



HARBOUR

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR
GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS**

Policy Owner	Group Chief Executive
Document Author(s)	Group Business Support Manager
Approved By	Harbour Homes
Date approved	November 2024
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Review Cycle	3 years
Communication & Training Methods	Discussion at Board Annual Signing by Board members DocTract
Is a mandatory read required?	NO
Does this policy require to go on the website?	YES
Who does this policy apply to eg GROUP or ENTITY NAME(S) NB if not all, check there is a separate policy in place	GROUP
The Policy has a direct link to the following Harbour policies and procedures If there are separate procedures which require to be attached to the policy in Doctract, please ensure these are reviewed at the same time and also provided.	Boards Membership Policy and Procedures Entitlements Benefits and Payments Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Fraud Policy and Procedures Freedom of Information and Environmental Policy Harbour Rules Harbour Homes Board Member Role Descriptions Whistleblowing Policy
This policy complies with the requirements of these legal and/or regulatory documents	SHR Regulatory Framework (2024) Standard 5: The RSL Conduct it affairs with honesty and integrity. Standard 6: The Governing board and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.
Equality & Diversity Impact (EI) Assessment Status	This document was EDI Assessed by Group Business Support Manager and Group HR and OD Manager

	using the organisation's set procedure in October 2024 and is considered to be free of anything which may lead to any unfair discrimination in its application. El Assessment records are held by the Business Support team and can be accessed on request to the Group Business Support Manager.
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Data Considerations	Protection Our policies and procedures foster an approach of 'data protection by design and by default' In practice it means that our policies and procedures consider data protection issues, ie how to protect the data subject served by the policy or procedure; New systems, services, products and business practices involving personal data are designed and implemented to ensure personal data is protected by default; Data protection principles and safeguarding of individuals' rights are clear in the policy or procedure; And that if the policy or procedure aims to provide service to vulnerable groups (eg children) that the personal data is treated with extra protection.
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1. Introduction
2. Who Our Code Applies To and When
3. How Our Code is Structured
 - A. Selflessness
 - B. Openness
 - C. Honesty
 - D. Objectivity
 - E. Integrity
 - F. Accountability
 - G. Leadership
4. Breach of this Code
5. Acceptance and Signature

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All members of Harbour Homes Board and Harbour subsidiary boards, Harbour Lettings, Harbour Connections and Harbour Multi-Trades must sign this Code of Conduct when they are elected, co-opted or appointed, and on an annual basis thereafter. References throughout this Code of Conduct (the Code) to 'we', 'us' and 'our' mean Harbour.
The Code reflects our Values which are Inclusion, Respect; Innovation; Support and Honesty.
- 1.2 We attach the greatest importance to ensuring that high standards of governance and ethical behaviour are demonstrated by all of our people and in all of our activities.
- 1.3 Our Code of Conduct sets out the requirements and expectations which are attached to your role as a Board member. You have a personal responsibility to uphold the requirements of our Code. You cannot be a Board member¹ if you do not agree to adopt our Code of Conduct. To confirm that you understand its requirements and accept its terms, you must review and sign this Code annually.
- 1.4 As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we are required to adopt and comply with an appropriate Code of Conduct². Our Code is based on the Model Code of Conduct produced by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, which the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has confirmed fully complies with its Regulatory Standards.
- 1.5 Our Code of Conduct is an important part of our governance arrangements; it is supported by the Role description which describes your responsibilities as a Board member.

You are responsible for ensuring that you are familiar with the terms of this Code and that you always act in accordance with its requirements and expectations. Board members must always ensure their actions accord with the legal duties of the RSL and with regulatory guidance. You must also ensure you are familiar with any policies which are linked to this code.

- 1.6 If there is a concern that a Board member may have breached any part of this Code, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the Protocol that we have adopted. A serious breach of our Code may result in action being taken by Harbour Homes Board to remove the Board member(s) involved.

¹ Our Rules state that the Board can remove a member who fails to sign the Code of Conduct (Rule 44.5.2); it is a regulatory requirement that our Rules enable the Board to take such action (SHR Regulatory Framework (2024) Constitutional Standard 19)

² Scottish Housing Regulator (2024) Regulatory Framework, Regulatory Standard 5.2

- 1.7 This Code of Conduct was adopted by Harbour Homes Board on 21 November 2024

2. WHO OUR CODE APPLIES TO AND WHEN

- 2.1 Our Code of Conduct applies to all elected, appointed and co-opted members of Harbour Homes Board and its sub-committees and to the governing bodies of all subsidiaries and members of Harbour.
- 2.2 The expectations of the Code apply in all settings and circumstances where our Board members are representing us or acting on our behalf and where their conduct could reflect on our tenants /organisation and/or their reputation. The Code applies equally to conduct in person, virtually and on social media.

