South Liverpool Homes



Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

It is vital that everyone who works for, or represents, South Liverpool Homes (SLH) is held to the highest standards of conduct. This protects us, our residents, and the reputation of social housing.

We have adopted the National Housing Federation's (NHF) 2020 Code of Governance which promotes board excellence. As part of our commitment to the highest standards of governance, this code of conduct (hereinafter referred to as the code) complements the overall code of governance by interpreting the behaviours we expect from our colleagues, members and involved residents and volunteers.

This code is adapted from the NHF code of conduct 2026.

In this code, SLH is the collective term used for South Liverpool Homes, Avela Services Limited, Avela Home Service and SLH Developments.

2. What is the Code of Conduct?

Simply described, this code sets out the behaviours, or standards of conduct, that are expected of people who are involved in our work or decision-making.

3. Application of the code

This code is provided to all individuals to support application of the code and to ensure individuals are fully aware of the conduct expected of them. Members and colleagues are required to attend mandatory 'governance at SLH' training, which incorporates this code.

Individuals have access to the probity framework and the associated policies and should familiarise themselves with their requirements under each policy.

4. Compliance with the code

The SLH board is ultimately responsible for the actions, policies and work of our organisation and it is the board's responsibility to make sure that all those concerned can comply with this code.

This code forms part of our probity framework and associated policies and procedures. All of which require board review and approval. During the approval process, consideration will be given by board in terms of how residents have influenced this code.

We report compliance against the probity framework to the audit and risk committee quarterly, which reports into the board.

5. Non-adherence to the code

We have a number of accessible routes for individuals to all raise concerns or complaints about any behaviour that is contrary to this code. These include, reporting concerns to your line manager, head of service or executive officer, the HR team, or via our speak up policy.

Alleged breaches will be addressed via the appropriate policy, for example through our disciplinary, governance or complaints policies. Each policy describes the process that will be followed, including support that is available.

6. Guiding principles

Whilst this code aims to provide clarity of conduct expected from individuals, they may face situations not directly addressed by the code. In such situations, they should be guided by our values and behaviours:

- **We are inclusive** - We respect and value each other, we are stronger working together.
- **We make it happen** - We innovate; using our passion and energy to be bold, find solutions and make a real difference.
- **We care** - We care about the wellbeing of our customers, our colleagues and the communities we work in. They are at the heart of everything we do.
- **We take ownership** - We take personal responsibility for our actions; doing what we say we will do.
- **We are professional** - We value experience and expertise, but also love to develop potential.

Individuals can ask for further information or guidance about the application or detail of this code from any member of the governance team or by emailing corporategovernance@southliverpoolhomes.co.uk.

7. How the code is structured

There are five parts to the code:

1. Acting in the best interests of SLH, residents and the communities we serve

You have a responsibility to carry out your role in a way that supports the long-term interests of our current and future residents and in line with our purpose and values.

2. Behaving with integrity

By integrity, we mean that you must act honestly, transparently and in line with the highest standards of ethical conduct. Our reputation and good name depends on compliance with this code, and with the laws, policies and procedures that it refers to.

3. Treating others fairly, with respect and empathy

The way in which people behave towards each other is fundamentally important to the experience of our residents and staff. Respectful, fair and empathetic behaviour is essential to building trust, maintaining effective relationships and supporting a healthy organisational culture.

4. Taking responsibility for the impact of your actions

You have a responsibility to consider the immediate and longer-term impact of your actions and to be accountable for them.

5. Acting with diligence and care

The diligence and care with which roles are performed has a significant impact upon the quality of our decision-making and services, and on the experience of our residents and staff. This includes taking responsibility for your own performance and for meeting relevant professional standards.

Each part of the code comprises a set of principles and detailed expectations. Where requirements apply differently to different groups members, involved residents and staff, we use subheadings within the relevant section to distinguish them.

Acting in the best interests of SLH, residents and the communities we serve

You have a responsibility to carry out your role in a way that supports the long-term interests of our current and future residents and is in line with our purposes and values.

A. Meeting your responsibilities

The principle

You must act in good faith, putting aside personal gain and making decisions that support the long-term interests of our residents as a whole and are in the best interests of our organisation

Expected of all

A1 - You must always try to fulfil the requirements of your role to the best of your ability. If any circumstances arise that limit your ability to meet your responsibilities, you must raise this through the appropriate channels.

A2 - In carrying out your role, you must always seek to further our strategic objectives, reflecting our culture.

A3 - You must not act in a way that discriminates against, or unfairly favours, particular individuals, groups or interests, including on the basis of any protected characteristics they may have (this does not include lawful positive action to support disadvantaged or underrepresented groups).

