**Mid Devon Housing: Code of Conduct – Tenant Involvement**

**Introduction**

Mid Devon Housing (MDH) is committed to working with our tenants to shape and develop the housing service with the aim of delivering high quality homes, responsive services and clean and tidy neighbourhoods.

This code of conduct sets out the standards of acceptable behaviour required by all members during any tenant involvement meeting and activity.

**As a member of Tenant Involvement, you have a responsibility to:**

* Arrive punctually to enable meetings, virtual or in person, to start promptly.
* Listen to each other and allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment. Respect the views of others and their right to speak.
* Avoid jargon or explain what it means.
* Express your point of view without being aggressive or overbearing.
* To represent only the views, wishes and opinions, of the tenants and not to introduce personal matters into discussions when attending any tenant involvement activity.
* Appreciate and respect differences – in knowledge, background, or ability to speak in public. You must, never discriminate on any ground against any other involved tenant, other tenants, Councillors or Officers of the Council.
* Be courteous to each other at all times and not use offensive, provocative, discriminatory or racist language.
* Try to find solutions and work through disagreements with others.
* Disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any other group you belong to, which might possibly affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion. You should not misuse your position or information gained as a Member to further your private interests or those of others.
* Respect confidentiality of personal information about individuals, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific cases which may cause embarrassment or identification of an individual. Any personal data on individuals or information regarding MDDC you collect must be confidential even after you resign as a member.
* Not to use information that you have received from being a member of the tenant group for any personal matter. In support of this, we suggest not speaking about information gained to anyone outside the organisation.
* Not to divulge information about any other group member that they have not given their consent for you to share.
* Avoid seeking to obtain personal information from the Council about any tenant without the written permission from that tenant. (Written permission can be obtained by the completion of a Tenant Report Form).
* Ensure that you do not use your status as a member in any situation not connected with Tenant Involvement activities.
* Not speak or write on behalf of the group without the prior agreement of the group. Make any correspondence sent on behalf of the group available to all members of the group.
* Do not use threatening behaviour, violence, obscene language or racist/sexist behaviour or threats or otherwise disrupt meetings of the group.
* Abide by your tenancy agreement.
* Return to the Council the relevant identity badge in the case of resignation.

**Responding to the Media**

You should not make direct contact with the media or respond to media enquiries unless it has been agreed in advance that you should do so. All media enquiries should be directed to the Customer Engagement Team in the first instance.

**Attendance at External Events**

As an Involved Tenant, you may be able to attend external events including meetings where you have an opportunity to network with tenants of other Registered Providers of Social Housing, seminars or conferences. Any request to attend such an event will be carefully considered by the Customer Engagement team.

When representing MDH at such an event, you are required to adhere to the terms of this Code of Conduct and to bear in mind that you are an Ambassador for MDH. Any complaints about your conduct would reflect badly not only upon you but also MDH.

**Breach of the Code of Conduct**

Any alleged breaches of the code of conduct will be investigated by the Customer Engagement Team and, where appropriate, these investigations will involve other Council Officers and other involved tenants.

The following procedure will apply in respect of any involved tenant who does not uphold or abide by this code:

Stage 1 - Verbal warning

 If the incident is deemed to be of a minor nature by MDH or other Officers employed within the Council, a verbal warning will be given. This warning will outline the nature of the alleged misconduct and provide guidance on how the conduct should be improved and maintained in the future.

Stage 2 - Written warning

 If the incident is considered by the Council to be of a more serious nature or the Involved Tenant has previously received a verbal warning, then the Council will issue a written warning. A copy will be given to the appropriate MDH Operations Manager.

Stage 3 - Withdrawal

 If the matter is considered by MDH to be one of gross misconduct - for example threatening, bullying, or violent behaviour, abusive language, theft or dishonesty, the individual will be asked to resign from tenant involvement duties with immediate effect. A letter outlining the issue will be sent by the Customer Engagement Co-ordinator. In such a situation the Involved Tenant must return their identity badge to the Council immediately, failure to do so will result in the Council withdrawing all support to the Involved Tenant in relation to tenant involvement activity. A copy of the letter will be given to the appropriate MDH Operations Manager.

Grievance Procedure

 If any Involved Tenant feels they have been treated unfairly, they have the right to appeal in writing within 28 days of the event. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing, or other senior manager, will investigate, review the case and make a decision as to whether or not the matter should be upheld. They may identify an action plan to address issues raised.

**The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.**

## I agree to abide by the terms of this Code of Conduct

Signed Date

Print Name

Witnessed by Date

Print Name