



## **Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel**

### **Code of Conduct**

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DRAFT

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# Code of Conduct for Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel

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## Code of Conduct

### 1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct for Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel members is aimed to show how you will meet your obligations and attain the highest standards in your position as a Complaints Designated Tenant Member.

#### **Rules of Membership to the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel**

Membership and appointment to the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel is clearly defined within its terms of reference.

### 2. The Role of the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel

Under 'The Localism Act 2011' collectively the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel is about empowering social tenants to contribute to resolving housing complaints locally. It is about;

- Using local knowledge, contacts and relationships to work with tenants and landlords to find local solutions at the earliest possible occasion
- Being able to constructively challenge landlords and tenants so that they can sort things out for themselves wherever possible
- Being part of a local democratic framework providing support to tenant and being relevant to ordinary people and communities
- Building up local knowledge to give feedback to help landlords improve their complaints handling.

*Resolving complaints locally: Your role as a designated person  
The National Tenant Organisations Written by Nic Bliss & Blasé Lambert*

#### **In addition it will:**

- monitor the performance of CBH in providing quality services;
- consider ways of enhancing resident involvement in all appropriate areas of the Company's operations and review major customer information issues;
- ensure that the CBH Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure remains an effective method for customers to provide formal feedback or raise concerns;
- Make a commitment to:
  - attend scheduled Complaint Learning Group meetings;
  - attend Complaint training events;
  - set aside time to prepare for meetings.
  - set aside time to meet with complainants

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### 3. Key Roles:

#### Chair of the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel

- to provide the Panel with leadership;
- to represent the Panel at meetings
- to establish constructive working relationships
- to ensure complainants names and addresses stay confidential, as required under the Data Protection 2003 Act
- to work closely with CBH Customer Service Team ensuring that support is maintained as needed

#### Members of the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel

- to mediate on customers behalf between the complainant and CBH, helping to support complainants through the complaints process and if required to refer complaints onto the Housing Ombudsman Service on completion of the CBH 3 stage complaints process.
- Identify how CBH can improve the service to customers learning from Compliments, Comments & Complaints received

### 4. The Code of Conduct

Effective conduct of the Panel's business is vital to good governance. CBH is committed to an approach to concerns and complaints which are honest and thorough. The Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel role is to help support complainants and try and resolve housing complaints locally. The Group will mediate with the complainant providing them support with the CBH complaints process and if required consider referring their complaint onto the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel will have access to complainant's personal information and it is vital that they adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement which they must sign before being accepted onto the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel.

#### Conduct at Meetings

To maintain optimum effectiveness, openness and transparency, the following will apply:

- All Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel members should treat colleagues with respect at all times;
- Designated Tenants' Panel members must make every effort to attend meetings. If members are unable to attend a meeting, at least three working days notice of absence should be given to the Chair.

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### **Conduct of Panel Members**

- Confidentiality must be obtained when handling personal information

### **General Obligations**

- do nothing that cannot be justified to tenants or the public;
- avoid situations that could cause suspicion of improper conduct;
- declare any conflict of interest in accordance with the guidance listed at Point 7 of this Code of Conduct.

### **Group members must:**

- promote equality and diversity by not discriminating unlawfully against any person;
- treat others with respect;
- support other members, especially new appointees;
- report to the Chair as soon as possible if a member becomes aware of any conduct by another member which he/she reasonably believes involves a failure to comply with the Designated Tenants' Panel Code of Conduct;
- agree to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of this Code of Conduct.

### **Group members must not:**

- disclose information about the company given to him/her in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which s/he believes is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless s/he is required by law to do so; nor
- in his/her official capacity as a Designated Tenants' Panel member, or any other circumstance, act in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Designated Tenants' Panel or CBH into disrepute.

### **Contact with Staff**

Generally, outside of organised meetings, it is unlikely that Panel members would meet individual staff, but if you do, then specific case issues or views on practices should not be raised.

