

Area Panel: July 2016

Briefing Paper: Code of Conduct

Background

The Code of Conduct was developed as part of the Everyone Counts report that was agreed by the Housing Committee in December 2012. Having a robust Code of Conduct that explained expected behaviours was the most supported part of the report during the consultation process with residents.

Some residents from the Area Panels and Tenancy Service Improvement Group came together with the Resident Involvement Team to undertake a review of the Code of Conduct between February and May 2016. A huge thank you for this constructive piece of work.

The Resident Involvement Manager also met with the Tenancy, Neighbourhoods, Sheltered and Customer Services Managers, and the Resident Involvement Officers.

Key findings and recommendations

1. The Code of Conduct takes a long time to read, a shorter version is more user friendly.

The draft revised Code of Conduct is shorter, and the Breach of the Code of Conduct process is now a separate document.

A shorter set of Ground Rules for meetings has also been developed.

2. It has been useful to use at activities in the community room organised by the association.

The fact that the Code can be used in association and resident involvement activities has been made more explicit.

3. The Everyone Counts Report said the committee would sign the Code and it would be displayed at meetings, in practice the Code was simply circulated, is this sufficient?

The Model Constitution refers to the Code of Conduct so it is not necessary to get members to sign it. A laminated copy of the Code and the Ground Rules will be circulated to all meeting / activities organisers to display.

4. There is no guidance on when a resident resigns or is voted off a committee how long does this stand. Should there be different timescales for different levels of poor behaviour?

Residents have recommended that the person cannot take part in the following annual general or election meeting. This will be explained when a person offers their resignation.

5. There is no guidance on when someone behaves poorly at a number of meetings. Can an association ask them not to attend future meetings, and if so how long would this be for? Or is this a local matter for associations to decide?

This should be up to associations to decide, a clause could be added to the constitution if agreed by members.

6. The unacceptable behaviour form is only of use for behaviours at meetings or activities.

The unacceptable behaviour form has only been used once regarding unwitnessed behaviour outside of a meeting. Otherwise breaches of the Code have been reported in person, over the phone or by email. The form should be removed.

7. The Code is useful for the behaviour of everyone at meetings and association activities as a person can be asked to modify their behaviour or leave.

The ultimate sanction is that it is requested that a person be removed from the committee or is removed from a Housing led meeting.

Anti-social behaviour is a breach of the Tenancy Agreement.

A section about reporting anti-social behaviour has been added. This is from the last Area Panel briefing note (December 2015) about the Code.

Contact:

Becky Purnell, Resident Involvement Team

e: becky.purnell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

t: 01273 293022