

Code of Conduct

Tenant Representatives on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group

This Code of Conducts sets out the principles governing how tenant members of Caerphilly Homes Task Group should conduct themselves both in meetings and also on any other occasion when they are representing tenants of the Council. For the avoidance of doubt all Councillors sitting on Caerphilly Homes Task Group are bound by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by Caerphilly County Borough Council on 2 May 2008.

Tenants who act in a way that violates this Code of Conduct can be subject to disciplinary consequences such as warnings, temporary or permanent exclusion from meetings and Task Group membership.

The Code is not meant to prevent robust debate but is intended to promote a fair and democratic participation. All tenant representatives should adhere to the following Code of Conduct.

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct a tenant representative, is a person elected by other tenants from one of the three housing areas (Upper Rhymney Valley, Lower Rhymney Valley, Eastern Valleys) to provide a tenants' voice on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.

1. Representing Tenants

You must:

- 1.1 Strive to ensure the Caerphilly Homes Task Group meets the objectives laid out in the Terms of Reference.
- 1.2 Provide a tenants' view on issues of concern and raise views impartially and sensitively in relation to formal agenda items on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group or through the mechanism of requesting reports.
- 1.3 Provide feedback to tenants groups and networks on matters discussed at the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.
- 1.4 Be careful about expressing personal opinions when this may conflict with the majority view of the tenants' representatives on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.

2. General Behaviour

You should:

- 2.1 Be polite and courteous at all times and support and help one another with any problems, which may occur within your roles.
- 2.2 Not use any language or behaviour that may cause offence to others.
- 2.3 Be respectful and considerate to the rights of individuals and the duties of Councillors and staff.
- 2.4 Not expect to receive any better or worse treatment / service from Councillors or members of staff due to your position as a tenant representative.
- 2.5 Use normal procedures when reporting issues such as repairs, complaints, request for service etc. The Caerphilly Homes Task Group is not the platform for reporting day to day issues.

- 2.6 Declare an interest on any matter on the agenda that might raise a conflict of interest.
- 2.7 Send apologies for non attendance at meetings. Should a tenant member miss three consecutive meetings (without good cause or prior agreement) then the Chair person may request that this individual relinquish his/her position).
- 2.8 Comply with conditions of tenancy. The Council reserves the right not to work with any tenant representative who is in breach of their tenancy conditions. Any tenant representative in this position may face temporary suspension from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group until the breach is remedied. A decision on suspension will be made by the Chief Housing Officer whose decision shall be binding and absolute.
- 2.9 Do not approach the media regarding any unresolved issue. Such issues should be subject to normal reporting to allow an opportunity for resolution.

3. Conduct During Meetings

You should:

- 3.1 Follow the guidance of the Chair of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group throughout the meeting.
- 3.2 Allow others to speak, listen to them and respect their views, even if they do conflict with your own opinions.
- 3.3 Avoid cross talking and allow for others to comment. Ensure you signal to the Chair if you wish to speak and keep comments relevant to the topic of discussion.
- 3.4 Keep to the agenda and make points clearly and concisely.
- 3.5 Avoid using jargon, or if it is necessary to do so, fully explain your language.
- 3.6 Prepare for the meeting by reading the relevant agenda papers beforehand and bring a copy of these documents to the meeting for reference.
- 3.7 Enter the meeting quietly and discreetly if you are late to avoid disruption, or if you have to leave early.
- 3.8 Switch off mobile phones during meetings to avoid disturbance.

4. Confidentiality

You must:

- 4.1 Keep any information or material received while fulfilling your role as a tenant representative on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group confidential and you must not divulge it to any person, organisation, or the press unless advised otherwise, excepting of course where such information may already be in the public domain.
- 4.2 Recognise and respect tenants' / residents' confidentiality at all times, whether in their presence or not.
- 4.3 Individual issues must only be discussed with the appropriate officers during normal office hours and is not a subject for the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.
- 4.4 Not to mention or discuss specific cases which may cause embarrassment to or potentially lead to the identification of an individual.

5. Discrimination

You must:

- 5.1 Show mutual respect for other tenants, landlords, elected members and officers of the Council when working together on this group.
- 5.2 Conduct yourself appropriately at meetings (or when representing tenants of the Council). Any offensive or bullying behaviour or actions, including discriminatory or inflammatory remarks, or abusive language will not be tolerated (and could lead to exclusion from the Task Group). Neither will inappropriate behaviour due to alcohol or substance misuse be accepted.

You must not:

- 5.3 Discriminate against other people, including discriminatory language or actions on the grounds of their ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non belief, use of Welsh Language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

6. Political Interest

You:

- 6.1 May be associated with, or part of a political party, however you may not represent this party or its view within your role as tenant representative on the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.
- 6.2 Must make political affiliations known when discussing issues where this could be of influence.

7. Breach of Code of Conduct

Is not acceptable

- 7.1 Where an individual considers that a breach in this Code of Conduct has occurred, the matter should be reported to either the Chief Housing Officer or the Head of Programmes, but only one of these officers will become involved at this stage, detailing:
 - Who they consider has breached the Code of Conduct
 - When the breach occurred
 - Nature of the breach
 - If appropriate, who witnessed the breach
- 7.2 The Chief Housing Officer or the Head of Programmes will inform the tenant representative accused of the alleged breach, detailing the breach and date it occurred, and work to bring the situation to a conclusion that satisfies both the person reporting the breach and the tenant representative accused of the breach.
- 7.3 If the situation cannot be brought to a conclusion satisfactory to both parties, the Chief Housing Officer or Head of Programmes will convene a meeting with a representative from Legal Services, to consider the nature of the breach and decide on appropriate action that may include but is not exclusive or pre determined:
 - Suspension during further investigation
 - No further action

- Written warning
- Exclusion for a period of time
- Permanent exclusion resulting in the commencement of selection of a new tenant representative from the relevant area.

7.4 Tenants who wish to appeal any decision made will have the right to have the case reviewed by either the Chief Housing Officer or Head of Programmes, whichever officer has not been involved in the earlier part of the investigation, and the decision of this officer will be final.

Tenant representatives will be advised of any independent support that could be made available.

The Council reserves the right not to work with any tenant representative who has not complied with the terms of this Code of Conduct.

I, the undersigned, have read and understood this Code of Conduct and its implications and agree to adhere to the above Code.

Name:

Address:

Signed:

Dated:

February 2015

This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais