



# Norwich City Council tenant panels Code of conduct

## Purpose

- This code of conduct applies to all meetings held within Norwich City Council's formal tenant involvement structure including the tenant involvement panel and the annual review group.
- The purpose of the code is to contribute towards a constructive and pleasant atmosphere for all tenants, officers and guests, to ensure that everyone understands what behaviour is expected from them and what they have a right to expect from others attending the meetings.

- Every tenant panel member must read and sign the code of conduct and agree to uphold its principles.
- Panel members must abide by this code of conduct at all times, and accept that any failure to do so may be a disciplinary matter.

## Personal conduct

### Both tenants and officers will:

- make positive and constructive contributions to the meeting
- work together to achieve objectives
- treat each other fairly and with respect, allowing all attendees reasonable opportunity to speak

- understand that all views are important even if they are not the same as their own
- ensure that personal or individual enquiries are raised outside of the meeting
- make sure all meetings are conducted in accordance with Norwich City Council's equality policy and ensure that equal opportunities are promoted irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation
- not use abusive or threatening language, or raise personal disputes, during meetings
- understand that all forms of discrimination, hate crime, bullying or harassment are unacceptable and may be reported
- establish and maintain a constructive and supportive relationship between tenants, officers and members at all levels

- represent the council and its tenants positively externally.

## Meetings

All panel members accept that they have a personal responsibility to:

- ensure they are properly prepared for meetings by reading the paperwork beforehand and by committing themselves to attending meetings as required
- make sure that when wishing to speak they seek the attention of the Chair and wait their turn when directed by the Chair
- support and abide by all council policies and procedures
- have regard to the reputation and interest of the council and its tenants, and respect confidentiality of information about the council, and individual staff and residents
- treat all paperwork and

discussion as confidential unless instructed otherwise and be mindful of data protection. The Data Protection Act 1998 means it is unlawful to disclose any information about an individual without that person's consent (eg, tenants, officers, applicants for housing, fellow panel members). Panel members must therefore never release or discuss such personal information

- contribute to and share responsibility for panel decisions and not contradict that position nor criticise the panel or any member of it outside meetings
- not communicate with the press or key stakeholders unless expressly authorised by the council.

## Register of interests

- Tenants must declare anything that could be seen as a potential conflict of interest (s) or as potentially influencing their contribution to a

meeting. This could include but is not limited to:

- working for or having a direct interest in that company that does business with Norwich City Council
- positions of public responsibility, for example magistrates
- panel/committee membership or shareholding membership of another registered social landlord
- any other interests that could affect judgement or give the impression that a panel member could be acting for personal motives (such as by kinship, friendship or membership of an organisation, such as the Freemasons).

- The panel will maintain a 'Register of Interests', which will be made publicly available.
- All panel members must complete and sign a declaration of interests.

- Panel members with a conflict of interest (s) may be asked to leave a meeting for certain items, be excluded from voting or be deemed ineligible to sit on the panels.
- Offers of money or personal gifts made in relation to holding a seat on a panel must always be refused and must be recorded in the gifts and hospitality register.
- Any member elected as a councillor for Norwich City Council should resign from the panel.
- Panel membership will be reviewed for tenants who fall into tenancy or garage rent arrears, become involved in any significant dispute with the council or are found to perpetrate antisocial behaviour.

## Requests from residents

The nature of the panel means it is likely that tenants will approach panel members

and ask them to get involved in individual concerns. However, it is crucial that panel members recognise the need to behave impartially and not get involved in detailed operational matters.

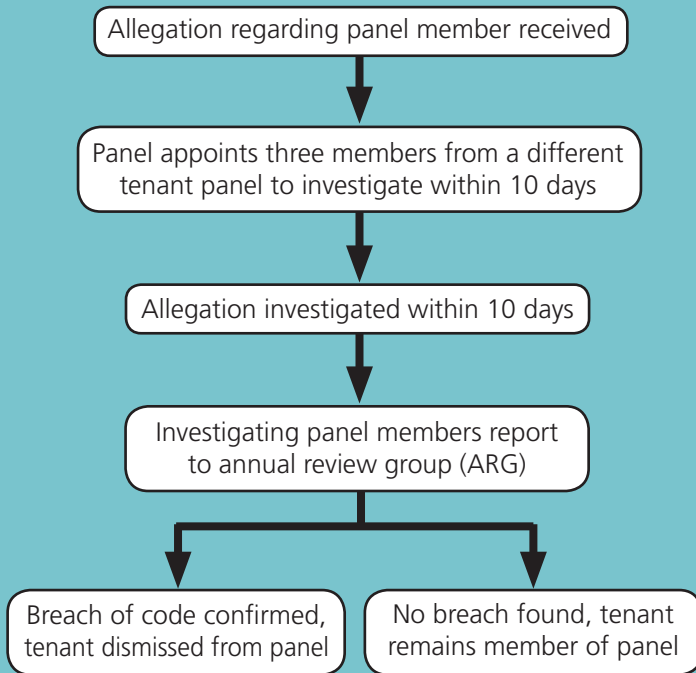
Therefore, in dealing with matters raised by individual tenants panel members should operate as follows.

- (a) Encourage the tenant to approach the relevant officer/department of the council or their local Tenant & Residents' Association.
- (b) Take into account there are always two sides to a story
- (c) Do not get involved in any lobbying.
- (d) Where appropriate, encourage the tenant to raise the matter through the council's complaints procedure.
- (e) If the tenant raises issues about council policies, suggest they raise the

issue with the relevant department for clarification and/or discussion. The details of any such issue should be referred to the relevant officers for a response.

## Breaches of the code

Any alleged breaches of the code will be dealt with in the following way:



I confirm I have read and understood the Norwich City Council tenant panels code of conduct and agree by its terms.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

