A
Approved by Management Committee	January 2026
Latest date of Next Review	January 2029

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative will provide this policy on request at no cost, in larger print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages. Please contact the office.

1. Introduction

This policy sets out West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative's (WWHC) approach to providing and receiving employment references. It aims to protect WWHC and its employees while ensuring fairness, maintaining consistency and legal compliance in how references are handled.

This policy applies to:

- All employees, managers, and HR staff involved in providing or requesting references.
- All external requests received for employment references relating to current or former employees.
- All recruitment processes where references are sought from previous employers.

2. Legal Framework

There is no general statutory obligation in the UK to provide an employment reference. Exceptions may apply where a contractual obligation exists e.g., written into the employee's contract or agreed as part of a settlement agreement. In addition, where specific regulations require it e.g., Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority regulated roles).

- **Equality Act 2010** - References must be accurate, fair, and not misleading while complying with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring no discriminatory content is provided.
- **Data Protection Act 2018** - All references must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 to ensure that any reference provided is limited to relevant, lawful and necessary information. Employees may request access to references held about them.

3. Responsibilities

Senior Staff (Line Managers)

- Issue and respond to reference requests in line with this policy.
- Request references at the appropriate stage of the recruitment process.
- Ensure that reference information is considered alongside other pre-employment checks.
- Refrain from giving personal, informal or verbal references in a professional capacity on behalf of WWHC.

Director

- Provide guidance to managers on compliance with this policy.
- Maintain templates for a standard reference response and reference request

4. Providing References

WWHC will provide references only through Senior Staff (Line Managers)

The information contained in the references will be limited to:

- Dates of employment
- Job title(s) held
- Summary of the duties and responsibilities involved in the role(s)

Additional information e.g., performance or conduct will only be provided if there is a regulatory or contractual requirement, and the information can be substantiated with documented evidence. Advice will be sought from the Director prior to providing additional information.

Informal or verbal references must not be provided on behalf of WWHC.

Reference requests will be handled consistently and fairly to avoid any appearance of bias or discrimination.

5. Requesting References

WWHC will request references during the final stage of a recruitment and selection process. References will only be sought for a successful job applicant once:

- A conditional job offer has been made and accepted by the job applicant
- Permission from the job applicant has been received.

WWHC will use a standard reference request template to make sure consistency in approach is always adhered to.

6. Receiving References

References may be requested as part of the recruitment process, but WWHC will not solely rely on them when making recruitment decisions.

Where references are limited e.g., confirming only dates of employment and job titles, additional pre-employment checks will also be used to verify suitability for the role e.g., right-to-work, qualifications.

If a reference is deemed unsatisfactory, the content of the reference should be discussed with the individual concerned to establish further information. If the further information does not satisfy the pre-employment check, we may consider rescinding the offer of employment. In this circumstance, further advice should be sought from the Director prior to a final decision being made.

7. Implementation and Review of the Policy

WWHC will ensure that all employees involved in the recruitment and selection process are aware of the content of this policy. Non-compliance of the policy may expose WWHC to legal claims, including negligence, defamation, or discrimination.

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

This policy should be read in line with WWHC's Recruitment Policy.

Responsibility for review and monitoring the application of this policy will rest with the Director. The policy will be reviewed every five years and if necessary, in line with legislative updates.

8. General Data Protection Regulations

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in WWHC's employee privacy notice.

Reference Request Letter Template

[Date]

[Name]

[Organisation Name]

[Address]

Private and Confidential

Dear [Name],

Re: Reference Request for [Candidate's Full Name]

[Candidate's Full Name] has accepted the position of [Job Title] with West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative and has provided details of your organisation as a previous employer.

The role is conditional upon a satisfactory reference therefore we would be grateful if you could provide a reference to confirm the following details:

- Dates of employment
- Job title(s) held
- Summary of the duties and responsibilities involved in the role(s)

Please note that in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 candidates have the right of access to their files and provision of a reference will therefore be taken as granting consent to access.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Job Title]

Employment Reference Template

Private and Confidential

[Date]

[Name]

[Organisation Name]

[Address]

Dear [Name],

Re: Reference for [Employee Full Name]

We confirm that [Employee Full Name] was employed by West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative from [Start Date] to [End Date].

During their employment, they held the position(s) of [Job Title(s)].

The duties and responsibilities involved in the role(s) are outlined below:

- ***Outline the main duties and responsibilities as detailed in the job description.***

It is our policy only to provide references containing information as to employees' roles and dates of employment. This should not be seen as implying any comment about the candidate or their suitability for employment with you.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Job Title]

Equalities Impact Assessment

Policy/Project/Service Information			
Lead Officer	Director		
Policy / Project / Service	Employment Reference Policy	New Policy / Project / Service or revision of existing?	New
Is this a reassessment following amendments being required at a previous assessment?	No		
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / project / service.	The policy sets out WWHC's approach to providing and receiving employment references. It aims to protect WWHC and its employees while ensuring fairness, maintaining consistency and legal compliance in how references are handled.		
Who is intended to benefit from the policy / project / service? (Eg. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)	Staff members and job applicants		
What outcomes are wanted from this policy / project / service? (Eg. the measurable changes or benefits to members/ tenants / staff)	Operating within legal and regulatory requirements. The Policy mitigates the risk of complaints and claims.		
Consultation			
Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of your assessment?			
EVH Model Policy			

Equalities Impact Assessment		
Which protected characteristics could be affected by the policy, practice, or service?	Identify any positive impact/s that could result for each of the protected characteristic groups.	Identify any negative impact/s that could result for each of the protected characteristic groups.
Age	Policy is designed to ensure that the recruitment process is supported appropriately and that staff members are provided with references containing only relevant information.	None
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage & Civil Partnership		
Race		
Religion/Belief		
Pregnancy/Maternity		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		

Action Plan To Mitigate Negative Impact		
What action/s are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment?		
Protected characteristics	Action	Implementation Date
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		
Marriage & Civil Partnership		
Race		
Religion/Belief		

Pregnancy/Maternity		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
Human Rights		

Final Decision	Tick relevant box	Include explanation where appropriate
Approved for implementation without change	X	
Amend or change the Policy/Project/Service		
Continue the Policy/Project/Service without change (despite impact)		
Stop the Policy/Project/Service		
Lead Officer Signature	Grant Clayton	
Date	17/12/2025	
Date approved by Management Committee/ Sub Committee	26/01/2026	