



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Tenant Services

Code of Conduct for Contractors

This is Tenant Services' Code of Conduct for Contractors and forms Appendix 7 of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy which, in turn, forms Appendix C of the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

If you need a larger print copy, audiotape, Braille or translation please contact Wokingham Direct on 0118 974 6000.

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SIGNING OFF SECTION

This Policy has been subject to consultation with the following;

- Involved Tenants

And was signed off by;

-

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1. Our Commitment

We are committed to providing our tenants with an efficient and high quality service. As a service provider to the Council, you are a Council representative and we therefore require you to follow the practices and guidance set out in this Code of Conduct for Contractors.

We believe that everyone has the right to fair and equal treatment. We aim to create an environment where employees and contractors treat our tenants and each other, with dignity and respect at all times.

We expect our contractors to maintain our high standards of confidentiality. The information we provide should only be used for the purpose for which it is supplied and not shared with any third parties unless we have given written permission. Information should not be held for longer than necessary and destroyed securely once it is no longer needed.

Any confidential information about our tenants or staff should remain confidential, unless there are serious or urgent concerns where sharing this information would prevent harm.

2. Our Requirements

When working on our behalf you must:

- Make an appointment and call within the agreed time.
- Always show your identity card.
- Inform the tenant if you will be delayed.
- Leave a card if the tenant is not in asking them to make another appointment.
- Let tenants know before starting works outside their home (if they are available)
- Park all vehicles responsibly, ensuring they do not cause an obstruction or damage to any landscaped areas.
- Seek the tenant's permission to park on any hardstand or other designated parking area.
- Be polite and respect tenants' cultural beliefs and personal circumstances.
- Inform the tenant what work will be done and how it will affect them.
- Protect tenants' belongings from damage, dust and paint.
- Keep materials and equipment safe in order to avoid injury to anyone.
- Be appropriately dressed with a clean and tidy appearance.
- Ensure appropriate care is taken, especially when carrying out work near children and pets. Ask the tenant to keep their children and pets out of the work area for both their and your safety.

- Take reasonable steps to keep a tenant's home and their belongings secure.
- Avoid damage to a tenants' garden and plants. If this is unavoidable the tenant/s must be made aware prior to any actions.
- If working alone, inform the tenant if you need to leave to get a part or if you cannot finish the work in the same day and have to arrange to come back.
- Make sure the tenant has water, electricity, heating and cooking facilities before leaving at the end of the day.
- Clear up any mess and take away rubbish.
- Make sure any subcontractor follows this code of conduct.
- Tell your line manager if the tenant is a relative or friend.
- Ensure any work area is left in a safe and secure state.

And you must not;

- Smoke in a tenant's home or garden.
- Play music.
- Use inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Gossip about other tenants, the Council, our staff or other contractors.
- Be in a tenant's home with children known to be under 16 if a responsible adult is not present.
- Use a tenant's toilet without permission.
- Receive gifts or payments from a tenant.
- Keep keys to a tenant's home, unless you have the written agreement of the tenant.
- Develop a relationship with a tenant which may involve you working outside of the scope of your employment. This could include witnessing wills or financial documents.
- Leave the property insecure at any point during the course of any work.
- Undertake private work for any tenant where the tenant pays you for work undertaken at their request.

3. Guidance for dealing with specific issues or situations

Safeguarding

We have a duty to make sure that everyone who lives in one of our properties or uses our services is protected and safe.

Safeguarding is about stopping a person from being harmed and promoting their welfare. We have a policy and guidance in place for recognising signs of abuse, suspected abuse, or vulnerable adults and children.

If you suspect that a tenant may be at risk of harm you should report your concerns to your line manager and to the Council immediately.

Vulnerable People

Some tenants could feel nervous about having a stranger in their home. It is important for you to show your identification card, introduce yourself, your company and the reason for your visit before going into a tenant's home.

If you feel a tenant is vulnerable, you should seek an opportunity to have another person present whilst the work is being carried out in their home.