A4 - You must consider the impact of your actions on the safety and wellbeing of residents and colleagues.

Expected of board members and involved residents

A5 - You must respect and take responsibility for decisions that are made by the group(s) of which you are a member, even if you do not personally agree with them.

Expected of staff members

A6 - You must consult your manager before taking any other paid or voluntary work that may interfere with your ability to act in line with our purpose, or conflict with the terms set out in your contract of employment.

B: Representing SLH

The principle

In representing us in any capacity, including at external events, in dealings with outside bodies and on social media, you are an ambassador and must uphold and promote our values, objectives and policies.

Expected of all

B1 - In representing us, you must act in accordance with our values, policies and goals.

B2 - You must not conduct yourself in a manner that could reasonably be regarded as bringing us into disrepute through dishonest, misleading or inappropriate behaviour.

B3 - You must not make knowingly false, malicious or misleading statements about us or those connected with us.

B4 - You must not seek to officially represent the views or position of SLH unless authorised to do so.

B5 - When representing us through any medium, including social media, you must at all times act with professionalism.

B6 - Where any personal social media accounts refers to your role with us, you must make it clear in what capacity you are communicating.

B7 - If you intend to engage in an activity, including political or campaigning activity, which may reasonably be regarded to affect us, you must obtain prior consent. Such consent must not be unreasonably withheld unless your activity poses a material risk to us.

Behaving with integrity

By integrity, we mean that you must act honestly, transparently and in line with the highest standards of ethical conduct. Our reputation and good name depends on compliance with this code, and with the laws, policies and procedures that it refers to.

C: Conflicts of interest

The principle

You must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between your duties and your personal interests, other duties, and relationships. You must adhere to our declarations of interest policy.

Expected of all

C1 - You must formally declare, at the earliest opportunity, any interests, roles and relationships that could - or could reasonably be perceived to - affect your ability to act in our best interests and of our residents; you must make sure that these interests do not interfere with your ability to carry out your role effectively.

C2 - You must declare any known relationship to a resident, potential resident or other customer where this could reasonably be perceived to influence your role. You must not be involved in decisions relating to their relationship with us or seek or accept preferential treatment for them.

C3 - You must declare any known relationship to a member of staff or board member where this could reasonably be perceived to influence your role. You must not be involved in decisions relating to their relationship with us or seek or accept preferential treatment for them.

C4 - You must declare any known relationship to a person or organisation seeking appointment as a contractor or supplier and must not be involved in their appointment, performance management or reward.

C5 - Except where specifically permitted, you must avoid using contractors and suppliers for private purposes.

C6 - You must not use, or attempt to use, your position to secure personal benefit or advantage for yourself or any connected person, business or organisation.

C7 - You must not seek to influence decisions improperly, including by applying pressure, offering inducements, or using personal relationships to secure preferential outcomes.

C8 - You must declare any known relationship to a person applying for or performing a role within SLH and must not be involved in their appointment, performance management or reward.

Expected of members and involved residents

C9 - You must be clear about the role you are acting in and must not use your position to influence individual service decisions or treatment for yourself or others.

C10 - You must act independently and fairly, avoiding involvement in individual operational matters unless this is part of an agreed role.

C11 - Individuals with a conflict should not take part in discussions and decisions relating to that conflict and should be prepared to take all reasonable steps to address the conflict. These should include being willing to resign if the conflict is material or long-standing and, in the opinion of the relevant board, committee or other group, cannot be managed appropriately. For residents, a conflict could include a matter being discussed that relates specifically to the individual's home. It should not prevent residents taking part in discussions about matters that affect larger groups of residents.

D: Bribery, Gifts and Hospitality

The principle

You must not allow gifts, hospitality or other benefits to influence, or be perceived to influence, your judgement or behaviour. You must adhere to our gifts and hospitality policy.

Expected of all

D1 - You must not seek or accept preferential treatment in the provision of benefits such as employment or housing accommodation.

D2 - You must not solicit or seek gifts or hospitality or other benefits in connection with your role.

D3 - Any gifts or hospitality offered to or by you must be either declared or declined according to our gifts and hospitality policy.

D4 - If you are offered a bribe, hospitality or a gift, which is or may be in return for expected preferential treatment, you must decline and declare this immediately to the company secretary.

Expected of involved residents

D5 - You must not seek or accept preferential treatment in the provision of housing or related services.

E: Funds, resources, and personal benefit

The principle

You must use our funds, resources and assets responsibly, transparently and only for proper purposes.

Expected of all

E1 - You must comply with our policies and procedures regarding the use of our funds and resources, to ensure they are used properly and efficiently.

E2 - Procurement decisions must be guided by our policies and fairness in decision-making and in line with relevant law.

E3 - You must take all reasonable measures to protect our funds, resources, property and assets from fraud, theft, damage and misuse.

E4 - If you claim reimbursement for any expenses you must do so in line with our policies and procedures.

Expected of members

E5 - If you are making decisions about litigation, you must ensure that funds and resources are used properly and efficiently with consideration of financial, operational and reputational risk.

F: Confidentiality

The principle

You must handle information that is provided to you in your role responsibly and lawfully, balancing confidentiality, commercial sensitivity and legal obligations with openness, transparency and accountability.

Expected of all

F1 - You must not disclose, without the required permission and authority, any personal data about residents, staff or colleagues. This duty continues to apply after you have left the organisation or stepped down from your position.

F2 - You must not disclose, without authority, any confidential or sensitive business information. This duty continues to apply after you have left the organisation or stepped down from your position.

F3 - You must not, without authority, pass or distribute to the press or media or any other external recipient any unpublished information or materials relating to us that is confidential, restricted or sensitive.

F4 - You must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which they are entitled by law and should support transparency where appropriate.

G. Working with residents

The principle

You must act fairly and properly in your dealings with residents, including listening to

their views and being accountable for your actions.

Expected of all

G1 - You must seek and value views from residents when making decisions that will affect them.

G2 - You must not allow any personal relationship with a resident to influence how you discharge your role and responsibilities.

G3 - You must not give personal gifts or loans of money to, or receive personal loans or gifts of money (including will bequests) from, residents.

G4 - You must handle residents' money only where absolutely necessary and ensure that a receipt is completed for every transaction. In any event, you must operate in accordance with our financial policies, procedures and controls to ensure appropriate handling of any and all funds.

G5 - You must not invite or influence a resident to make a will or trust under which you are named as executor, trustee or beneficiary.

Expected of staff and board members

G6 - You must maintain appropriate boundaries with staff and residents and must not allow personal relationships to influence how you carry out your role.

Expected of involved residents

G7 - When you advocate for issues, concerns or experiences raised by residents or communities, you must do so honestly and without seeking unfair advantage or preferential treatment.

H: Reporting concerns

The principle

You must report to company secretary, any reasonable suspicions you have about possible wrongdoing in line with our policies and procedures.

Expected of all

H1 - If you have a concern about possible wrongdoing, you must immediately report it via the appropriate internal channel or external body. This includes becoming aware of potentially dishonest or fraudulent activity, and material breaches of this code or relevant legislation including health and safety.

H2 - If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this code or legislation, you must immediately report it to the company secretary.

H3 - You must not victimise or disadvantage any person who uses or intends to use our confidential reporting (whistleblowing/speak up) procedures to report actual or alleged wrongdoing.

3. Treating others fairly, with respect and empathy

The way in which people behave towards each other is fundamentally important to the experience of our residents and staff. Respectful, fair and empathetic behaviour is essential to building trust, maintaining effective relationships and supporting a healthy organisational culture.

I: Fairness, respect and empathy

The principle

You must treat all others with fairness, respect and empathy, regardless of role, status or circumstances. You must recognise where you have power and authority in your role and use this in a way that is responsible and, where possible, empowers other people.

Expected of all

I1 - You must comply with the law and with our policies and procedures relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and imposes positive duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality. Our policies give further guidance.

I2 - Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding. You must comply with our policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.

I3 - You must treat everyone you engage with through your role with respect, politeness, consideration and empathy.

I4 - You must respect individuals' chosen identities, backgrounds, protected characteristics and lived experiences, and avoid making assumptions about others.

I5 - You must act in ways that contribute to an inclusive environment, where people feel fairly treated, respected and listened to and where they feel able to raise concerns.

I6 - You must not harass, bully, intimidate or discriminate against others, or engage in behaviour, including subtle or repeated behaviours, that could reasonably make others feel marginalised, threatened, patronised or dismissed.

I7 - You must not display materials in the workplace or use language in the performance of your role which other people might reasonably find offensive.

I8 - You must report through appropriate channels any instances of unfair or unequal

treatment associated with the housing association and, where it is your role to do so, you must investigate any such reports thoroughly, with compassion and respecting confidentiality.

Expected of colleagues

I9 - If your role includes working in residents' homes, you must behave respectfully and with care, recognising that you are entering someone's home. This includes respect for people's privacy, preferences and personal property.

