

## **BOARD MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

As set out in the Association's policy on Conduct and Probity, housing associations have a reputation for high standards of conduct and probity. These are reinforced by legislation, the ethos of the housing association movement and by the policies of individual associations.

This code sets out the standards expected from Board members. On signing acceptance of their Letter of appointment, each Board member acknowledges that they agree to abide by this Code.

### **1.0 Principles**

The principles which underpin the Code of Conduct are based on those summarised as the Principles of Public Life (Nolan Committee).

#### **1.1 Selflessness**

Board members should take decisions solely in terms of the interest of the Association. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **1.2 Integrity**

Board members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties as Board members.

#### **1.3 Objectivity**

In carrying out the Association's business, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, Board members should make choices on merit.

#### **1.4 Accountability**

Board members are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.

#### **1.5 Openness**

Board members should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the interest of the Association clearly demands.

#### **1.6 Honesty**

Board members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interest of the Association.

## 1.7 **Leadership**

Board members should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## 2.0 **Upholding the values, interests and reputation of the Association**

All Board members are expected to:

- 2.1 Uphold the values of the Association and support achievement of its aims and objectives.
- 2.2 Act only in the interest of the Association and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.
- 2.3 Put the interests of the Association before their own interests.
- 2.4 Take an active interest in the Association's public image and strive to uphold the reputation of the Association and those working within it.
- 2.5 Refer media enquiries to the Chair as the spokesperson for the Association.
- 2.6 Not pass or distribute to the press or media any information or material relating to the Association. All letters to the press or media articles about or in the name of the Association should be approved in advance by the Chair.
- 2.7 When speaking or acting as a Board member, reflect organisational policies and aims.

## 3.0 **Personal Gain**

Board members should ensure that private or personal interests do not influence decisions, and that they do not use their position to obtain personal gain of any sort, other than reimbursement of expenses for being a Board member.

In particular:

### 3.1 **Conflict of interest**

To disclose any personal interests and/or relationships with outside bodies, companies or individuals.

To make an annual declaration of interest as required under Sch1 of Housing Act 1996.

### 3.2 **Gifts and hospitality**

- Not to accept personal gifts with a monetary value in excess of £10, without first seeking guidance from the Chief Executive.
- Not to accept hospitality if it could be seen as a way of exerting an improper influence over the Association's decisions.
- Not to accept money
- To notify the Chief Executive of any gifts or hospitality accepted for recording in the Gifts and Hospitality register.
- Not to give or offer gifts of a monetary value in excess of £50.
- Not to offer hospitality if it could be seen as lavish, or as a way of exerting an improper influence over the decisions of another person or organisation.
- To notify the Chief Executive of all hospitality offered, apart from inexpensive items such as working meals, for recording in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

If in any doubt about the nature of any gift or offer of hospitality, the advice of the Chief Executive should be sought.

### 3.3 **Use of suppliers to the Association**

To avoid, as far as is reasonably possible, making use of the services of any consultant, contractor, professional advisor or other individual or firm who may work for the Association. A list of all approved consultants and contractors is kept by the Association and is available on request from the Chief Executive's office.

Where it is considered to be unavoidable, for example in the case of specialist advisors, then the Chief Executive should be informed in advance and the matter recorded in the register of such interests.

### 4.0. **Confidentiality**

- 4.1 To treat as confidential all information relating to the business, organisation, management, future plans, clients, residents and staffing of United Welsh. Furthermore not to part with possession or reproduce any of the Association's reports, minutes, policies, correspondence etc for the benefit of third parties without the expressed permission of the Chair.

### 5.0 **Conduct at Meetings**

- 5.1 To attend meetings, giving apologies ahead of time if unable to attend
- 5.2 To engage in debate, respecting the views of others and the authority of the Chair.
- 5.3 To declare any interest in any item for discussion or decision at Board or Committee. If the interest is clear and substantial, to take no part in the discussion and to leave the room if requested by the Chair.

5.4 To take shared responsibility for all decisions taken by the Association's Board.

#### 6.0 **Equality and diversity**

To develop an understanding of and commitment to the positive promotion of the Association's policy in relation to equality and diversity.

#### 7.0 **Enquiries from residents**

To abide by the following protocol when dealing with enquiries from residents on housing matters:-

- Encourage the enquirer to approach the relevant member of staff
- Avoid taking sides.
- Avoid getting involved in lobbying for allocations or transfers.
- With regard to complaints, refer to the Association's policy and procedure for dealing with complaints.
- If the enquiry raises issues regarding policy at United Welsh, request that an item be put on the agenda at a future Board meeting for discussion.