If a child under the age of 16 returns home when you are working in the property and there is not a responsible adult present, you should contact the Council and your line manager immediately and agree a course of action.

If, whilst working in a tenant's home, you witness something you feel uncomfortable about, you have a duty to report this immediately to the Council and to your line manager. Examples of this could be a parent abusing a child or an adult living on their own who appears to be not coping.

4. Dealing with violence and difficult situations

Violence at work

Situations may arise where there is verbal abuse, violence or a threat of violence. At all times you should try to minimise confrontations and not be drawn into arguments. If the situation cannot be resolved, you should calmly leave the property. Maintaining personal safety comes first. If there is an incident it should be reported directly to the Council and your line manager.

Difficult situations

Occasionally it may feel uncomfortable working in occupied homes given the circumstances or the behaviour of a tenant or their visitors. An example might be if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In these situations, as soon as it is safe to do so you should politely tell the tenant you need to leave (without giving the specific reason) and report the situation to the Council and their line manager.

5. Equality and Diversity

We recognise that the people who live in our homes and use our services come from diverse backgrounds. We are committed to ensuring that all people are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination. Our Equality and

Diversity Strategy addresses the inequality, disadvantage and discrimination that some of our tenants may face during their daily lives.

We need to recognise the individual rights of disabled people and their particular needs. Do not ask personal questions which have no relevance to the work you are carrying out and do not do anything you are not trained to do.

Guidance for working where there are people with disabilities or mobility issues.

Mobility problems

- Make sure a tenant's ability to move around their home is not restricted.

People with impaired hearing

- Ensure you attract the tenant's attention before speaking.
- Face the tenant when you talk to them, speak clearly and use your usual tones. Raising your voice may distort what you are saying and make it more difficult for them to understand you or lip read.
- Be prepared to write things down but be aware that the tenant may not be able to read written text.
- Let the tenant know if you will be making a lot of noise, for example drilling or hammering.
- Give clues about what you are saying in; your face, your body language and the gestures you make.
- Let the tenant know if you have to leave the property for any reason.

People with impaired vision

- When you arrive introduce yourself using, where appropriate, an agreed password or your identification card.
- It is not possible to anticipate every tenant's needs but it is important to tell the tenant; what you will be doing, where you will be working and how the work will be done.
- If you think the tenant needs your help ask first, don't just assume they do.
- Use ordinary words and phrases and don't be afraid of using words like 'look' and 'see'.
- Explain where you will be working and what you will be doing.
- If you need to move items of furniture, ask the tenant where you should put it and make sure you put it back in the same place when you finish work.
- Agree with the tenant where you can safely leave work materials.
- If you have to leave the property for any reason let the tenant know, and give them an idea of when you will be back.

Language translation

When you come into contact with a tenant who cannot speak English, you can either phone the translation company direct or via the Council's Tenants Services Offices. Details of this will be provided by your employer.

Religious Matters

You should not move a religious object without asking first. If a tenant asks you to comply with a particular religious procedure, wherever possible, you should respect their request.

However, you are not expected to compromise your safety or ability to do a job, for example if you are asked to remove your safety footwear before entering a room. With such requests, contact your employer or the Council for advice.

Ethnic Minority Groups

You should always be aware of the language you use, regardless of who you are working with. Below is a list of common terms, along with guidance on whether they can be used or not:

Common Terms	Can this term be used?		Comments
Black	✓		Often used to refer to African, African-Caribbean, Asian and other ethnic minority people.
Coloured		X	This term should be avoided.
Non-White		X	This term should be avoided.
Asian	✓		This can be used but you should be aware that some people from the Indian subcontinent do not consider themselves to be 'Asian'. It is acceptable to refer to people by national origin if known for example Chinese, Japanese.
Oriental		X	This term should be avoided.
British	✓		This term relates to citizenship and does not directly relate to ethnic origin so is acceptable.
Ethnic Minority	✓		This is generally accepted as the broadest term.
Immigrant		X	This term should be avoided.