Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative
421 Roman Road, Bow, London E3 5QS
Tel: 0208 981 5089
email: mail@phoenixhousing.co.uk
www.phoenixhousingcoop.org

Members Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Phoenix Housing Co-operative expects its members to maintain high standards of personal behaviour and to behave honestly, professionally and transparently when acting on behalf of the Co-operative.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards that we expect our members to meet and explains what action we will take if a member fails to meet these standards.

As a co-operative organisation our approach to our business is underpinned by the co-operative principles and values as formulated by the International Co-operative Alliance. Our code is based on those values and sets out standards for personal and professional conduct that will enable our members to meet them.

2. Objectives of the Code of Conduct

The objectives of the code are:

- To explain how the co-operative principles and values are relevant to Phoenix Housing Co-operative as an organisation, and why they are relevant to all our members, whether or not they serve on the management committee.
- To define our business ethics and to explain why these ethics are important.
- To set out what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour at meetings and other public forums.
- To ensure that members, and especially committee members, are aware that they must declare any relevant interests and must not accept gifts or hospitality

3. Breaches of the code

Phoenix Housing Co-operative will take very seriously any report that a member has breached the code of conduct. Breaches of the code should be reported to the management committee. On receipt of an allegation that the code has been breached, the committee will conduct an investigation and will then consider the matter at a committee meeting. Alternatively the committee may appoint an independent expert to investigate in its place, and to recommend an appropriate course of action. Any person who is alleged to have breached the code will be entitled to defend those allegations in person to the management committee. In the event that the committee determines that there has been a breach of the code, the following sanctions will be available, subject always that the sanction is provided for in the rules, which may be amended from time to time:

- A reprimand and / or a request for an apology.
- Temporary suspension from the management committee.
- Temporary prohibition from attending general meetings.
- Removal from the management committee.
- Expulsion from the co-operative, subject always to a vote at a general meeting

4. The Co-operatives principles and values

	The Principle	What this means for us and our code
1	**Voluntary and Open Membership** Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination	As an organisation and as individuals we will do our best to ensure that everyone in our community has a fair chance to become a member of our co-op. We will not use our membership of the co-operative to give special preference to our friends, family or people with similar interests or backgrounds
2	**Democratic Member Control** Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the co-operative—who participate in setting policies and making decisions.	We will take decisions and elect our representatives democratically, and we will abide by our rules. As individuals we will not seek to dominate or impose our will on others, but will work together for the common good
3	**Members' Economic Participation** Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the co-op rather than on the capital invested	As members of a housing co-operative, we benefit from affordable rents and more control over our homes and community. Provided we buy a share and pay our rent, we all have an equal right to a share of these benefits
4	**Autonomy and Independence** Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintain the co-operative's autonomy.	We manage our own affairs and we are accountable only to our members (but of course we must also follow the law of the land). If we enter into agreements or borrow money from others, we will not sign up to any conditions that jeopardize our independence or our democracy.
5	**Education, Training and Information** Co-operatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of co-operatives	We offer our members training that will help them develop the skills to enable them to participate in the running of our co-operative. If we employ staff, we will provide them with appropriate training. If we have sufficient resources we may offer other sorts of training to our members and also to others in the local community
6	**Co-operation among Co-operatives** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures	We may join relevant regional, national or international co-operative bodies. However, we are not obliged to become a member of any particular secondary organisation and will decide how we participate in the wider movement based on the interests of our members.
7	**Concern for Community** While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members	Our principle responsibility is to our own members, but we should not do anything as individuals or as an organisation that is harmful to others in our community or to the environment. With the approval of our members, we can use a small part of our resources to support projects that will benefit the local community.

5. Personal Behaviour at meetings

Phoenix Housing Co-operative will only be successful if our members put the co-operative's interests above their own personal interests. Members must not allow their private interests to influence the way they vote at meetings or the decisions they take on our behalf.

There will be an agenda and order of business for each meeting. All the members attending the meeting will respect the agenda and will only propose changes to the order of business in the manner provided for by the standing orders. The co-operative does not accept that filibustering is a legitimate tactic and it shall be the responsibility of the meeting to ensure that debates are kept to a proportionate length, and that all the items listed on the agenda are given a fair hearing.

