

Code of Conduct for Board and Committee Members



Introduction

The Association recognises the contribution made by voluntary Board members and Committee members to the Association.

The purpose of this Code is to maintain high standards of conduct, assist members in their work for the Association and to protect the best interests of the Association.

Throughout the Code of Conduct, the term "Board" is used to refer to both members of the Board of Management and members of Committees established by the Board.

Obligations of Board Members

The Association expects that all Board members will support the Association's values, aims and policies once these have been agreed.

The Board will normally attempt to reach decisions by consensus.

Board members are required to act only in the interests of the Association and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group. The experience and understanding that each Board member brings from their own experience is highly valued and Board members are not expected to act as representatives of any constituency or interest group.

Board members are expected to attend meetings of the Board and meetings of Committees and Working Groups of which they are a member. Members are expected to have read the papers which have been circulated prior to meetings so that they can contribute fully to meetings.

Board members are expected to attend relevant training events and to take reasonable steps to ensure that they are aware of the development of public policy and other issues which affect the work of the Association.

Board members are required to:

- listen, and respect the views of others;
- seek positive and constructive resolution to those issues where differences in opinion exist;
- respect the office of the Chair, to ensure the orderly conduct of meetings.

From time to time, the Association requires Board members to represent the Association to outside agencies and organisations.

Declarations of Interest

All Board members are required to:

- ensure that private or personal financial interest never influences their decisions;
- ensure that they do not use their position as a Board member for personal gain of any sort;
- disclose to the Secretary any direct or indirect pecuniary interest or other interests which are not pecuniary but which could influence judgment or give the impression that the Board was acting for personal motives as soon as they are aware of any such interest;
- note that the Chair or the Secretary has the right to request that a Board member withdraws from that part of the meeting when any such conflict of interest exists;
- resign from the Board if he/she has any business interests relating to the work of the Association which either directly or indirectly give personal advantage or conflict with the requirements of Schedule I to the Housing Act 1996 or other relevant legislation;
- comply with the Association's policy for hospitality and gifts;
- not gain any advantage by virtue of Board membership if they use the services of a consultant, contractor, professional advisor or other individual firm that also works for the Association and to disclose any such use to the Secretary.

In the event of a Board member considering that another Board member has an interest which should be disclosed, he/she has a duty to report that matter immediately to the Secretary.

Confidentiality

Board members should not pass any information gained through their involvement with the Association to a third party without the approval of the Chair or Secretary. All Board and Committee papers should be regarded as confidential within the Association.

Outside Activities

Board members should consider themselves at all times as being potentially regarded as ambassadors of the Association and should, therefore, ensure that none of their other activities has the effect of bringing the Association into disrepute.

Misconduct

Board members' conduct may be considered to be unsatisfactory when a breach of the Rules, this Code, standing orders or members' legal obligations has occurred.

In cases where there is concern that a member's conduct may be considered unsatisfactory, the following procedure will be adopted:

- The Chair will arrange for an investigation of any allegation of misconduct to be conducted to establish the facts.
- The Chair will invite two other members of the Board to form an Appeals Panel to consider the facts and to determine what action should be taken; if the complaint concerns the Chair then the Vice Chair will convene the panel.
- The Appeals Panel will determine what action shall be taken.
- The action that will be taken will depend upon the seriousness of the misconduct and any previous misconduct. In cases of serious misconduct, the Panel will seek a voluntary resignation from the Board and if such resignation is not forthcoming, formal procedures will be taken in accordance with the Association's rules to remove the Board member.

A Board member has the right to appeal against any decision made, and may make an appeal by writing to the Chair within 14 days of being notified of the decision by the Appeals Panel setting out the grounds on which the Board member is appealing.

The Board (excluding the Appeals Panel members) will hear any such appeal and the Board's decision will be final.

In cases where the Chair feels it is appropriate, he/she may suspend the relevant member from attendance at meetings of the Board and Committees while the matter is being investigated.

Grievances

The procedure for individual grievances covers those matters which are specific to the individual Board member in relation to his/her service as Board member.

If a Board member wishes to raise a grievance, he/she should write to the Chair of the Association.

If the grievance relates to another Board member or the Chief Executive, the Chair should investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

If the grievance is in relation to a member of staff other than the Chief Executive, the Chief Executive will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

If the grievance relates to the Chair, then the Vice Chair will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

If the Board member is not satisfied with the reply which would normally be sent within 10 working days of the original grievance, he/she may appeal to the Chair in writing seeking an appeal outlining the grounds for the appeal.

The appeal will be referred to an Appeals Panel; the composition of the Appeals Panel will be determined by the Chair and will comprise three members of the Board. Appeals will normally be heard within 10 working days of lodging the appeal.

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.