



London Borough of Camden Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Code of Conduct

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this Code is to help tenants and leaseholders who engage with Camden about how we manage their homes to get the most out of their voluntary efforts.
- 1.2 Engagement is about working collaboratively together, therefore we want it to be a positive experience for residents, staff and council members. Residents expect staff and members attending engagement activities to be amongst other things well prepared, helpful and polite. Expected standards of staff and Councillor behaviour is covered in officer and member codes of conduct.
- 1.3 Equally those attending engagement activities need to be aware of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour from tenants and leaseholders and the actions taken when the boundaries are breached.
- 1.4 This code sets out the behaviours we expect of all tenants and leaseholders involved in our formal and informal engagement activities; including but not exclusive to:
 - Tenant & Resident Associations
 - District Management Committees
 - Residents Scrutiny Group
 - Active Tenant & Residents Panel
 - Focus Groups
 - Coffee Mornings
 - Consultation events
- 1.5 It covers expected standards of behaviour when participating in resident involvement activities, both in at and outside of formal meetings.
- 1.6 The chair of any meeting is responsible for enforcing this Code of Conduct, with the support of the other people present. For other tenant and leaseholder engagement activities, the organiser or staff member will be responsible for enforcing this Code. If the Chair breaks the code, the vice-chair or any other member can call the Chair to account under this code of conduct.
- 1.7 To be recognised and supported by Camden Council, tenants and residents groups must agree and adopt this Code. They may also add to the Code to suit the needs of their own group.

2 Personal conduct for those taking part

Involved residents should:

- 2.1 Demonstrate good manners at all times;
- 2.2 respect differences in age, knowledge, background, ability to present ideas, ethnicity race, religious belief and sexuality etc.
- 2.2 act fairly and not discriminate, on any ground, against any other individual or group;
- 2.3 treat people with dignity and respect;
- 2.4 refrain from any type of anti-social behaviour including but not limited to:
 - abusive, offensive or aggressive behaviour
 - racist or sexist remarks
 - bad language
 - defamatory, insulting or personal comments
- 2.5 listen to other views and not dominate discussions;
- 2.6 not promote party political or sectarian views whilst participating in engagement activities;
- 2.7 ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times in relation to matters of a personal or sensitive nature, or anything which has been shared in confidence;
- 2.8 not claim to represent their group or Camden tenants and leaseholders, unless they have been specifically charged with "representation" by the group itself;
- 2.9 not seek preferential treatment by virtue of their engagement and are expected to use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, neighbourhood issues, complaints etc.
- 2.10 attend training or other events they have signed up to, unless there are unavoidable circumstances; in which case they must notify the Chair or Camden Council staff member immediately;
- 2.11 declare any potential conflicts of interest that are identified (for example because of personal relationships, employment, involvement with other groups, business etc.)
- 2.12 not to cause harassment and anti-social behaviour against anybody including officers and members of the Council fellow residents and visitors. This covers in person, by phone, written, text, email or internet harassment and anti-social behaviour; and
- 2.13 use email and social media appropriately.

3 Meetings code

In addition to the general personal conduct rules above the following apply to meeting conduct. Attendees are expected to:

- 3.1 Send apologies if they are not able to attend a meeting or other group business;
- 3.2 prepare for meetings by reading the papers and bringing them to the meeting;
- 3.3 arrive punctually to enable meetings to start promptly;
- 3.4 leave any personal issues to outside of the meeting; and
- 3.5 switch off mobile phones during the meeting.

Be bound by normal procedures, such as:

- 3.6 Arrive on time so that meetings can start on time;
- 3.7 not to interrupt when another member is speaking;
- 3.8 seek to intervene or contribute "through the chair";
- 3.9 co-operate with the Chair in dealing with the business and keeping to the agenda and time available for the meeting/ agenda items;
- 3.10 accept that the Chair's rule is final unless they have breached this code;
- 3.11 keep contributions brief and to the point;
- 3.12 not to distract the meeting by holding individual conversations with others;
- 3.13 accept other people's right to speak and accept that different points of view are valuable to good decision making;
- 3.14 avoid jargon or explain what it means; and
- 3.15 work with other members constructively to arrive at the best possible solution.

4 Finance

Tenants and leaseholders are expected to:

- 4.1 Only use grants for the purpose that they were applied for. This includes grants from the Council and any other funds;
- 4.2 return equipment funded through grants to the Council if the group cease to exist;
- 4.3 follow financial guidelines within their TRA constitution. In the unlikely event that these are not covered the Council's model constitution will apply;
- 4.4 abide by the expenses policy, complete expense claim forms and provide receipts for any expenditure; and
- 4.5 if the group is funded, close the bank account according to the terms of the Constitution or the Council's Model Constitution.

5 Chairing code

The Chair should:

- 5.1 Undertake initial and regular refresher training on chairing skills;
- 5.2 encourage all to participate;
- 5.3 sum up at the end of each discussion / agenda item; and
- 5.4 manage the agenda and timing of meetings.

6 Breaches of this Code of Conduct

Meeting breaches:

- 6.1 All members of the group or activity are responsible for abiding by the Code of Conduct and helping to ensure that others do so;
- 6.2 if a meeting is getting heated a five minute time out can be called at the discretion of the Chair. Any member of the group can suggest this option to the Chair;
- 6.3 if a member of the group or activity do not abide by the Code of Conduct, the Chair will warn that if they break the code again they will be asked to leave the meeting;
- 6.4 if the Chair breaks the code, they can be warned by any other member and may be asked to leave the meeting with the support of the majority of the meeting members;
- 6.5 serious or persistent breaches will result in a written warning, suspension (time must be specified) or permanent expulsion. A decision to temporarily or permanently exclude any tenant or resident can only be taken after a quorate meeting of their group to discuss the breach where a majority have voted in favour of this action;
- 6.6 temporary exclusion can last only for a maximum of one year; and
- 6.7 allegations of breaches of misconduct by one resident against another outside of a meeting should always be raised with the relevant residents' group in the first instance.

7 Conduct for TRA Hall key holders

- 7.1 The Council's memorandum of understanding must be adhered to.
- 7.2 If the TRA is no longer recognised or closes, the keys must be returned to the Council within 7 days.
- 7.3 A current inventory must be kept of all grant funded equipment within the hall with a copy to the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Team.

- 7.4 A spare set of keys must be registered with the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Team.
- 7.5 A lettings policy and fee structure should be agreed with the committee and made public.

8 Role of the council

- 8.1 Where there are breaches of the code, the role of the Council is to:
- Provide advice and support to a group in taking its own action where appropriate (at or outside meetings if required);
 - take direct action, i.e. writing to / speaking to perpetrators;
 - provide training where identified as a need;
 - arrange mediation between two parties if identified as appropriate.
- 8.2 In very serious cases, the Council will investigate an issue and take action. This action could include:
- a restriction or ban on engagement activity;
 - action against the tenancy or lease should the behaviour result in a breach; and / or
 - a referral to the Police should a crime have been committed.