

The Bernicia Way – Values and Behaviours Framework

Overview

Our behavioural framework supports our values and clearly articulates our expectations from colleagues. We all play a role in contributing to the success of the Bernicia Group and believe that by demonstrating positive values and behaviours, we will continue to go from strength to strength.

We can achieve success through our core values which we call 'The Bernicia Way.' These values are at the heart of what we do and how we do it. We live our values every day through our behaviours; how we do things, how we treat others, and how we expect to be treated.

Our behaviours help shape the culture of our organisation, are key to our growth and development and drive our success in terms of individual, team, and organisational performance. Our behaviours also align to the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Professional Standards, and the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Conduct.

Our Bernicia values



Customer Focused

We understand our customers and champion customer service.



Trusted

We uphold the highest of standards of integrity in all our actions, we are personally accountable and deliver what we say we will do.



Collaborative

We collaborate to help meet the needs of tenants and customers, partners, and the wider North East.



Respect for our people

We respect our tenants and customers and recognise them as individuals. We value our colleagues, encourage their development and reward their performance.



Leadership

We provide strong and transparent leadership, supported by clear decision-making which is evidence-based and outcomes-focused.



Our vision, mission & values

Impact (our vision)

We believe a good home makes lots of other things possible, so we provide great homes and services that do just that. By listening to tenants and customers, and supporting opportunity across the North East, we can enhance communities and help transform our region; it's called The Bernicia Effect.

Purpose (our mission)

Investing in homes, services, people and partnerships to make a positive impact on the communities of the North East: We will invest to provide quality new and existing homes, in the provision of services that respond to our tenant, customer and business requirements, in our people, and in the communities within which we operate. We will invest in the North East and in doing so will help unlock the potential of our region

Way (our values)

The Bernicia Way: we value our customers, collaborate, respect each other, and have the highest levels of accountability and integrity. We deliver what we say we will, something that our tenants, customers and partners can rely upon.

Purpose of this framework

The framework gives some examples of positive behaviours we each need to reflect in our daily ways of working.

The behaviours, based on our core values provide a common language and approach when we discuss how we perform.

By clearly setting out our organisational expectations in terms of how we approach and deliver our work we want colleagues to be able to recognise when they see people demonstrating the behaviours, and give colleagues the confidence to challenge others when they feel they are not being met.

This framework should be used as a reference point as part of everyday work activity as it describes the behaviours required by all colleagues and supports the delivery of our business objectives, values and culture across the Bernicia Group.

In summary, this provides:

- Greater clarity in what we need to do to perform well
- A clear pathway to support recruitment and career development
- A shared language about the behaviours that are expected from all colleagues
- Support for learning and development - highlighting behavioural expectations associated with all roles and levels across the business.



Summary of our behavioural expectations

Specific behaviours have been identified for each of our individual core values. These have been broken down into descriptions at three different organisational levels:

- All colleagues - behaviours which apply to everyone
- Team leaders / managers - behaviours which apply to those leading others
- Senior leaders - behaviours which apply to senior leaders

The different behavioural levels provide clarity and consistency in determining what is required for a given role, allowing colleagues and line managers to focus performance discussions and development efforts for the greatest improvement in performance.

Each level is cumulative, meaning that a team leader / manager or a senior leader is expected to also demonstrate the behaviours considered effective at the 'all colleague' level.

Negative behaviours are those which undermine positive performance and go against our culture. These are the opposite of the positive behaviours identified in this framework.

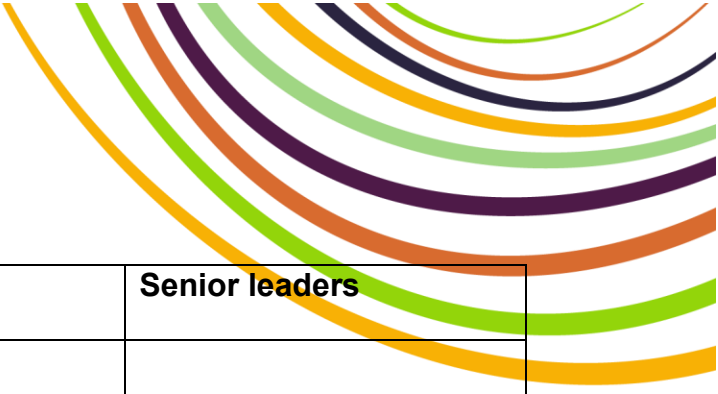
The behavioural indicators for each level are not exhaustive but are designed to indicate what effective performance looks like.



Customer Focused

Because we care about our customers, how we do things is as important to us as what we do. We understand our customers and champion customer service.

