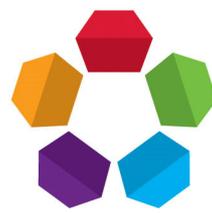


*Stronger communities,  
Better homes, smarter business*



**Alliance  
Homes**

# Approved Contractors Standards

Issue 4 October 2015



## Introduction

These guidelines cover the requirements that apply whilst working on behalf of Alliance Homes to ensure that the highest levels of contractor performance whilst work activities are conducted in a suitable safe manner.

This document does not relieve you, the contractor, of your responsibilities carried out on behalf of Alliance Homes in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other Acts and Regulations where applicable pertaining to the work being undertaken.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to communicate the content of this guide to its employees, and those of its Sub-contractors and to ensure that it is strictly followed.

We trust that you will give your full support to this initiative and look forward to sharing a healthy and safe working environment with you.

**Failure to adhere to this document will result in a review of the individual Contractor(s) concerned in respect of future employment with Alliance Homes.**

## **1.0 Code of Practice for Approved Contractors**

### **1.1 Image**

The image that we present to our tenants is important, so our contractors will:

- Be smart and clean in appearance
- Be friendly and courteous
- Be helpful and understanding

### **1.2 Contractors should avoid**

Any behaviour which is considered by tenants to be:

- Rude or objectionable
- Excessively noisy, e.g. use of radios etc.
- Overly familiar, argumentative, harassing or intimidating
- Derogatory about Alliance Homes or their employer

Contractors must not:

- Work under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
- Park on pavements or driveways without the tenants consent
- Smoke in or near tenant properties.

### **1.3 Identification**

The contractor will:

- Wear clear, easy to read, identification cards, in a prominent position on the workers clothing, at all times, which include:
  - The workers name & photograph
  - The company's name
  - The company's address and telephone number
- Use a password if one had been arranged
- Encourage tenants to call the workers company and/or Alliance Homes if they are in any doubt about the work or the worker.
- Show tenants a letter or a works order, which confirms they have been instructed to carry out on out work on behalf of Alliance Homes.

### **1.4 Quality of Workmanship**

The contractor will carry out work to a high quality and standard as specified and approved by us whatever the general state of the property.

### **1.5 Visits to Tenants Homes**

The contractor will:

- Ask permission before entering a tenants home or garden to carry out work.
- Inform and apologise to tenants and their neighbours if the work is likely to cause a nuisance due to dust, noise etc
- Provide tenants a full explanation for any delay in starting or completing work.
- Provide updates on revised dates for starting or completing the work.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time to visit for any further work.

- Leave a card with the caller's details if the tenant is not in, explaining the reason for the call, providing the contact name, address and telephone number.
- Notify as soon as possible if the visit has to be cancelled and apologise for any inconvenience caused. Where possible a minimum of 24 hours will be given.

### **1.6 Protection of Tenants Belongings**

The contractor will make sure that:

- Furniture, fittings and carpets are protected by dustsheets. Items of furniture or other possessions will be moved with tenant permission if this offers further protection.
- If items are potentially breakable or valuable tenants should be advised that it would be wiser to move them. If this is not possible the tenant should contact the Alliance Homes call centre.
- Damage to plants, trees etc shall be avoided as far as possible. If some damage is inevitable this should be discussed and agreed with the tenants.
- The area of the tenants home which is affected by the work, should be left clean and free from any debris.
- Equipment and materials must be removed wherever possible each day, unless this is impracticable. In this case it should be stored in a position agreed with the tenant.
- If the property is made unsafe or hazardous, the contractor will give the tenant and any neighbours who maybe affected, adequate warning and will minimise the risk.

### **1.7 Leaving Tenants Homes**

When completing works, contractors will:

- Explain to the tenant what has been done and check to see that they are satisfied. If new equipment is installed contractors will leave operating instructions and provide a full demonstration on how to use the equipment.
- Check that all services are in working condition at the end of each day, during works and when the work is finished.
- Make sure that the tenants home is safe and habitable overnight and at weekends when the work cannot be completed with one working day.