3. HOW OUR CODE IS STRUCTURED

- 3.1 Our Code of Conduct is based on the seven principles which are recognised as providing a framework for good governance. They demonstrate honesty, integrity and probity.³
- 3.2 Each principle is described, as it applies to the activities of Harbour and its Board members, and supporting guidance is offered for each to provide more explanation of our Code's requirements. The guidance is not exhaustive and it should be remembered that Harbour and our Board members are responsible for ensuring that their conduct at all times meets the high standards that the RSL sector is recognised for upholding.
- 3.3 The seven principles that you must adhere and commit to by signing this Code are:
- A. Selflessness
 - B. Openness
 - C. Honesty
 - D. Objectivity
 - E. Integrity
 - F. Accountability
 - G. Leadership

4. PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE

A. Selflessness

³ Committee for Standards in Public Life (May 1995), Nolan Principles

You must act in the best interests of Harbour at all times and must take decisions that support and promote our strategic plan, aims and objectives. Members of the Harbour Homes Board should not promote the interests of a particular group or body of opinion to the exclusion of others.

- A.1 I will always uphold and promote Harbour's aims, objectives and values and act to ensure their successful achievement.
- A.2 I will exercise the authority that comes with my role as a Board member responsibly.
- A.3 I will accept responsibility for all decisions properly reached by the Board (or a sub-committee or working group with appropriately delegated responsibility) and support them at all times, even if I did not agree with the decision when it was made.
- A.4 I will consider and respect the views of others.
- A.5 I will not seek to use my position inappropriately to influence decisions that are the responsibility of staff.
- A.6 I will not seek to use my influence inappropriately or for personal gain or advantage or for the benefit of someone to whom I am closely connected or their business interests.

B. Openness

You must be transparent in all of your actions; you must declare and record all relevant personal and business interests and must be able to explain your actions.

- B.1 I will use my best endeavours and exercise reasonable skill and care in the conduct of my duties.
- B.2 I will avoid any situation that could give rise to suspicion or suggest improper conduct.
- B.3 I will declare any personal interest(s) and manage openly and appropriately any conflicts of interest; I will observe the requirements of our policy on the matter. I will keep my entry in the Register of Interests complete, accurate and up to date. I will make an annual statement to confirm my declarations are accurate.
- B.4 I will not accept any offers of gifts or hospitality from individuals or organisations which might reasonably create – or be capable of creating – an impression of impropriety or influence or place me under

an obligation to these individuals or organisations. I will comply with Harbour's Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy.

- B.5 I will ensure that, in carrying out my role as a Board member, I am informed about and take account of the views, needs and demands of tenants and service users.
- B.6 I will ensure that Harbour is open about the way in which it conducts its affairs and is positive about how it responds to requests for information.
- B.7 I will not prevent people or bodies from being provided with information that they are entitled to receive.

C. Honesty

You must ensure that you always act in the best interests of the organisation and that all activities are transparent and accountable.

- C.1 I will always act honestly and in good faith when undertaking my responsibilities as a Board member.
- C.2 I will use my experience, skills, knowledge and judgement effectively to support our activities.
- C.3 I will ensure that decisions are always taken and recorded in accordance with our Rules and procedures.
- C.4 I will ensure that Harbour has an effective whistleblowing policy and procedures to enable, encourage and support any staff or Board member to report any concerns they have about possible fraud, corruption or other wrongdoing⁴.
- C.5 I will report any concerns or suspicions about possible fraud, corruption or other wrongdoing to the appropriate senior person within the organisation in accordance with our whistleblowing policy.
- C.6 I will comply with our policies and procedures regarding the use of our funds and resources⁵ and I will not misuse, contribute to or condone the misuse of these resources.
- C.7 We forbid all forms of bribery, meaning a financial or other advantage or inducement intended to persuade someone to perform improperly any function or activity. I will neither accept from nor give bribes or any

⁴ These concerns might include, but are not confined to, suspected fraud, dishonesty, breach of the law, poor practice, non-compliance with regulatory requirements, misconduct, breach of this code.

⁵ Resources include people, equipment, buildings, ICT, funds, knowledge, stationery, transport

other inducement to anyone. I will comply with our Fraud Policy and procedures and will report any instances of suspected bribery or corruption within the organisation or any of its business partners.

- C.8 I will ensure that neither I nor someone closely connected to me receives or is seen to receive preferential treatment relating to any services provided by the organisation or its contractors/suppliers. I will declare all interests openly and ensure they are effectively managed to demonstrate this.

D. Objectivity

You must consider all matters on their merits; you must base your decisions on the information and advice available and reach your decision independently.

