Code of conduct - meetings

1. Scope

This code of conduct covers all meetings that are hosted by RB Kingston’s housing service for residents. In this code, the word ‘meeting’ means any meeting, training session, conference, workshop, visit, inspection or other resident participation activities hosted by RB Kingston’s housing service.

It does not include any online engagement, Housing Consultative Committee or the Kingston Residents’ Scrutiny Panel, all of which have separate codes of conduct.

All residents, staff and guests at meetings are expected to adhere to the code of conduct.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the code of conduct is to ensure that:

- people feel welcome and able to contribute at meetings
- meetings are conducted in an open and business-like manner
- the highest standards of behaviour are maintained

3. Personal Conduct

Those attending meetings must:

3.1. treat all members, staff and guests with respect
3.2. welcome new members and make them feel comfortable
3.3. promote equality and diversity by not discriminating unlawfully or unfairly against any person
3.4. not use discriminatory language
3.5. not make derogatory, inflammatory or personal remarks about other people
3.6. not harass, bully, threaten, intimidate or assault others
4. Declarations of interest

4.1. Where a resident has a personal interest in a matter to be discussed, they should declare it. The other people at the meeting will then decide if the resident should withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed. This does not apply to interests held by residents generally, such as the quality of services.

5. Conduct

During meetings, those present shall:

5.1. Conduct themselves in a reasonable manner
5.2. Before attending, read any papers relevant to the agenda
5.3. Do their best to arrive on time
5.4. Keep mobile phones switched off except when an emergency situation is anticipated
5.5. Keep to the subject under discussion and contribute accordingly
5.6. Treat everyone fairly and with respect
5.7. Respect the right of other people to speak without interruption and allow everyone the opportunity to speak
5.8. Respect the views and opinions of others and accept that these may not always be the same as their own
5.9. Adhere to the Chair’s instructions and decisions
5.10. Not discuss issues described as ‘confidential’ with any person or body outside the meeting
5.11. Not swear or use abusive or derogatory language
5.12. Not attempt to disrupt the meeting
5.13. Not attend forums when under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
5.14. Not seek to raise individual issues or complaints, unless time is set aside specifically for this purpose

Conduct between meetings

5.15. The Head of Housing shall deal with any cases where there is potential or actual cause to stop someone from attending meetings because of their behaviour between meetings.

5.16. If an individual treats a member of a group between meetings in a way that is likely to cause them to feel uncomfortable about attending future meetings, the Head of Housing may take the following actions:
• If deemed sufficiently serious, suspend the individual from attending one, more or any meetings pending an investigation

• Hold an investigation, the conclusion of which may be to:
  o Take no action
  o Give a warning to the individual
  o Place conditions on further attendance at meetings
  o Exclude the individual for a period of time from attending any or all meetings
  o Cause the behaviour to be investigated by the police or other agency, and/or take action for breach of tenancy or lease, and/or (for members of staff) instigate disciplinary or capability proceedings
  o Take other appropriate action in light of the circumstances

5.17. The Head of Housing may also exclude an individual from attending meetings if there is reason to believe they might place a risk to the safety or wellbeing of others at or near the meeting.

6. Breaches of the code

6.1. Anyone present may raise a possible breach of the code with the chair.

6.2. The chair may warn someone in breach of the code against breaking the code again. The chair may also ask for an apology to be given.

6.3. If a breach of the code is severe or if there are persistent breaches, the chair may demand that the person who breached the code leaves.

6.4. If an individual breaches the code repeatedly and/or seriously, the other members of the group may vote to exclude that individual from one or more meeting/s.

6.5. The Head of Housing has the ability to exclude a person who has breached the code in a very serious or persistent way at a number of meetings from all meetings for a period of time.

Breaches by the chair

6.6. It is expected that the chair of a meeting will act reasonably, by common consent, and in a way that maintains a fair and impartial atmosphere.

6.7. If the chair is in breach of the code (including not chairing the meeting as in 6.6), the lead officer for that meeting may enforce the code of conduct as if they were the chair. If demanded by a majority of those at the meeting, a vote of no confidence in the chair will be held at the start of the next meeting of that group, with due notification being given of this to all members of that group.