## **2.0 Safety Standards for Contractors**

### **2.1 Protection of the Public**

Protection of the public is of paramount concern and any arrangements must allow for the reduced level of awareness of safety risks amongst members of the public.

### **2.2 Responsibilities**

Contractors are required to co-operate with Alliance Homes and individuals in discharging their responsibilities. They must:

- Comply with any Company Safety Rules and instructions in force.
- Ensure that a relevant risk assessment is completed before commencing work and notified of any subsequent changes to these assessments and ensure that persons likely to be affected identified are informed of the risks and appropriate control measures are taken.
- Ensure that persons under their control follow any rules and procedures (including provision and use of Personal Protective Equipment).
- Ensure that any other person likely to be affected by their operation is informed of the risks and the measures necessary to remain unharmed.
- Prepare a specific method statement where required. It must include all the measures necessary to ensure that the operation can be carried out safely and must be submitted and agreed before any work commences.
- Contractors must not borrow tools, plant or equipment..
- Contractors must satisfy themselves that all tools, plant or equipment are suitable for the purpose to which the Contractor intends to use them and that they are in good condition and any defects reported without delay.
- The users must be properly trained, competent and supervised.
- Every effort must be made to segregate the general public, especially children, from work areas.
- At all times co-operate with Alliance Homes to enable them to carry out his statutory duties.

### **2.3 Accident / Incident Reporting**

Contractors must have their own Accident Book and they must record details of all injuries to their employees. All accidents are to be immediately reported to Alliance Homes.

The Contractor must inform the Health & Safety Executive and submit an F2508 in the event of a reportable accident to direct or agency employees as defined in RIDDOR. A copy of the F2508 must be forwarded to the Alliance Homes.

Contractors are also required to keep Alliance Homes informed of the subsequent developments of long term injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

## **2.4 Welfare**

Any facilities provided by Alliance Homes are to be maintained in a safe and clean condition and any person wilfully damaging such facilities will be removed from site and subsequently be liable to being charged for making good.

Contractors must assess their particular first aid needs and agree arrangements with Alliance Homes that ensure adequate and appropriate first aid provision is made for their employees. Smoking is only permitted in designated areas.

## **2.5 Minimum Acceptable Standards**

All tradesmen and operatives employed on behalf of Alliance Homes will have a demonstrable skill level incorporating Health & Safety training at the appropriate level for the activities to be undertaken.

Contractors are required to declare and be able to demonstrate the level of Health & Safety training that has been completed by their managers and supervisors, relevant to their responsibilities.

## **2.6 Risk Assessments**

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations requires employers and self-employed persons to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to employees and any others who may be affected by their undertaking and record the significant findings.

All risk assessments will be reviewed Alliance Homes prior to commencing work on site. A period must be allowed for this process and therefore method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed. Failure to comply may result in a delayed start to the operation.

## **2.7 Method Statements**

All method statements will be reviewed by Alliance Homes prior to commencing work on site. A period must be allowed for this process and therefore method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed.

## **2.8 Fire Precautions**

Contractors retain the primary duty to ensure that all its workers fully understand and are familiar with the fire precautions. Care must be taken when using any equipment that generates flames, sparks, heat or other similar ignition sources and hot work permits will be required for all such activities. No work hot should be carried out within final hour of the days work activity.

Flammable substances must not be brought onto any site without notification in the relevant method statement.

Fire call points, exits and roadways must be kept clear at all times. Where work may obstruct/affect access to fire exits, call points and fire equipment, notification must be given before this situation arises.

Contractors must identify and provide their own fire extinguishers/equipment on site which must be in a serviceable condition and suitable for the risks involved. Waste materials must be removed from the premises at the end of each day, high risk items must be removed upon completion of their use.

## 2.9 Asbestos

For any work that involves disturbance of the fabric of the building the contractor must make reasonable efforts to identify the likelihood of presence of asbestos in the area to be worked or disturbed, for example:

- look for adhesive labels warning of the presence of asbestos,
- ask for the site asbestos register,

If contractors are working with asbestos containing materials the activities must be in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, associated government codes of practice and company requirements.

When working with asbestos containing materials, contractors should ensure that their workers are competent to carry out their work and are aware of all associated risks and control measures.

