

**WEST LANCASHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**TENANTS' AND
RESIDENTS' FORUM**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Tenants' and Residents' Forum Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct sets out the working relationship between members of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum, Council Officers and Councillors and the rules and procedures that should be followed at the Tenants' and Residents' Forum meetings and all related meetings.

The Code of Conduct has been drawn up following joint discussion between Tenant Representatives, Housing staff and Councillors.

It has been developed in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding of each other roles and responsibilities. The aim of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that the Tenants' and Residents' Forum has a culture of partnership and co-operation. The Code of Conduct will also allow for a professional and positive relationship to develop between members of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum, Council Officers and Councillors.

Members of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum, Council Officers and Councillors must agree to adopt and abide by the Code of Conduct; any failure to do so may result in the individual being excluded permanently from the Forum.

This Code of Conduct complements the rules laid down in the Tenants' and Residents' Forum Constitution.

All elements of the following Code of Conduct apply equally to Tenants, Residents, Councillors and Council staff, who will hereafter be referred to as Participants, unless specifically noted.

Conduct at meetings of the Forum and all related bodies

- The Chair should welcome participants and any others to the meeting.
- All participants will prepare for Tenants' and Residents' Forum meetings by reading the information sent to them prior to the meeting and bringing it with them to the meeting.
- Participants are expected to stay for the duration of each meeting. However if a Participant wishes to leave the meeting early for whatever reason, they should inform the Chair at the beginning of the meeting.
- Participants should exit the meeting with minimum disruption.
- Refreshment breaks should only be taken at an agreed point in the meeting
- Participants who arrive late to a meeting should enter quietly and not disrupt the meeting with apologies.
- Speakers should go through the Chair and keep to the subject being discussed. Any participant wishing to ask a question or raise a point, must raise their hand and wait. The Chair or the Tenant Participation Officer will

note the raised hands and will note the order for questions to be asked or points to be raised. This is to ensure that all participants get an opportunity to speak.

- Any participant unable to attend a meeting should always give apologies in advance of meetings.
- Only one participant should speak at a time and there should be no cross-talking or separate discussions held.
- Where available, a microphone should be used when a participant is speaking
- Participants must listen respectfully to whoever is speaking and not hold their own conversation with others who are sat around them.
- Wherever possible, jargon should be avoided, however if it is used, then a full explanation should be given.
- Participants should remember that the purpose of the meeting is to benefit tenants and residents generally and not specific individual/s.
- No smoking is allowed during the meeting and smoking is not allowed immediately outside any Council buildings, where the meeting is being held.
- All dealings will be fair and impartial.
- During a meeting, participants may be assertive in an attempt to put over their view, however this must not be in an aggressive manner.
- In carrying out their role, no participant will discriminate against any person in a manner that is contrary to the Councils Equal Opportunities Policy. All participants shall ensure that everybody is treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, marital status, disability, age, or sexual orientation or any other matter, which causes people to be treated with injustice.

Code of Conduct

All participants:

- are required to act in a courteous manner and treat each other with a mutual respect that is open and honest. Personal attacks, offensive and abusive comments will not be tolerated.
- will listen to each other's points of view and respect that people sometimes have differing views.

- should learn from each other and work together as a team and recognise the work that each other does.
- will remember that everyone is human and sometimes makes mistakes.
- will recognise that everyone is an individual and has their own area of expertise.
- Will address each other in a professional manner.
- Will declare any personal or professional connection they have with an issue if relevant.
- Will not abuse any personal connections.
- Will expect to be treated equally.
- Will use the proper procedures to report issues and not use meetings of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum as a reporting platform.
- will not bring personal or political issues to the attention of the Forum,
- will recognise that Councillors are elected to perform their duties in the best interests of the Council and will fully respect the position regardless of their own personal political views.
- Will remember that demands on tenants and residents time must be kept to a minimum.
- Will offer full explanations about decisions, which have been made.
- Will ensure all their communications are in plain English.

Additional information

Council Officers and Councillors are non-voting participants and will abide by the Tenants' and Residents' Forum Code of Conduct when attending meetings or in representing the Tenants' and Residents' Forum.

Council Officers Code of Conduct

- Officers are responsible to WLDC and will fulfil their duties in mindful recognition of the Council's Tenant Participation Policy statement to increase the involvement of tenants in the delivery of services and will support and encourage the development of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum.
- Officers will support and advise the Tenants' and Residents' Forum on issues concerning Council policy, but will not discuss details of individual tenancies.

- Officers will also abide by the Council's Code of Conduct.

Councillors Code of Conduct

- Councillors will recognise that the Tenants' and Residents' Forum is a non-political organisation and will not politicise meetings unless they are asked to clarify a point of information relating to Council policy.
- Councillors are also bound by the Council's own Member Code of Conduct.

Breach of Conduct

Should any Tenants' and Residents' Forum member, Council officer or Councillor breach the Code of Conduct at a meeting, they may be given a verbal warning. If the individual continues to breach the Code, or in the case of more serious breaches, that person may be excluded or suspended from the meeting by the Chairperson.

Complaints regarding the action of Council staff shall be dealt with via the Council's normal procedures and not by the Forum. Complaints of misconduct by Councillors shall be dealt with via the Standards Board for England

Participants who breach the Code of Conduct may be excluded from attending further Forum meetings.

If any participant refuses to leave a meeting, after being excluded, the meeting can be closed and reconvened at the Chairs discretion.

Participants who have been asked to leave a meeting or who have been excluded from attending future meetings have a right to appeal to the Forum Secretary in writing for consideration by the Grievance Committee.

If a participant of the Tenants' and Residents' Forum feels another participant is breaching the Code of Conduct, the details of the alleged breach shall be made in writing to the Tenant Participation Officer.