Above all when interacting with staff treat them as you would want to be treated and recognise the potential impact of any comments you may make.

The Panel may instruct any officer or employee of CBH to attend any meeting and provide pertinent information as necessary subject to the prior approval of the Chair of the Panel.

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### Breach of the Designated Tenants' Panel Code of Conduct

Panel members must report to the Customer Service Team Leader of CBH as soon as possible if a member becomes aware of any conduct by another member which he/she reasonably believes involves a failure to comply with this Code of Conduct.

This meeting will be held in confidence. If the Customer Service Team Leader considers there is a potential breach of the Code, he/she will, with the assistance of the Customer Relations Manager investigate the matter.

If the allegation is considered to be of a serious nature, the Panel member shall be suspended until the investigation has been completed.

The result of the investigation will be reported to the Panel for a decision.

The Panel's decision will then be confirmed in writing to the Panel member by the Customer Service Team Leader within two working days.

## 5. Equality and Diversity

CBH has adopted and published a Single Equality Scheme covering all areas of its work. Equality of opportunity is a core value of every Board and staff member and Designated Tenants' Panel members are also requested to support this.

The CBH Single Equality Scheme includes and responds to all legislative changes which may affect CBH and its customers and takes into account best practice guidelines.

## 6. Review

The Designated Tenants' Panel will be reviewed annually along side the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy.

## 7. Declaration of Interests

Any member who could be considered as having a personal interest in the complainant's complaint or with a specific complaint must ensure that notification is given. To assist you with your declaration please complete a CBH declaration of interest form (found in Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel Terms of Reference). Declaring a personal interest does not automatically exclude you from the decision making process.

### Personal Conflict of Interest

If a Panel member has a **personal** interest in any item to be discussed by the Designated Tenants' Panel, he/she can remain in the meeting and take part in discussions and decision making.

Examples of a personal interest are:

- residing in the area to be discussed;

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- related to anyone residing in the area to be discussed;
- related to an employee of CBH;
- a member of any organisation which receives funding from either CBH or CBC

### Prejudicial Conflict of Interest

A Panel member is regarded as having a **prejudicial** interest in an item if his/her interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement. In this case, he/she must declare the interest on the form provided **before** the matter is discussed by the Designated Tenants' Panel Group and withdraw from the meeting for that item.

Examples of a prejudicial interest are:

- discussions relating to any organisation in which they have a beneficial or financial interest;
- matters which relate to an issue specific to an individual group member e.g. a dispute with CBH or CBC (but not matters relating to general tenancy or service users)

### A Panel Member shall not be treated as having an interest:

- of which the Panel member has no knowledge and of which it is unreasonable to expect him/her to have knowledge.

## 8. Confidentiality

As part of their mediation role, Designated Tenants' Panel members will receive information regarding Complainants complaint issues, after the Complainant has signed an agreement, allowing his/her personal information being released to the Panel members.

**Designated Tenants' Panel members are expected to respect the confidentiality of information relating to the Complainant, CBH's business or Board decisions at all times and not discuss the Panel's activities outside of meetings. Failure to do so will be considered a serious breach of this Code.**

## 9. Data Protection

The rules as laid out in the Data Protection Act of 2003 will apply to each member of the Designated Tenants' Panel Group.

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### 10. Whistle Blowing

CBH operates a whistle blowing policy for its employees. Any member of staff who may have concerns about serious issues such as unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to the public or environment is able to raise these concerns at an early stage and in confidence. This Policy shall also apply to members of the Designated Tenants' Panel Members.

### 11. Declaration of Acceptance of CBH Tenant Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel Code of Conduct

I, \_\_\_\_\_, having been duly appointed as a member of the CBH Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel, declare that I undertake to observe the approved Code of Conduct for Tenant Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel members.

I further declare that I undertake to work in the best interests of tenants and will do nothing to compromise the Complaints Designated Tenants' Panel, CBH or bring either into disrepute.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_