Where risk assessments and method statements have been provided workers must be aware and work in accordance with them.

Records of training and competency should be provided when requested.

**For further information please refer to the Asbestos Management document.**

## 2.10 Dress Code

Contractor work employees will ensure compliance with the company dress code, as a minimum all workers must wear:

- Identifiable uniform
- High visibility vest/jackets
- Appropriate safety footwear with mid-sole protection

## 2.11 Personal Protective Equipment

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations require every employer to provide their employees with suitable personal protective equipment to be used at work when they may be exposed to a hazard where there is a risk to their health or safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

PPE must be kept clean, maintained and stored in good condition, with any defects reported.

## 2.12 Disciplinary Procedure

Contractors will, when necessary, invoke their disciplinary procedures. Repeat infringements or serious offences may result in individuals being removed from site and may be precluded from other work for Alliance Homes.

## 2.13 Drugs and Alcohol

It is the policy of Alliance Homes to seek to ensure that all its sites are free of the use of alcohol and proscribed drugs.

Alliance Homes will exclude from its sites any person under the influence of alcohol or proscribed drugs.

## **2.14 Good Order – Housekeeping**

Site tidiness is an essential part of accident reduction and fire prevention programs. Areas where Contractors are undertaking work will be kept in a reasonable state of cleanliness to prevent slips, trips and fire hazards.

Waste, debris and off-cuts of materials are to be cleared as is necessary but at least daily to ensure other users of the site are not put in DANGER and that floor areas or structures are not overloaded. No timber or other material with projecting nails shall be allowed to remain in place where they are a source of DANGER. A good order strategy should be in place to manage this requirement.

## **2.15 Manual Handling**

Contractors are to assess the risk and avoid manual handling where reasonably practicable by the use of mechanical aids. Where mechanical aids are not used the contractor is responsible to undertake a detailed assessment of the residual risks to be carried out and a safe system of work used to ensure the health and safety of the employee.

Suitable PPE should be issued where appropriate.

## **2.16 Access Equipment / Ladders and Step Ladders**

All access equipment must be assessed for suitability. Ladders (step and lean to) may only be used for access where there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that:

- the equipment used is suitable for the task and regularly inspected
- workers are suitable trained in working at height procedures.

Note: Ladders (step and lean to) are not to be used as working platforms unless there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

## **2.17 Lifting Operations, Excavators, Hoists and MEWP's**

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that all lifting equipment and accessories whilst working on behalf of Alliance Homes site are in compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations.

All lifting operations must be fully assessed and planned by a competent, appointed person who has adequate practical and theoretical knowledge and carried out in compliance with BS 7121 Safe Use of Cranes.

All lifting equipment including excavators, hoists and MEWP's, must be accompanied with all current examination, inspection and test certificates and reports for retention by the Principal Contractor.

## **2.18 Monitoring Contractor Health & Safety.**

Although the ongoing monitoring of Health & Safety is the Contractor's responsibility, formal inspection and / or auditing may be carried out by Alliance Homes to monitor safety standards.

### 3.0 Equality & Diversity Guidance

Alliance Homes is committed to equality and diversity and to the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in all our dealings as an employer and provider of housing and related services.

As part of our overall commitment to equal opportunities and statutory responsibilities, we ask contractors to answer the questions contained in the application questionnaire to help us in our overall evaluation of the quotations/tenders received.

The information provided helps Alliance Homes to evaluate each firm's understanding and practice of Equal Opportunities in relation to the number of people it employs.

#### 3.1 Legal Background

The Equality Act came into force from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. It replaced the previous 9 pieces of major legislation, roughly 100 smaller pieces of legislation and over 2500 pages of guidance and codes of practice. It aims to simplify the law to make it easier for people to understand and comply with.

It replaces the previous 7 strands of diversity with 9 'Protected Characteristics'

- Age
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race
- Sex

We are required to promote equality and ensure that all 'protected characteristics' are covered. This includes data collection, monitoring, tenants profiling and Equality Impact Assessments.

#### 3.2 What Alliance Homes will do in the procurement of goods, services and works

Alliance Homes will reflect its duty to promote equality in its procurement functions and will ensure that the protected characteristics are integrated into its procurement processes.

