**Alliance Scrutiny Panel**

**Code of Conduct**

**1. Why we need a Code of Conduct?**

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that members of the panel understand the standards of behaviour expected of them.

 The Panel code of conduct give confidence to Alliance Homes, Board, Staff and customers, that Panel members will show professionalism and integrity, and their actions will be accountable and transparent.

We aim as panel members to act in interests of Alliance Homes and customers.

This Code of Conduct has been developed in line with the National Housing Federation Code of Conduct of Governance, which is based on the 7 principles of public life, but this code goes beyond this.

The seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in its first report guide the content of this Code of Conduct.

1. **Selflessness**: take decisions solely in terms of Alliance Homes values and mission. We should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family and friends
2. **Integrity**: not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties
3. **Objectivity**: ensure that in the delivery of services, we ensure impartiality and that choices are made on merit alone
4. **Accountability**: accept accountability for our decisions and actions to our residents, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate
5. **Openness**: be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that we take. We should give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly so demand
6. **Honesty**: declare any private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that is lawful, and protect Alliance Homes reputation, values and mission
7. **Leadership**: promote and support these principles by leadership and example

**2. Personal Conduct**

Panel members will demonstrate the following behaviours and attitudes at all times:

* courtesy to other members, the Board and staff at Alliance Homes
* be welcoming and friendly
* act with integrity, honesty and openness
* remember that their involvement is to benefit the community, not to pursue personal aims
* not speak or write to the press or any other external body, relating to Alliance Homes without prior agreement of Alliance Homes and the Panel
* behave appropriately and not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
* treat all paperwork, discussions and personal information about customers as confidential and sign a confidentiality statement to adhere to the Data Protection Act.
* embrace equality and diversity by not making comments that could be seen as derogatory or breach the laws of equality
* not use offensive, intimidating, threatening, abusive, patronising or demeaning language or behaviour and understand and respect that people will have different tolerances of such language or behaviours
* leave political views at home
* adhere to their tenancy agreement
* be especially careful of relationships with customers, Board, staff and contractors and never allow any personal relationship to conflict with the Panel and Alliance Homes interest
* avoid gifts except in the very limited circumstances as the giving and receiving of gifts can create a relationship that can be seen to influence our judgement and to adhere to the Alliance Homes hospitality procedures if gifts are offered/received
* avoid jargon

**3. Conduct at meetings**

Panel members will:

* arrive on time for meetings
* be properly prepared, having completed any pre reading sent out with reasonable notice ahead of the meeting date
* give apologies in advance of the meeting to the Community Engagement team, if they are unable to attend and if possible inform one of the members they are working with during that meeting
* switch off mobile phones, or refrain from using unless prior agreement has been given by Panel at a meeting
* not talk over others
* leave the meetings as friends and not gossip and discuss personal issues about each other
* be sure not to undermine the Panel in public or in the offices of Alliance Homes
* make sure we are presentable in our dress and professional in our attitude
* carry an ID badge and display this when working on behalf of the panel
* stick to the point of the meeting and the agenda and not stray from this, including onto personal issues, and waste time in the meeting
* follow the agenda and help each other reach informed and effective decisions
* members should prepare properly for each meeting by reading all the relevant papers and bring these to the meeting
* speakers at meetings should go through the elected chair for that meeting
* respect each other’s views and make any points of disagreement after the point has been made by another member
* any other business will only be used for urgent items and will be agreed at the beginning of the meeting
* remember that working in a group means that Panel members might not like each decision, but accept majority decisions, reached by consensus
* show respect and courtesy in all dealings with others for the purpose of improving services for all customers

**4. Confidentiality**

The Panel may deal with sensitive and controversial issues. They will exercise discretion and care in performing their duties and responsibilities. If confidential information is discussed it must not be passed on to anyone who is not a member unless otherwise agreed at the meeting.

Any information which is no longer required by the Panel will be disposed of through the Community Engagement team at Alliance Homes where it will be shredded.

Alliance Homes will provide a cupboard where the Panel may keep confidential data.

All Panel members will sign a separate Confidentiality agreement.

**5. Conflict of Interest**

Panel members will:

* ensure their private or personal interests do not influence their decisions and they do not use their position to obtain personal benefit
* disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent that they consider may affect any matter under discussion
* declare any interest in an item and leave the meeting if requested to do so
* use the normal procedures for reporting or dealing with any aspects of their tenancy, for example reporting of repairs and not use meeting time for this.

**6. Dealing with breaches of this code**

**During a meeting**

If anyone does not abide by this Code of Conduct during a meeting the following action may be taken:

* they will be made aware of the breach by the co-ordinator or staff member from Alliance Homes who may warn the member that they may be asked to leave the meeting
* if the member continues to ignore the Code of Conduct the co-ordinators/staff request - they will ask the members present at the meeting to vote on whether that member should leave the meeting

**In the case of regular or more serious breaches:**

A co-ordinator will make a member aware if they breach the Code of Conduct and bring the Group into disrepute, the member will be warned that they may be asked to leave the Panel on a permanent basis. The Alliance Community Engagement Manager and a co-ordinator of the Panel may warn them verbally that if they break the code again, they may not be able to continue as a member of Panel.

If the breach is by a co-ordinator, then this will be administered by another co-ordinator and Alliance Community Engagement Manager

If, despite a warning, a member of the Panel continues to breach this Code, or, in the case of a first and very serious breach, a Panel member will be suspended or removed from future work.

The matter will be investigated by a co-ordinator and the Alliance Community Engagement Manager and the outcome will be confirmed in writing.

Examples of serious breaches include, but are not confined to, the following:

* Misusing or disclosing tenant feedback or other tenant information obtained for the purpose of conducting a service review
* Acting in a manner that causes offence to another person (customer, Board Member or staff) – e.g. displays of prejudice or aggression, verbal and non-verbal

A third/final right of appeal may be made in writing to the Alliance Homes CEO, or a senior manager who is chosen to act on her/his behalf.

All breaches will be considered within 10 days and the result will be communicated within 3 days to the Panel member.

***In signing this Code of Conduct, I agree to abide by all requirements set out above:***

Signed by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Alliance Scrutiny Panel member

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***In return, Alliance Homes agrees to provide training, support (including travel and other expenses) for Panel Members to conduct scrutiny or to act on their behalf at other meetings:***

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Alliance Homes

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_