Melton Borough Council

Code of conduct

For contractors and officers of the council when visiting tenants in their homes and communities

Melton Borough Council

June 2025

TENANT APPROVED

MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Revision History

Date	Version	Author	Description
02/06/2025	1.0	Kerry Roche, Tenant Engagement and Regulatory Compliance Lead	Final draft
01/10/2026	1.1	Kerry Roche, Tenant Engagement and Regulatory Compliance Lead	Section 3 – Tenant-centred service

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1. Introduction

This code of conduct sets out the behaviour we expect of contractors and officers when entering and working within tenants' homes and communities. It aims to ensure that all interactions are professional, respectful and considerate of tenants' rights, privacy and wellbeing.

2. The principles

All contractors and officers must:

- Treat tenants with respect and dignity at all times.
- Have an ID badge to identify themselves.
- Act professionally and with integrity.
- Maintain tenant confidentiality and privacy.
- Follow health and safety regulations.
- Report any concerns about tenant welfare through correct procedures.
- Comply with all relevant laws and council policies.
- Maintain the skills, knowledge and training required to carry out their role effectively.

3. Tenant-centred service

Contractors and officer will:

- Listen to tenant views and concerns.
- Take account of individual needs, communication preferences and circumstances, making reasonable adjustments where required.
- Be honest, open and accountable.
- Keep tenants informed and manage expectations.
- Take ownership of issues and follow up where commitments have been made.

- Treat tenants as partners in improving housing services.

4. Entry and conduct in a tenant's home

4.1 Prior notice and permission

- Tenants must be given a minimum notice of 24-48 hours prior to visiting for responsive repairs except in emergency situations or when the council is investigating tenancy breaches.

- Prior to the visit the tenant should be made aware of who is visiting and the reason for the visit.

- If the property is undergoing works involving planned maintenance such as a new kitchen, bathroom etc, the tenant must be notified two weeks before work starts so that they can plan ahead.

- Consent must be obtained before entering the property, unless the law allows entry without consent (e.g. emergency repairs).

- If a tenant refuses entry for valid reasons, the refusal must be respected, and concerns should be escalated accordingly.

  Valid reasons for refusal could include:

  - The tenant has supporting needs that requires a trusted adult to be present before allowing entry.
  - No suitable adult in the property when a child answers the door.

4.2 Identification and communication

- Contractors and officers must carry and display official identification at all times.

- Upon arrival, they must introduce themselves, state the reason for their visit, and show identification before entering. If no identification is provided the tenant may refuse entry.

- Use clear, polite and non-threatening communication.

- If appointments can no longer go ahead for whatever the reason, the contractor or officer should make the tenant aware as soon as possible to apologise and re-arrange a convenient time.

4.3 Respect for tenants and their homes

- Treat the tenant and their property with care and respect.
- Do not move or touch personal belongings unnecessarily.
- Avoid making excessive noise or disruption such as playing music loudly.
- Keep the working area within the home clean and tidy, clearing up after work is completed. This could include dust sheets being used to protect flooring or furniture. Tenants may be asked to remove their belongings where it is appropriate to do so. The property should be left in a state of how it was or better prior to the works being completed.
- Upon entry, the contractor or officer should wear protective coverings over shoes.
- Ensure any rubbish is removed and disposed of correctly.

5. Ongoing communication

5.1 Keeping in touch

- If further visits or communication are required, this should be explained to the tenant so that they are kept informed.
- Tenants should be made aware of timeframes including a proposed date for completion where appropriate.

6. Professional behaviour and ethics

6.1 Appropriate conduct

- Do not smoke, vape or consume alcohol in a tenant's home.
- Avoid using offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate language.

- Do not engage in arguments, confrontations, or personal disputes with tenants.
- Avoid personal comments, jokes or remarks that could be misinterpreted.
- Tenants should not be asked to make hot drinks or provide food. Tenants can offer should they wish to do so.
- Do not play music loud when working on site.

6.2 Privacy and confidentiality

- Do not discuss a tenant's personal circumstances with others unless required for legitimate purposes (e.g. safeguarding concerns).
- Consider the environment before discussing personal circumstances related to the tenant i.e. a communal area would not be appropriate.
- Any documents, photographs or records must be handled with confidentiality and stored securely.

6.3 Gifts and personal relationships

- Contractors and officers must not accept gifts, money or favours from tenants.
- Any conflicts of interest (e.g. personal relationships with tenants) must be declared to your line manager and must notify their contact at the council.

7. Safety and security

7.1 Personal and tenant safety

- Contractors and officers must adhere to health and safety laws and council policies.
- If unsafe conditions are observed (e.g. hoarding, gas leaks), they must be reported to your line manager or contractors must inform their contact at the council.

- Officers conducting lone visits to properties or communities should use their lone working device and consider any additional measures needed to ensure their safety such as risk assessments.

7.2 Protection of vulnerable tenants

- Be aware of safeguarding responsibilities concerning adults or children at risk.
- Any concerns about a tenant's welfare or a member of the household must be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

8. What we expect from tenants

- If a tenant behaves aggressively, contractors or officers should withdraw and report the incident via their usually procedures.
- Tenants should ensure that their homes are clean and free from hazards such as rotten food, drug paraphernalia, human or animal waste.
- Tenants should ensure their homes are well-ventilated if smoke is present before contractors or officers arrive. Since your home is considered a workplace of our contractors and officers, persistent smoking during their visit may result in your appointment being cancelled.

9. Complaints and reporting misconduct

9.1 Tenant complaints

- Tenants have the right to report concerns about contractors or officer conduct.
- Complaints should be handled promptly, fairly and professionally and in line with our policy.
- Tenants must be informed about the complaints process.
- Should a tenant disclose their dissatisfaction, the officer should do what they can to put things right if possible and inform that a complaint will be raised, and an investigating officer will be in touch to discuss further.

9.2 Reporting breaches of conduct

- Any breaches of this Code must be reported to the council on 01664 502 502.
- Upon a breach being identified, the council should consider whether further sanctions should be taken such as an apology or training.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against those who fail to comply.

10. Compliance and training

- All contractors and officers will be provided with copies of and will be bound by this Code of Conduct.
- Failure to adhere to this Code may result in further action being taken under the relevant contract or in relation to the officer concerned.

11. Linked policies and procedures

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Compensation and reimbursement policy.
- Complaints policy.
- Gifts and hospitality policy March 2020.
- Housing Competence and conduct policy.