We expect our members to treat each other with dignity and respect during meetings and to respect the authority of the Chair. Whilst we recognise that there will on occasions be legitimate disagreement between members and we encourage constructive debate, disruptive, aggressive and bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. The administrators of the meeting shall have the right to ask a member who persists in behaving aggressively or unreasonably to leave the meeting.

Respect for diversity and the promotion of equality are fundamental co-operative values. We expect all our members, both at meetings and elsewhere, to respect the rights and feelings of others, and in particular not to make comments that may be considered racist, sexist or homophobic, or that may otherwise offend sections of our community. The meeting shall have the right to ask anyone whose language or conduct is persistently discriminatory or offensive to leave the meeting.

In order for our meetings to be effective, it is important that those attending behave rationally and responsibly. Members shall not attend meetings whilst their conduct or judgement is impaired due to the consumption of alcohol or drugs. The meeting shall have the right to ask any member who is disrupting a meeting to leave it.

We aim to govern our co-operative democratically and transparently. This may sometimes mean that members of the committee are made party to private information about individual members or others. Such information will be kept strictly confidential by all concerned. Unauthorised disclosure of confidential private information will be treated as a breach of this code.

6. Declarations of Interest

Every member of the management committee will be expected to declare any private interests which might conflict with their role as a committee member with a duty to act in the interests of the co-operative. Examples of relevant interests include:

- A relationship (eg family, friendship, business relationship, employment) with a contractor or other supplier A relationship with an applicant to the waiting list
- A relationship with any organisation with which the co-operative has a contractual or statutory relationship
- An investment or other financial interest in any organisation or individual with whom the co-operative does business or invests

Phoenix Housing Co-operative will maintain a register of interests. Each committee member should make a fresh declaration each year and also when any new potential conflict of interest arises. Members with no relevant interests must also make a declaration to this effect. When any member becomes aware that a matter is to be discussed at a committee meeting in relation to which they made face a conflict of interest, the member shall immediately make a declaration to the Chair. The Chair will then consider the declaration, and may ask the member to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed. More information about declarations of interest can be found in our Standing Orders for General Meetings.

7. Gifts, Hospitality and payment in kind

Gifts, including the payment of money, hospitality and payment in kind are commonly offered by disreputable contractors and suppliers in order to influence committee members to make decisions which may be contrary to the interests of the co-operative. Consequently, no person acting on behalf of Phoenix Housing Co-operative is permitted to accept any money, gift or payment in kind from any person, company or organisation. Hospitality, other than that of very minor value, will usually be treated as a gift. However, routine hospitality (eg lunch or drinks) which forms an integral part a legitimate activity, such as business meeting, a training event or a study visit, will be considered acceptable subject to being declared. Very minor gifts, with a monetary value of less than £20, may be accepted on behalf of the co-operative, particularly if refusal might cause offence. Such gifts become the property of the co-operative rather than the individual and shall be used for collective rather than personal benefit. All gifts, no matter how small the monetary value, must be declared. No person acting on behalf of the co-operative shall make any offer of a gift, hospitality or payment in kind to any person, company or organisation. Any person making such an offer, whether or not the offer is accepted, will be considered to be in breach of this code. The co-operative will maintain a hospitality register. Each committee member shall make a declaration each and every time they receive routine hospitality or a minor gift

8. Members Expenses

Members of Phoenix Housing Co-operative will have the right to claim for out of pocket expenses incurred whilst carrying out approved activities on behalf of the co-operative. The management committee will determine a procedure for claiming expenses, which may include the requirement that certain expenses are always pre-approved. Expenses must be claimed an using an expenses form and receipts must be provided. Any member making a fraudulent claim for expenses will be considered to have breached the Code of Conduct. The member may also have committed a criminal offence. Members may claim for reasonable transportation expenses, for telephone bills and for the cost of meals and refreshments if these are not otherwise provided. Subject to the agreement of the management committee, members may also be able to claim for the cost of caring for dependents while attending meetings, and for stationary and postage costs. This policy will be reviewed annually.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will also be reviewed if there are changes to relevant legislation or to the regulatory framework

This Policy was passed on ……