J: Professional relationships

The principle

Individuals must maintain a constructive, professional relationship based on a sound understanding of their respective roles.

Expected of all

J1 - You must not ask or encourage the commitment of wrongdoing, including any breach of this code.

J2 - You must behave in a professional manner appropriate to your role, maintaining independence and integrity at all times. You must conduct relationships with other people who hold roles (whether involved residents, board members or staff) on an appropriately professional footing.

J3 - You must challenge language or behaviours that reinforce stigma about residents or social housing.

J4 - You must welcome constructive challenge and respectful disagreement from others, and offer challenge to others in a constructive and respectful way.

Expected of members

J5 - Your relationships with staff and residents must be constructive and professional.

J6 - You must set an example by demonstrating the highest standards of honesty and ethics and your alignment with our values, policies and objectives.

Expected of members and involved residents

J7 - Where it is necessary to raise issues of staff, board or contractor performance, these must be raised constructively and through the appropriate channels and policies we have in place (procedure for handling allegations against members, member performance

procedure, speak up policy).

J8 - Unless you have specific and, where practicable, written delegated authority to do so, you must not individually give instruction or direction to any member of staff or contractor.

Expected of colleagues

J9 - You must avoid, in a professional setting, inappropriate personal familiarity with board members and involved residents.

J10 - You must not use informal channels to lobby or influence members or involved residents on matters of the housing association's business.

J11 - You must not knowingly mislead the board or any of our committees or panels. In presenting information, you must set out the facts and relevant issues and risks truthfully.

4. Taking responsibility for the impact of your actions

You have a responsibility to consider the immediate and longer-term impact of your actions and to be accountable for them.

K: Resident experience

The principle

You must anticipate and take responsibility for the impact that your conduct, actions

and decisions may have on residents.

Expected of members and colleagues

K1 - You must consider how your conduct, actions and decisions may impact on residents.

K2 - You must be prepared and able to offer residents a clear explanation for actions or decisions you take, especially where these directly affect them.

K3 - You must respond constructively to feedback about your actions, decisions and performance, by whoever this is provided.

L: Health, safety and wellbeing

The principle

Your conduct, actions and decision making must promote the health, safety, security and wellbeing of yourself or others.

Expected of all

L1 - You must comply with our health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and bring to the attention of the appropriate person any risks to yourself or others.

L2 - You must comply with the law and our policies on smoking and on the use of alcohol, illegal drugs and other substances.

L3 - You must comply with our policies relating to the security of premises.

L4 - You must not knowingly put your own or others' health, safety, security or wellbeing unnecessarily at risk. When you take actions and make decisions, you must consider the impact your action or decision may have on the safety and wellbeing of others.

L5 - If you have any concerns about the health, safety, security or wellbeing of yourself,

another individual or a group of individuals connected with the association, you must report this immediately through the appropriate channels.

M: Environment and sustainability

The principle

Within your role, you must consider, and try to avoid or reduce, negative impacts on the environment and sustainability.

Expected of all

M1 - In carrying out actions or making decisions in the performance of your role, you must consider the environmental impact of your decisions and where you are able, seek to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

M2 - You must take reasonable steps to reduce unnecessary waste and resource use.

Expected of members

M3 - You should consider the long term environmental impact of your decisions.

N. Digital and data

The principle

You must ensure that your use of digital systems, data and emerging technologies is responsible and protects residents, staff and the organisation from harm.

Expected of all

N1 - You must take reasonable steps to protect sensitive information from loss, misuse or unauthorised access.

N2 - In carrying out your duties, you must use digital systems, devices and tools only in ways which are formally permitted. You must report any suspected data breach, cyber security breach or concern, and any other digital threat or vulnerability immediately through the appropriate channels.

N3 - In using digital systems, data and emerging technologies within your role, you must take care to avoid use that may be misleading, discriminatory or otherwise inconsistent with the housing association's values and responsibilities.

N4 - You should be transparent and proportionate in any permitted use of artificial intelligence and take care to maintain human judgement and accountability in such use.

5. Acting with diligence and care

The diligence and care with which roles are performed has a significant impact upon the quality of decision-making and services and the experience of residents and staff. This includes taking responsibility for your own performance and for meeting relevant professional standards.

O: Learning and development

The principle

In partnership with SLH, you must take responsibility for your own learning and development, regularly updating and refreshing your skills and knowledge.

Expected of all

O1 - You must play an active part in our supervision and performance appraisal processes as they apply to your role.

O2 - You must make personal training and development needs relevant to your role known and you must undertake all mandatory training for your role.

