

MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

OVERVIEW

Each member of Brandrams Co-op has a tenancy agreement which outlines what is expected and acceptable behaviour as a tenant and neighbour so that all members can enjoy living in our community.

This code of conduct specifies how co-op members are expected to behave when participating and engaged in co-op business. It also covers how any breaches of this code will be handled.

This policy does not cover disputes between members or complaints about the co-op management which are covered by the **Complaints Policy**.

A summary version of this Code must appear in the Members' Handbook, which must be given to all new members on induction.

The Management Committee must be reminded of this Code at the beginning of every new term of office and the Chair may remind the whole membership periodically at General Meetings.

All CO-OP MEMBERS are obliged to behave according to this code and agree to:

GENERAL CODE

- Be aware of and act within the co-op's rules and policies
- Never behave in a way that could be considered threatening, abusive or insulting to another member, their guests or other visitors to the premises

CONDUCT IN MEETINGS

All members are expected to:

- Help make the meetings business-like and effective as well as being enjoyable and inclusive of diverse points of view
- Read papers before the meeting whenever possible
- Arrive on time or let the Secretary know if you are running late or cannot attend
- Recognise and respect the role of the Chair to run the meeting effectively
- Raise a hand to let the Chair know that you wish to speak and not to speak on any one subject for longer than the Chair defines
- Follow the agreed agenda and raise any other matters to the Chair to be discussed as Any Other Business (AOB) at that or the next meeting depending on urgency and time available
- Treat each other with dignity and respect and help enable all present to express their own views
- Listen and not interrupt when another person is talking
- Keep calm and avoid shouting or aggressive behaviour
- Avoid outbursts of disagreement directed at the previous speaker. Wait your turn and direct your comments to the meeting in general, or to the Chair
- Avoid repeating or revisiting previous debates or decisions where there is no new information
- Avoid any language that could be deemed offensive, including swearing
- Be aware of the co-op's **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- Not attend meetings under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The co-op Secretary will maintain a **Register of Interests** and all committee members must sign a declaration at the start of their office. This is to avoid any conflicts of financial or personal interest. **Members agree to:**

- Declare any direct or indirect financial interests in relation to co-op business including being employed by or in partnership with a company that the co-op employs
- Declare any personal interest in relation to co-op business including being friends or relations with a company or individual that the co-op employs
- Inform the Secretary or the Chair of any developments that may lead to potential conflict of interest so that the register can be updated
- Inform the Chair of any conflicts of interest relating to an issue on the agenda ahead of any discussion and leave the meeting during that discussion if requested by the Chair. This includes decisions over waiting list applications by someone known personally
- Avoid letting private and personal interests influence decisions
- Avoid using positions of responsibility within the co-op to obtain personal gain of any sort unless it is available to all members equally
- Inform the Chair if it's believed that another co-op member has an undeclared conflict of interest

CONFIDENTIALITY

The co-op Secretary will maintain a **Register of Confidentiality** and all committee members must sign a declaration at the start of their office. **Members agree to:**

- Sign a Confidentiality Declaration before taking up their position
- To respect the privacy of fellow co-op members and not disclose information deemed confidential
- To never share personal or sensitive information about co-op members without their permission
- Inform the Chair if it's believed that another co-op member has breached confidentiality.

Further details of requirements in law are outlined in the co-op's **Data Protection Policy**

HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS

The co-op Secretary will maintain a **Register of Hospitality & Gifts** received

Members agree to:

- Not accept personal gifts or special treatment from services or suppliers whilst on co-op business
- Ensure that any hospitality or gifts received whilst carrying out the co-op's business are recorded on the Register of Hospitality & Gifts
- Inform the Chair if it's believed that another co-op member has breached the rules on hospitality and gifts

BREACHES of the Code in MEETINGS

Brandrams wishes to include all members in the running of the co-op and aims to honour a diversity of views and ways of expressing opinions. However, deliberate or persistent disruptions, uncooperative or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated in meetings. Breaches of the code of conduct will be dealt with as follows:

Members in **minor breach** in a meeting, such as swearing, interrupting or making personal comments about another member, will be warned by the Chair that they are in breach and asked to stop. They will be offered the chance to immediately retract, apologise or re-phrase their remark. If a member is warned more than once in any meeting, the Chair may instruct them to leave the meeting. The minutes will record, with minimal detail, that a minor breach occurred and the initials of the member who left the room.

Members who commit a **major breach** in a meeting, such as shouting or aggressive conduct, will be instructed by the Chair to leave the meeting. If the member refuses to leave, the meeting should be adjourned until the member leaves. The minutes will record, with minimal detail, that a major breach occurred and the initials of the member who left the room.

Following a meeting where a member has been asked to leave, the Chair will contact the member and offer them the opportunity to retract, apologise or rephrase their remarks. If this is taken up, the member may attend the next meeting and their retraction, apology or rephrasing be recorded in the minutes in Matters Arising.

If the member in breach of the code of conduct is a member of the current Management Committee, regardless of whether it occurred in a General or Committee meeting, the Management Committee will consider and vote on whether to suspend the member from attending the next committee meetings. Any suspension will be for no more than two meetings. The Chair will notify the member in writing on behalf of the committee, giving reasons for the suspension and stating its length.

The committee member can appeal a suspension by writing to the Chair and the committee will decide by email or at a special meeting whether to invite the suspended member to the next Management meeting to state their reasons for appeal. The Chair will ask them to leave the meeting and the committee will vote on whether to accept the appeal and lift or reduce the suspension. The Chair will notify the member in writing of the decision, which is final.

The Secretary will keep a record of any members suspended from committees and these will be reported to the AGM ahead of voting for the next Management Committee.

No member may be excluded from attending a General Meeting, except in the following circumstances:

- Any member who has had their membership terminated following the serving of a Notice to Quit will no longer be entitled to participate in the running of the co-op
- Any member who has had successful legal action taken against them for rent arrears (possession order or suspended possession order obtained) will not be entitled to participate in the running of the co-op until all the arrears are cleared

Addenda and other Relevant Documents

- Template **Conflicts of Interests** form
- Template **Confidentiality Agreement** form
- The co-op has signed up to the **Confederation of Co-operative Housing Code of Governance** and will review this policy to ensure it remains compliant and relevant
- Brandrams' **Complaints Policy**
- Brandrams' **Equality & Diversity Policy**
- Brandrams' **Data Protection Policy**
- Brandrams' **Communications Policy**