Alliance Homes will understand the needs of its service users including any needs due to having a protected characteristic.

#### 3.3 What Contractor's and Suppliers can do

It is important that any company awarded a contract can demonstrate the same level of commitment to equality in employment and service delivery as Alliance Homes.

Although the statutory duty falls on Alliance Homes, contractors and suppliers can be made liable through contracts enforced by Alliance Homes.

It will be necessary for contractors and suppliers, if they wish to acquire contracts from Alliance Homes, to have full regard to the requirements that Alliance Homes will observe in offering those contracts. Alliance Homes will not award a contract to any contractor or supplier who breaches any equality standard observed by them.

### 3.4 Continuing Contractor Good Practice

Previous good practice recommendations for implementing and monitoring equality, will continue to apply:

- adopt a written policy on equality and diversity
- secure, agreement on the policy with trade unions and employee representatives
- communicate the policy to employees and job applicants
- adopt disciplinary procedures for tackling all forms of discrimination, including harassment, and victimisation.
- train managers and supervisors in ensuring equality
- review regularly recruitment, promotion, training and transfer practices in the light of the policy
- take positive action to encourage greater representation of under-represented groups in the workforce
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- record the protected characteristics of job applicants and members of the workforce and use such records to monitor the effectiveness of equality policies.

### 3.5 Process for checking contractor's compliance

Alliance Homes will check a contractor's compliance with equality issues by asking the contractor equality questions allowed by law and requiring documentary evidence to support the answers. The answers and evidence given will be used to decide if a contractor's equality policy and procedures are sufficient to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

If the answers and evidence do not, after evaluation, satisfy Alliance Homes criteria, the company may not be granted entry on to a tender shortlist or awarded a contract.

Contractors and suppliers will be informed if they do not meet the required criteria and will be given suggestions about how they can improve their policy to comply with requirements.

Contractors and suppliers should note that Alliance Homes equality and diversity requirements will be included in contract conditions. The conditions require contractors to:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff, suppliers and subcontractors meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure no unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act.
- Inform Alliance Homes of any findings of unlawful discrimination against the company and of any steps the company takes in response to that finding.
- Provide information to Alliance Homes to enable it to see that the company is complying with these contract conditions.

On-going compliance with these conditions will form part of the contract performance monitoring

## 4.0 Dignity at Work Guidance

It is every employee's legal and moral right to be able to carry out their work without fear of being harassed, bullied, victimised or discriminated against. It is also their responsibility not to commit acts of harassment against another person and to respect the principles upheld by this policy.

Alliance Homes operates a Dignity at Work Policy is to make all staff and contractors aware of the types of behaviour that are unacceptable and the action that may be taken as a result. It also shows the steps to be taken if an employee suffers from harassment at work.

Harassment in Alliance Homes is neither permitted nor condoned and should it occur employees have the right to take action to ensure that it does not reoccur.

### 4.1 What is Harassment?

The term harassment is wide ranging and includes, but not limited to, victimisation, bullying, discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation; and any unwanted conduct relating to a relevant protected characteristic or any other personal characteristic which:

- Has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- Is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Employees and Contractors should be aware that what is acceptable to them may not be acceptable to other staff or tenants.

Harassment takes many forms, from casual comments to actual physical violence. Examples of harassment include (this list is a non-exhaustive list):

- Unwelcome and/or insensitive comments or gestures
- Sexual innuendo
- Insensitive jokes and pranks
- Verbal abuse
- Offensive material/graffiti
- Threatening behaviour
- Unwanted physical contact
- Violence
- Exclusion/silence
- Differential treatment
- Bullying
- Threat of dismissal/loss of promotion for refusal of sexual favours
- Promoting false rumours or gossip
- Sending offensive/insensitive messages or pictures via internal/external mail, via fax/email or social networking sites.

Harassment also includes those instances where malicious and false claims of harassment are made against individuals and will also be subject to disciplinary action.

### 4.2 Harassment from Tenants, Employees or Visitors

If employees are subjected to harassment from a tenant, employee or visitor they should keep a note of the details, the date, time and what was said and report it to their manager or supervisor who will take any necessary action to resolve the matter.