All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Putting ourselves in the shoes of our customers	Promoting a customer-centred focus across your team	Using insights from customer feedback to deliver strategic improvements
Communicating in a polite, caring, and patient manner, making every customer feel valued and supported	Using discretion and creativity in responding to customer issues and complaints	Focusing on the delivery of customer centric outcomes at a strategic level
Actively listening to what a customer is telling us and responding to their feedback	Supporting and empowering your team to deliver the best possible results for our customers	Identifying and eliminating barriers that interfere with providing excellent customer service
Working to our service standards and agreed timescales	Anticipating barriers to the delivery of high quality services to customers and taking action to remove them	Working across the organisation to provide an integrated and efficient service
Being flexible in our response to customers based on their needs whilst working within boundaries	Driving and supporting innovation and positive change where this will support the customer experience	Seeking out opportunities and ideas from across the sector and beyond which will improve customer service
Having brave, honest, conversations with customers, providing clear explanations and managing their expectations	Ensuring colleagues use data and good information effectively to make better decisions to improve services and deliver fair and consistent outcomes	Championing and embedding our Better Data, Better Service culture
Putting our hands up to any mistakes we make and saying sorry when appropriate		
Respecting people's time, privacy and (if relevant) their property		
Treating customers fairly and promptly, and with kindness and empathy		



All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Being approachable and demonstrating sensitivity to the customs, cultures, and beliefs of our customers		
Checking-in with customers to see if they are happy and satisfied		
Taking ownership of data to ensure it is accurate, complete, and up to date		
Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours
Dismissing or ignoring queries or complaints or withholding information	Maintaining and protecting the status quo in terms of delivery without considering other options	Failing to use customer insight and feedback to inform decision-making
Failing to keep our promises	Failing to role model a commitment to our customers	Not setting clear expectations around customer service standards
Negatively stereotyping or judging our customers	Failing to ensure team members meet our customer service standards.	Creating a culture that leads to poor customer outcomes and reduced trust in the organisation



Trusted

We uphold the highest of standards of integrity in all our actions; we are personally accountable and deliver what we say we will do.

All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Doing what we say we're going to do	Leading from the front by modelling and championing high standards, professional principles, and excellence	Driving positive professional standards of work in ways which enhances the reputation of the organisation and the wider housing profession
Working with high personal and professional standards	Proactively seeking feedback on your own and your team's performance and positively responding to it	Upholding and not compromising on high principles and standards in the delivery of strategic and operational projects and objectives
Being trustworthy, truthful, and honest	Positively communicating clear expectations and challenging poor professional standards from your team or other colleagues	Leading the business in ways which generates a sense of public pride in the importance and value of rented housing as a positive housing choice
'Doing the right thing' - not the easy thing	Empowering your team to take ownership for their own results and be able to make pro-active decisions	Enabling a positive performance culture, holding self and others to account
Having zero-tolerance for inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory behaviour	Taking responsibility for making things happen, achieving results and ensuring performance and behavioural standards are maintained	Empowering leaders and colleagues to drive performance, excellence and innovation
Positively representing Bernicia in the way we do our job and recognising the impact of our behaviour and conduct on the organisation	Ensuring that mistakes are not hidden but recognised, responded to, and positively learnt from	Rapidly responding to significant incidents and driving thorough prompt investigations as appropriate.



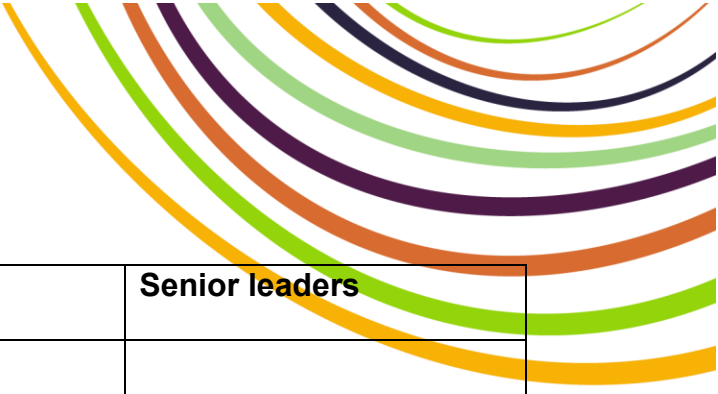
All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Taking responsibility for our actions and areas of work	Recognising the personal impact of your actions, feelings, and emotions on your team and adapting your style appropriately	Recognising responsibility for achieving strategic priorities and outcomes
Owning mistakes, putting them right and learning from them	Assessing and committing to continuing professional development and reflective learning	Communicating a clear business vision for data and information management
Keeping up to date and staying aware of professional standards and trends in our areas of work	Ensuring colleagues take responsibility for the data and information they create and use, and challenge where something isn't right	Championing professional standards and continuous learning and development, and fostering a culture of growth, accountability, and high performance
Taking steps to positively highlight or resolve problems		
Using data and information responsibly, securely, and only for the right purpose		
Ensuring your skills, knowledge and experience remain current and appropriate to deliver effectively in your role		
Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours
'Passing the buck' and not taking responsibility	Not respecting and backing Bernicia decisions once they've been made	Failing to act on and operationalise strategic decisions once they've been made
Spreading negative gossip and rumour	Blaming other people and teams	Voicing personal views and opinions in contradiction to Bernicia's decisions once they've been agreed
Making excuses and blaming others	Focusing only on personal ideas and dismissing the ideas of others	Prioritising achieving results over safety and standards



