



<b>Title</b>	<b>Employment Reference Policy</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the policy is to set out Maryhill Housing’s approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with requests for references for current or former Maryhill Housing employees in relation to job applications</li> <li>• Reference requests in relation to applicants and potential employees of Maryhill Housing</li> </ul> <p>This policy is non contractual and does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.</p>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>The policy applies to all employees and workers at Maryhill Housing and it must be adhered to at all times when a request for a reference is given or received.</p>
<b>Definitions</b>	<p>For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>corporate reference</b> is one given on behalf of Maryhill Housing by one of our employees.</li> <li>• A <b>personal reference</b> is one given by an employee in an individual capacity; whilst it might refer to work, it is not given on behalf of the Maryhill Housing. This is also known as a <b>character reference</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<p><b>Key Policy Aims</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst there is no legal requirement to provide a reference, where an employer fails to provide one, the failure could also potentially be subject to a claim that this is for discriminatory reasons, or could constitute victimisation if a discrimination issue has already been raised. There is no limit in time, and it is essential therefore that informal or verbal references are not issued, or ex-colleagues talked about in derogatory terms.</li> <li>• Only the HR team can provide a reference on behalf of Maryhill Housing. Managers should not be providing official references for employees’.</li> <li>• There are circumstances where Maryhill Housing will provide more detail on a reference. This can include in redundancy situations.</li> <li>• The policy sets out when LinkedIn references can be provided by employees in relation to current and former employees once within</li> </ul>

set parameters. The policy will also confirm that Maryhill Housing will not respond directly to any such requests.

### **Providing references to external organisations for existing and former employees**

Employees will be asked to provide their consent to the release of references to a third party as part of the exit interview process, which is completed by HR prior to exit.

Maryhill Housing's policy is that references for a former or current employee may be given only by the HR department. No other person in the organisation is permitted to provide a written or verbal reference about current or former employees. Any requests for a reference should be passed to the HR team to action [hr@maryhill.org.uk](mailto:hr@maryhill.org.uk)

All reference requests should be submitted in writing. All references issued by the HR team in relation to former or current employees will only include the following information (see Appendix 1):

- the dates of the employee's employment with Maryhill Housing
- details of whether the employee is permanent or fixed term and whether they are full time or part time
- the employee's job title;
- reason for leaving (where required)

The reference must be marked "private and confidential" and "for the addressee only".

If an enquiry is received from the prospective employer for clarification of information given in the reference, it is not permitted to go beyond the content of the reference in the information provided. Any such enquiry should, where possible, be dealt with in writing to avoid any subsequent confusion. If the enquiry is dealt with over the telephone, a written record of the information provided must be made at the time of the conversation.

Subject to the provisions relating to a personal/character reference, no person other than the HR team is authorised to provide an employment reference on behalf of Maryhill Housing whether verbal or written, about current or former employees.

HR will not respond to specific requests for information or complete questionnaires sent in by potential employers.

### **Obtaining references for prospective Maryhill Housing employees**

It is the policy of the Maryhill Housing to obtain references for all prospective employees. At least one reference must be from the most recent employer, or, if the candidate is seeking their first employment, from another directly relevant person who can comment on the candidate's skills and abilities (e.g. teacher, tutor, or similar). Where this is not

	<p>received before a formal offer is made, the offer of employment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. Consent will be requested before instigating any reference checks. A copy of all references received for the employee must be held on their personal file.</p> <p>Line managers at the point of interview will inform job applicants, if a job offer is made, they will wish to seek written references, normally from recent previous employers. They should also make it clear that any offer of employment will be conditional on those references being satisfactory to the organisation.</p> <p>If there are any discrepancies on a reference this will be discussed with the applicant. If the reference contains factual information that is adverse to the applicant, consideration will be taken as to whether or not this information is relevant, and if so whether it is sufficient to render the individual unsuitable for the employment in question.</p> <p><b>LinkedIn Recommendations</b></p> <p>Maryhill Housing will not respond to any requests for a recommendation/comment on a current or former employee on LinkedIn. Should any employee receive a request to provide a personal recommendation on LinkedIn, the employee can determine whether they wish to respond or not. There is no obligation to provide a personal recommendation.</p> <p>Where an employee chooses to provide a personal recommendation, an employee must add the following personal disclaimer:</p> <p><b>“Please note that this recommendation is written on a personal basis only and does not necessarily represent the views of Maryhill Housing. Maryhill Housing will not be liable or responsible for any recommendation given.”</b></p> <p><b>Other Requests for Information</b></p> <p>If any line manager receives a request to provide any other information in relation to an employee’s employment history with Maryhill Housing, such requests should be directed to the HR team.</p>
<b>Approval</b>	Senior Management Team 13 April 2021
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Marie Murphy, HR Manager
<b>Review</b>	This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in light of operating experiences or any changes in relevant legislation.