

Involved Tenant Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct provides a comprehensive framework for all involved tenant members and how they must behave and carry out their responsibilities. It ensures the panel functions with integrity, fairness, and professionalism, and that scrutiny activity benefits all tenants.

This code of conduct covers the following important issues:

1. General Conduct
2. Responsibilities in Meetings
3. Role of the Chair
4. Confidentiality
5. Conflict of Interest
6. Behaviour Standards
7. Breaching the Code

All involved tenants must agree to follow the Code and will be asked to sign the Code to confirm they have read and understood the information provided to them.

1. General Conduct

Panel members are expected to always uphold the highest standards of behaviour. Members must prepare for meetings, read associated papers, and contribute to discussions. Respect for fellow panel members, staff, and guests is essential. Members must:

- Attend meetings being fully prepared, having read all relevant paperwork provided prior to the meeting.
- Act in the best interests of all tenants, not only individual concerns.
- Contribute constructively, share views respectfully, and work collaboratively.
- Treat all members of the panel, members of Bernicia staff, guests, and residents with respect and courtesy.
- Recognise and respect different backgrounds, experiences, and opinions.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion, and avoid any negative discrimination.
- Avoid bringing the panel or organisation into disrepute.
- Do not use the position to seek preferential treatment.
- Ensure personal views do not dominate and avoid undermining group decisions

2. Responsibilities in Meetings

To support a productive meeting environment, members must:

- Raise their hand and wait to be invited to speak through the Chair/Facilitator.
- Participate actively and constructively
- Follow the agenda and remain focused on scrutiny objectives.
- Request agenda items through the chair in advance of meetings.

- Avoid side conversations or behaviour that disrupts discussions.
- Attend meetings regularly; and provide apologies when unable to attend.
- Keep mobile phones on silent or switched off when attending meetings and events, except with the permission of the Chair/Facilitator.
- No use of electronic devices such as tablets or laptops whilst information is being presented or during discussions, except for reading documentation required during the meeting.

3. Role of the Chair

The Chair has responsibility for ensuring fair and effective meeting management. The Chair will:

- Open meetings clearly, outlining objectives and expected outcomes.
- Present agenda items and background information.
- Guide discussion, ensuring contributions remain relevant.
- Summarise key points, clarify decisions, and support consensus building.
- Address inappropriate behaviour and maintain a respectful environment.
- Ensure everyone has opportunity during meetings to speak and prevent dominance by individuals.
- Keep meetings timely and focused.
- Be positive and help the group find solutions.

4. Confidentiality

- You must keep all sensitive information private.
- Any confidential information including performance indicators, budgetary details, commercial contracts and tenant information must not be disclosed to anyone outside the organisation.
- Not use social media to discuss panel matters.

5. Conflict of Interest

Members must not use their position as an involved tenant to influence any service provided to them, their family or friends from Bernicia which would result in them receiving an enhanced service and receiving preferential treatment. You must:

- Declare any personal interests.
- Withdraw where a conflict exists.
- Avoid using the role for personal gain.

6. Behaviour Standard

During meetings and when representing Bernicia and the involved panels, all panel members are expected to observe the following:

- Do not use offensive, provocative, discriminatory or racist language towards others.
- Avoid shouting, arguing, or individual disputes.

- Listen when anyone is speaking and do not interrupt.
- All views and opinions should be treated with respect.
- Maintain an open mind and make balanced judgements.
- Accept majority decisions even if you do not personally agree with them.
- Discriminatory behaviour of any kind to any person or group will not be tolerated and will be grounds for exclusion.
- Set aside personal or individual disputes and differences.
- Do not abuse your position as an Involved tenant to gain any favour or personal benefit.

Bernicia will commit to.

- Notes or minutes should be taken at each meeting and made available to the panel within 1 week.
- Necessary papers should be received by panel members no less than 5 working days prior to the meeting.
- Panel members will cease to receive invites/minutes if they fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings without providing apologies for absence. Staff will contact after 3 absences to identify reasons and report to panel for a decision based on individual circumstance.
- No Board member will attend meetings unless invited to do so by the panel.

7. Breaching of the Code

If an involved member breaches the code of conduct, the chair of the panel has the right to request the member leave the meeting, giving verbal reason, and then provide them with written confirmation of the verbal warning, advising of the misdemeanour and an opportunity to discuss the matter further.

If panel members continue to breach the Code the chair and Customer Engagement and Scrutiny Lead will issue a written warning advising that any further breach of the code may result in dismissal from the panel.

A breach after the written warning will result in consideration of dismissal from the panel. The process breaches will be:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Consideration of dismissal from the panel

The code of conduct and terms of reference will be reviewed regularly to reflect best practice and the needs of the tenants involved.

Future development of the Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference will be updated regularly to reflect best practice and needs of involved tenants.