## 5.0 Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy Summary

Alliance Homes' operates a counter fraud, corruption and bribery policy that details the steps that must be taken where fraud, corruption or bribery is suspected or discovered. Any person who becomes aware of any fraud, corruption, bribery or other illegal act and does not follow this policy could be subject to disciplinary action.

The key objectives of this policy are for Alliance Homes to:

- demonstrate commitment to minimise the risk of these incidents occurring
- safeguard assets and reputation
- provide a framework for whistleblowing
- to ensure Employers and employees can declare private interests which potentially conflict with the activities of Alliance Homes

We are committed to an effective process which:

- encourages prevention
- promotes detection and a culture of zero-tolerance
- identifies a clear pathway for investigation
- takes positive action on cases of fraud, corruption and bribery, responding with initial steps to any issues raised within 24 hours.

Fraud and bribery are criminal offences and the police are likely to be involved. Any individual committing acts of fraud or bribery could be subject to both criminal and disciplinary action.

### 5.1 Policy Detail

We are committed to an open culture where employees, tenants and the general public are encouraged to raise concerns regarding any aspect of service delivery, including allegations of fraud, corruption and bribery.

Our expectation on propriety and accountability is that Employers and employees will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

There is an expectation and requirement that all individuals and organisations associated with Alliance Homes will act with integrity.

### 5.2 Preventing Fraud, Corruption and Bribery - Employees

Employers and employees are expected to abide by our internal controls, follow any code of conduct related to their personal professional institute and the Alliance Homes Code of Conduct.

### 5.3 Internal Control Systems

We have Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in place that must be followed by all employees and Board members.

We are committed to continuing with systems and procedures, which incorporate efficient and effective internal controls, and internal check procedures.

The Executive Team will ensure that these controls are properly maintained and are effective. The existence, appropriateness and effectiveness of these internal controls are to be independently monitored by Internal and External Auditors.

#### **5.4 Reporting and Investigating Fraud, Corruption and Bribery**

A register is maintained to record all actual or attempted frauds. All such cases are reported to Audit Committee and all cases in excess of £5,000 will be reported to the Regulator.

The Executive Team will deal swiftly and firmly with those who defraud us, engage in any acts of bribery, or who are found to be corrupt.

#### **5.5 Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing means the confidential raising of problems within an organisation. We recognise that in certain circumstances employees or tenants will need or prefer to come forward on a confidential basis.

However, we would urge concerned parties to come forward to eradicate the misuse of our assets and the abuse of position. We will support employees reporting suspected fraud, corruption or bribery, and protect them from reprisals or victimisation.

When people come to us with a concern it will be considered carefully and fully. We will be fair to parties against whom an allegation is made. If someone is potentially being accused of misconduct, there is a clear need to ascertain his or her version of events. Where employees abuse the whistleblowing process we will treat this as a disciplinary matter. However, no one who comes forward in good faith has anything to fear.

#### **5.6 Disclosure of Interest**

A register of interests is maintained by the Company Secretary and is available for public inspection. Employers and employees are required to record any interests that could cause a potential conflict with the activities of Alliance Homes. Employers members and employees will complete a declarations of interest form annually and be responsible for providing updates to the Company Secretary as and when information changes.

## 6.0 CONTRACTORS DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLIANCE.

Signing of this document is a pre-requisite to any contractor or supplier appointment made by Alliance Homes and will be subject to regular review and appraisal.

No contractor will be allowed to commence any work until the declaration has been signed and returned with any other relevant information requested.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS DECLARATION AND RETURN IT TO THE ALLIANCE HOMES PROPERTY CARE DEPARTMENT.**

I confirm:

- That I have read and have understood all the above and my company will comply with all the requirements of the **Code of Practice and Safety Standards** when working on behalf of Alliance Homes.
- That the organisation's policies and procedure comply with the **Equality Act 2010** and cover the 9 Protected Characteristics
- That I have read and have understood the **Alliance Homes Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy** and my company will comply with all the requirements of the policy.

<b>Company:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	
<b>Fax Number:</b>	
<b>Contact Email:</b>	