O3 - Unless there are exceptional reasons, you must attend learning and development events as required and apply learning to your role.

O4 - You must offer open and constructive feedback to others and invite feedback about your own performance.

Expected of members

O5 - You must take responsibility for keeping your knowledge up to date in those areas in which you are a specialist, as well as keeping abreast of any matters relating to us and the wider housing sector.

Expected of colleagues

O6 - You must take responsibility for your own professional development. Where your role requires continuing professional development (CPD), you must keep this up-to-date and maintain any required records.

P. Acting with care and diligence

The principle

You must act with care and diligence in making sure that you understand your role

and its requirements, and that you are equipped to carry out your duties.

Expected of all

P1 - You must take care to understand the responsibilities of your role, including relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements.

P2 - You should prepare properly for any meetings, decisions and activities where you will be required to contribute views, to scrutinise or to make decisions.

P3 - If you become aware of a problem where action is required, you must not ignore, conceal or minimise the issue.

P4 - In carrying out your role, you should recognise the boundaries of your responsibilities and must escalate issues or risks as needed, particularly where these may impact residents, services, safety or the reputation of the organisation.

Q. Continuous improvement

The principle

You must support a culture of learning and continuous improvement through acting in an open and accountable manner, recognising mistakes and learning from feedback to help the housing association to continue to improve outcomes.

Expected of all

Q1 - You must demonstrate openness to learning from a range of opportunities, including resident scrutiny, complaints and other feedback.

Q2 - You should offer open and constructive feedback to others and invite feedback about your own performance.

Glossary of terms

Board and committee member (member)

Includes all members of boards and committees, whether they are formally known as non-executive director, independent member, co-opted member or committee member.

Close connections

In broad terms, means your family, relatives, close friends or business partners, as well as businesses in which you have an interest through ownership or influence. The term includes (but is not limited to) your spouse, unmarried partner or civil partner, children, siblings, grandchildren and grandparents. If you are unsure, it is best to err on the side of caution by acknowledging that there may be a close connection and acting accordingly.

Contractors

Includes those other than board members, staff and involved residents who are directly involved in delivering our business activities. This includes contractors, sub-contractors, consultants and agents.

Culture

Organisational culture can be simply described as 'how we do things around here' - it's the sum total of shared values, attitudes and behaviours that shape how people perform their roles in a housing association and how residents experience the services they receive.

Impact on the environment and sustainability

This means the effect your actions or decisions may have on the natural environment. This includes climate change, carbon emissions, energy and water use, waste, pollution, biodiversity and the responsible use of resources.

Involved resident

Includes residents and other customers who are formally involved in supporting, delivering, or scrutinising, our business activities.

Known relationship

For the purposes of this code, this means relatives and close connections (see definition above). Relationships with acquaintances i.e. people you know, but not very well, are not covered by this term.

Personal familiarity

For the purposes of this code, this refers to forming relationships that compromise, or could reasonably be perceived to compromise, professional boundaries, objectivity, independence of judgment or proper governance arrangements.

Professionalism

A set of behaviours which reflects the standards, skills, competencies and ethics associated with a role.

Protected characteristics

Distinguishing features or traits of groups and individuals which are protected under the law from discrimination and unfair treatment. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Residents

Throughout the code, we use the term 'residents' to include residents, tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and users of other services provided by the housing association. Organisations with customers who are not residents (e.g. recipients of other services) may wish to amend the term to read 'residents and other customers'.

Colleagues

Includes our employees and any other persons fulfilling the role of a paid employee, such as those deemed to be workers, interim placements, or those on secondment from another organisation. This includes directly employed operatives working in areas including repairs and maintenance, grounds maintenance, communal cleaning and safety compliance.

Volunteers

Includes those that volunteer for us, in any capacity.

Related Documents

Documents

- Employment Terms and Conditions
- SLH Rules of Association
- NHF 2020 Code of Governance
- NHF 2026 Code of Conduct
- Role profiles for board/committee members
- Financial Regulations
- Risk management framework
- Probity framework
- Corporate plan and associated strategies

Policies

- Recruitment and selection
- Speak up
- Declarations of interest
- Gifts and hospitality
- Board and committee member payment and expenses
- Board and committee member induction,
- appraisal, learning and development
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Customer feedback
- Data protection
- Anti fraud, bribery theft and corruption
- Admitting new shareholders policy
- Colleague expenses
- Procurement
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Volunteers
- Anti harassment and dignity at work
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Safeguarding

South Liverpool Homes

Great homes | Strong communities | Bright futures