Collaborative

We collaborate to help meet the needs of tenants and customers, partners, and the wider North East.

All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Working collaboratively and making an active and constructive contribution to the team	Promoting and fostering positive team working and collaboration across Bernicia	Building and sustaining a culture which promotes, recognises and rewards teamwork and collaboration
Sharing knowledge, skills, and expertise freely with others	Working collaboratively and positively with other leaders and teams from across the Bernicia Group	Developing strategies and sponsoring activities and projects which promotes a “one organisation” approach
Putting our hands up to help and participating positively in cross-team projects and initiatives	Using a coaching style to develop and promote collaborative working	Celebrating and sharing examples of positive collaboration work across the Bernicia Group
Positively and respectfully challenging others if we disagree with them	Sharing information so that others are empowered to take the initiative and make decisions	Breaking down barriers across the business and promoting cross organisational working
Working with a “one organisation” approach	Supporting and influencing others to reach agreement and achieve business improvements and change	Building and maintaining strong, strategic relationships with key partners and stakeholders
Saying “thank you” and recognising the good work of others	Identifies opportunities to strengthen relationships that benefit customers, communities, and the organisation	Encouraging the sharing of resources, expertise, and learning to maximise organisational impact
Embracing different technologies and ways of communication and connecting	Breaks down barriers between teams to improve service delivery and customer outcomes	Championing collaboration as a means of improving outcomes for customers
Representing the organisation professionally when working with others		



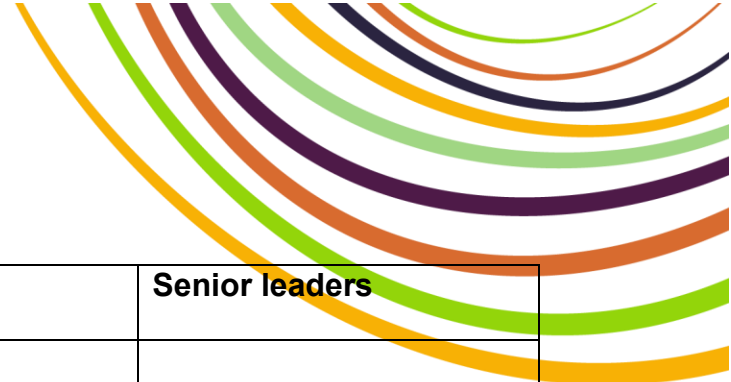
All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Building positive relationships with external partners, contractors, and stakeholders and valuing their contributions and expertise		
Working with colleagues and partners to achieve positive outcomes for customers and communities		
Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours
Acting in our own self-interest	Failing to promote and identify opportunities to work collaboratively with others	Failing to challenge individual or silo ways of working across the organisation
Not pulling our weight	Focusing on your team's objectives at the expense of supporting colleagues or overall customer experience	Adopting a narrow approach to resolving key issues - seeking minimal involvement or input from others
Having a "that's not my job" mentality	Tolerates behaviours that undermine teamwork and collaboration	Making decisions that benefit one area while negatively impacting customers or colleagues elsewhere
Bullying others or treating them unfairly		



Respect for our people

We respect our tenants and customers and recognise them as individuals. We value our colleagues, encourage their development, and reward their performance.

