

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF WILTSHIRE COUNCIL'S TENANT'S PANEL**

The Code of Conduct gives guidance to members about the way they carry out their duties on the Panel.

**Confidentiality:** The Panel may deal with difficult and sensitive issues. Discretion and care must be exercised during and after meetings. Any information concerning the personal circumstances of **ANY** person(s) shall be treated in confidence and not disclosed to anyone not on the Panel.

**Conduct of Meetings:** Members should at all times observe accepted practices while taking part in a Panel meeting.

- To be courteous to each other. Personal attacks, offensive and abusive comments are not acceptable.
- To allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment.
- To follow the guidance of the Chair in the conduct of meetings.
- To follow the agenda.
- To accept that the purpose of the meeting is to benefit tenants generally and not to favour specific individuals.
- To recognise the rights of tenants and the role of the Council employees.
- To operate within the rules laid down with the Panel's constitution.

The Chair will warn anyone who does not keep to the Code of Conduct during a meeting that if they break the Code of Conduct again they may be asked to leave that meeting. If that person continues to ignore the Code of Conduct the Chair will ask the meeting to vote on whether that person should be asked to leave.

**Personal Interests:** Members must not expect favourable treatment by the Local Housing Office or the Panel itself, nor should they be treated any less favourably, e.g. completion of a repair or allocation of a property.

Members must use the normal procedures at the Local Housing Office for reporting repairs and other enquiries relating to their own tenancies or on behalf of other tenancies.

Members must notify the Panel if they have any personal interest, financial or otherwise, in any matters considered by the Panel. It may be necessary for individual members to abstain from discussion and decisions on a particular item. This must be recorded within the minutes.

**Equalities:** No member will discriminate on any grounds against any other person. Racist, sexist or other discriminatory language or behaviour will not be tolerated.

**Publicity:** No member will speak or write on behalf of the Panel without the prior agreement of the Panel. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the Panel will be made available to all of its members.

**Constitution:** Members will familiarise themselves with the constitution of the Panel.

**Breaches:** Where a member has received a warning in each of two consecutive meetings or has committed any other breaches of the Code of Conduct, such a breach will be grounds for suspension from the Panel. The Chair shall have the authority to decide how long the suspension should last for and decide on any conditions which may be imposed before it is lifted.

**Appeals Procedure:** Where a Panel member has been suspended the following Appeal Procedure will apply.

- The person suspended may write to the Chair requesting a review of their suspension, and setting out the reasons why they feel they should be readmitted to future meetings. Any apology and undertaking to adhere to the Code of Conduct in future will be taken into consideration, but will not in themselves be sufficient to lift the suspension except at the Chair's discretion.
- The Chair will arrange for a hearing involving himself/herself or the Vice-Chair, and two other people. These may be members of the Panel, or where possible, people who are independent but knowledgeable on housing and tenants' issues. At the hearing the person suspended will be invited to discuss their request for a review of the suspension. The person suspended will have the right to bring a friend or representative to the hearing.
- The decision of the Appeals Panel is considered final and will be confirmed in writing.

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Name: .....

Signed: .....Date: .....

Signed by Chairman: .....

Date: .....