

# TOWER HAMLETS COMMUNITY HOUSING

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ARBs

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The success of the Area Resident Board depends upon its ability to reflect the diversity of opinions that residents in the Area may hold. Meetings of the Area Resident Board should therefore be conducted in a spirit of equality and informality to allow all views to be heard.

### 2. Conduct of meetings

- 2.1 Members should at all times observe accepted practice while taking part in a meeting:
- To be courteous to each other and support and assist other members in seeking the best possible solution to problems being discussed
  - To allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment
  - To follow the guidance of the Chair in the conduct of the meeting
  - To follow the agenda, and to help each other to reach effective decisions.
  - To remember that you are representing the views of, and should aim to be accountable to, your community or your residents' group
  - To remember that the purpose of the meeting is to benefit residents generally and not specific individuals
  - To bear in mind the rights of individual residents and the duties of staff when proposing solutions to problems.
  - To conduct themselves in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- 2.2. If you are representing a particular group you should not speak or write on behalf of that group without their prior agreement.
- 2.3 The main task of the Chair is to chair the meeting and should generally avoid getting involved in debates at meetings.
- 2.4. Speakers should go through the Chair and keep to the subject being discussed
- 2.5. Only one member should speak at a time and others should listen politely and actively
- 2.6. The Chair will aim to ensure that meetings must start at the stated time and keep to the agenda; late arrivals should enter quietly and not disrupt the meeting with apologies.

If things are getting heated the Chair may call for a five to ten minute break to allow for the situation to calm down.

- 2.7 Wherever possible jargon should be avoided. If it is used then a full explanation should be given.
- 2.8 It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that they are prepared for the meeting by reading all the relevant papers and bringing them to the meeting.
- 2.9 All those present at the meeting have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that does not cause offence to others or limits in any way another ability to fully participate in the meeting.
- 2.10 No member will discriminate against any other participant on any ground. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions. All those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice.
- 2.11 All members should familiarise themselves with the terms of reference to ensure that they continue to meet the agreed aims and objectives.
- 2.12 Individual members:
  - should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.
  - must not expect to receive more or less favourable treatment by staff because of their membership of the ARB
  - must use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, complaints or any other service request
- 2.13 Members should respect all individual residents' confidentiality, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific individual cases which may cause embarrassment or identification of an individual.
- 2.14 Individual members may be affiliated to/or be members of a political party but they may not represent a political party in their role as a member of the ARB.

### **3. Breach of Code of Conduct**

- 3.1 Any person present at the meeting who feels that the code of conduct has been breached should raise it with the Chair.
- 3.2 The Chair will judge whether the person has breached the code of conduct. If there has been a breach the Chair will point out that the behaviour is not

acceptable and that further breaches may result in that person being suspended from the meeting.

- 3.3 The Chair may give two further warnings (a maximum of three warnings in any one meeting and/or three consecutive meetings).
- 3.4 If that person continues to ignore the code of conduct then the Chair will ask the member to leave.
- 3.5 If a member of the meeting feels that the Chair has breached the code of conduct they should raise it with the Community Housing Office Manager, or most senior member of THCH staff, present at the meeting.