- D.1 I will ensure that the decisions that I take are consistent with our aims and objectives and with the relevant legal and regulatory requirements (including those of the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Care Inspectorate
- D.2 I will attend meetings regularly, prepare for them effectively and ensure I have access to all necessary information to enable me to contribute constructively and make well-informed decisions.
- D.3 I will monitor performance carefully to ensure that the organisation's purpose and objectives are achieved and take timely and effective action to identify and address any weaknesses or failures.
- D.4 I will use my skills, knowledge and experience to review information critically and always take decisions in the best interests of the organisation, our tenants and our service users.
- D.5 I will ensure that the Board seeks and takes account of additional information and external/independent and/or specialist advice where necessary and/or appropriate.
- D.6 I will ensure that effective policies and procedures are implemented so that all decisions are based on an adequate assessment of risk, deliver

value for money, and ensure the financial well-being of the organisation.

- D.7 I will contribute to the identification of training needs, keep my knowledge up to date, and participate in ongoing training that is organised or supported by us.

E. Integrity

You must actively support and promote our values; you must not be influenced by personal interest in exercising your role and responsibilities.

- E.1 I will always treat my Board colleagues our staff, our customers and partners with respect and courtesy.
- E.2 I will always conduct myself in a courteous and professional manner; I will not, by my actions or behaviour, cause distress, alarm or offence.
- E.3 I will publicly support and promote our decisions, actions and activities; I will not, by my actions or behaviour, compromise or contradict the organisation, its activities, values, aims or objectives. I will notify the Chair quickly if I become aware of any situation or event that I am associated with which could affect Harbour and/or its reputation.
- E.4 I will fulfil my responsibilities as they are set out in the relevant role description(s); I will maintain relationships that are professional, constructive and that do not conflict with my role as a Board member.
- E.5 I will comply with, support and promote our policies relating to equalities, diversity, inclusion and human rights.
- E.6 I will uphold our whistleblowing and acceptable use⁶ policies.
- E.7 I will respect confidentiality and ensure that I do not disclose information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it, both whilst I am a member of the Harbour Homes Board or subsidiary board and after I have left.
- E.8 I will observe and uphold the legal requirements and our policies in respect of the storage and handling of information, including personal and financial information.

F Accountability

⁶ This relates to the use of ICT, social media and networking, facilities etc.

You must take responsibility for and be able to explain your actions and demonstrate that your contribution to our governance is effective.

- F.1 I will observe and uphold the principles and requirements of the SHR's Regulatory Framework, and gain assurance that relevant statutory and regulatory guidance and Harbour's legal obligations are fulfilled.
- F.2 I will ensure that we have effective systems in place to monitor and report our performance and that corrective action is taken as soon as the need is identified.
- F.3 I will contribute positively to our activities by regularly attending and participating constructively in Board meetings, its committees and working groups.
- F.4 I will participate in and contribute to an annual review of the contribution I have made to our governance.
- F.5 I will ensure that there is an appropriate system in place for the support and appraisal of the Group Chief Executive and that it is implemented effectively.
- F.6 I will not speak or comment in public on our behalf without specific authority to do so.
- F.7 I will co-operate with any investigations or inquiries instructed in connection with this Code whilst I am a Board member and after I have left.
- F.8 I recognise that the Governing Body as a whole is accountable to its tenants and customers, and I will demonstrate this in exercising my judgement and in my decision-making.

G. Leadership

You must uphold our principles and commitment to delivering good outcomes for tenants and other service users and lead the organisation by example.

- G.1 I will ensure that our strategic aims, objectives and activities deliver good outcomes for tenants and service users. I will make an effective contribution to our strategic leadership.
- G.2 I will ensure that our aims and objectives reflect and are informed by the views of tenants and service users.
- G.3 I will always be a positive ambassador for the organisation.

- G.4 I will participate in and contribute to the annual review of the Governing Body's effectiveness and help to identify and attain the range of skills that we need to meet our strategic objectives.
- G.5 I will not criticise or undermine the organisation, any of its people or our actions in public.
- G.6 I will not criticise staff in public; I will discuss any staffing related concerns privately with the Chair and/or Group Chief Executive.
- G.7 I will not harass, bully or attempt to intimidate anyone.
- G.8 I will not use social media to criticise or make inappropriate comments about the organisation, its actions or any member of the Board, staff or other partners.
- G.9 I will not act in a way that could jeopardise our reputation or bring us into disrepute⁷.

4. BREACH OF THIS CODE

- 4.1 I recognise that each member of the Board has a personal and individual responsibility to promote and uphold the requirements of this Code. If I believe that I may have breached the Code, or I have witnessed or become aware of a potential breach by another member, I will immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Chair.

5. ACCEPTANCE AND SIGNATURE

I have read and understood the terms of this Code of Conduct and I agree to uphold its requirements in all my activities as a Board member of.

I am aware that I must declare and manage any personal interests. I agree to review all relevant Registers regularly to ensure that all entries relating to me are accurate.

I understand that, if I am found to have breached this Code of Conduct, action will be taken by the Board which could result in my removal.

⁷ This includes activities on social media, blogs and networking sites.

Signed:

Date: