**Membership Criteria**

**Code of Conduct**

All members commit to adhere to our Member Code of Conduct ([download here](https://members.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/240919-Member-Code-of-Conduct-GJ.docx))

**Non-registered Charities, Community Groups and Social Enterprises**

If you are not a registered charity you will need to ensure that your governing document clearly sets out the below four requirements:

1. A clear charitable purpose or otherwise a clear ‘good cause’ which is of demonstrable public benefit
2. That you are either completely not for personal or private profit; or that you are a social enterprise (see further below)
3. That your assets are protected in the event of closure through a ‘dissolution’ or ‘asset-lock’ clause
4. That you have a governing body with a minimum of 3 independent people – this means they are not related to each other and do not live at the same address (see below for Community Interest Companies exception)

**Registered Charities**

Registered Charities will automatically meet most of our criteria as set out above. However, we apply two additional requirements that apply to certain charities:

* Religious charities must demonstrate a charitable purpose or activity beyond pure evangelism

Church of England Churches can sign a special declaration to overcome the national constitution wording and we are open to discussing how this can be achieved for other faiths or denominations

* Registered Charities that are majority controlled by state bodies such as councils are not permitted to be full voting members

**Parish councils** that operate local charitable facilities can become Parish Council Members. Others may be eligible for our Volunteering For All Membership, and we are open to working with other such charities as partners rather than members

**Social Enterprises**

Social Enterprises which seek to make a profit for personal or private gain, including those paying share dividends or having paid Directors must additionally meet the below requirements:

* At least 50% of net profits must be reinvested in the further application or development of the good cause for which you exist
* Paid Directors should only receive a reasonable, not an excessive, salary
* Share Dividends should be based upon repayments of community share investments

**Community Interest Companies (CICs)**

CICs are permitted to become members where they have at least two independent and unrelated Directors. This is usually stated in a CIC’s Articles through the Quorum for Decisions clause. The reason for this exception is that CICs have a legally binding asset-lock which cannot be changed irrespective of how Directors vote.