All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Respecting the diversity and values of others	Championing fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion	Providing oversight and sponsorship of initiatives to promote a positive culture of trust, openness, diversity, inclusion and belonging
Being inclusive and treating others with dignity and respect	Actively listening to others, genuinely understanding their thoughts and feelings	Ensuring that equity, diversity, and inclusion is addressed as a strategic priority and is embedded into operational and strategic plans
Trusting and supporting colleagues to do their job	Challenging behaviours, assumptions, and practices that may make others uncomfortable or excluded	Creating open spaces for conversations about equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging to take place
Treating others based on how we would like to be treated	Positively supporting and encouraging colleagues to grow and develop	Improving the representation of minority groups across the Group, including at senior levels
Challenging the behaviour of people who do not show respect to others	Taking the time to get to know your team and the others you work with as individuals and understand what motivates them and how they want to develop	Setting the positive tone for the organisation in how you behave, engage, and communicate with others
Being open, honest and dependable and playing our part in creating a culture of trust	Proactively ensuring minority and underrepresented groups are considered in workplace activities and recruitment campaigns	
Communicating respectfully and professionally on all communication channels		

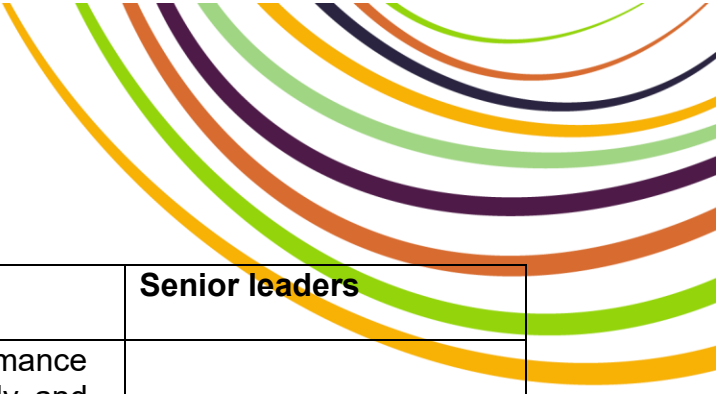


All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Being courteous and considerate		
Recognising that it is human to have biases and to make assumptions and to consider what biases and assumptions I make in how I do my job		
Having positive chat with colleagues in ways that includes everyone		
Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours
Staying silent when you see people being treated unfairly or unethically	Treating team members inconsistently or having favourites	Tolerating behaviours, assumptions and working practices which do not foster inclusion
Working in cliques and closed groups and not being inclusive or welcoming to others	Handling personal problems with insensitivity	Making strategic decisions without adequately considering the impact on customers
Being rude and / or aggressive	Failing to connect and communicate appropriately with each member of your team	Failing to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement

Leadership

We provide strong and transparent leadership, supported by clear decision-making, which is evidenced-based and outcomes-focused.

All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Inspiring others and setting a positive tone by “walking the walk”	Coaching and supporting your team to positively perform, grow and develop, giving timely feedback, praise, and recognition	Creating a clear and compelling vision for the future which inspires and enables colleagues to understand and deliver organisational objectives
Being accessible and approachable to colleagues at all levels	Motivating, inspiring and encouraging others – lifting people’s spirits in times of challenge and change	Coaching, mentoring and challenging others to reach their potential, encouraging an organisational learning approach
Giving timely feedback to others -praising positive performance and calling out poor performance	Fostering a culture of openness and trust within your team	Leading from the front, building high performing teams within own service area aligned to organisational goals
Encouraging co-operation, collaboration, and communication between teams	Encouraging colleagues from across your team to put ideas forward and continuously improve	Promoting and providing effective, confident, and consistent leadership within own service area and across the Bernicia Group
Encouraging colleagues and teams to develop and grow	Positively support and respect decisions that have been made strategically	Communicates organisational priorities, challenges, and decisions openly and honestly
Continuously looking for ways to improve services and outcomes and demonstrating a positive attitude when responding to change	Promoting innovation and change and actively supporting others to embrace and take the opportunities that change presents	Creates an environment where colleagues feel confident to speak up, challenge constructively, and contribute ideas
Constructively influencing and negotiating to achieve positive outcomes	Championing your team inside and outside of the Bernicia Group	Fosters a culture of ownership, accountability, and high performance across the organisation
Demonstrating transparency in our decision making	Taking responsibility for decisions and addressing challenges promptly	



All colleagues	Team leaders / managers	Senior leaders
Encouraging a diversity of views and experiences and listening to all relevant voices before making decisions	Addressing performance issues quickly, fairly, and constructively.	
Acting as an ambassador for the Bernicia Group		
Prioritising tasks and activities that add value for customers and the organisation		
Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours	Negative Behaviours
Micro-managing	Avoiding tackling under performance or having difficult conversations	Not monitoring the performance of your teams or holding people accountable
Being a mood hoover	Leaving people unclear about who is doing what	Ignoring performance issues in favour of personal relationships
Being a gatekeeper - not sharing information and blocking people from speaking to others	Failing to connect and communicate appropriately with each member of your team	Makes decisions based on personal opinion, assumptions, or preference rather than evidence