



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Code of Conduct for Contractors

2019

Contents

Introduction	3	Religious and ethnic considerations	7
Conduct with customers	3	Identification passes	7
Valuing diversity and inclusion	3	Dress code	7
Supporting customers	4	Difficult situations	7
Customers with Disabilities	4	Sub-contractors	7
Visually impaired, blind or partially sighted customers	4	Fire integrity of high-rise block managed by SCH	7
Communicating with deaf and hearing impaired customers	4	Work with Asbestos	8
Safeguarding	4	Health and Safety Due Diligence	8
Confidentiality	5	Reporting of accidents	8
Hazard Warning Markers	5		
Violence at work	5		
Harassment	5		
Customer care	5		
Before starting work in a customer's home	5		
Conduct whilst in a customer's home	6		
Care of the customer's home and possessions	6		
Leaving and returning to a property	6		
On completion of the job	6		



Introduction

This code of conduct is for contractors employed by Solihull Community Housing (SCH) and its partner associations.

The code is a formal part of the contract relationship between SCH and the service provider. We have tried to include as much information as possible, but if you don't find what you are looking for, please contact us. It is necessary to update Code of Conduct from time to time, but the latest version is available on our website or can be sent to you.

The code has been set up in order to protect the interests of our tenants and leaseholders for whom SCH provide services; and also to protect contractors who deliver those services on behalf of SCH.

While contracted by SCH, you, your employees and any sub-contractors you use are expected to comply with the terms of this code.

Any breach of the code will be treated very seriously and will be investigated and acted upon.

Please note: as a contractor you must make sure that you comply with all statutory requirements. Please ensure you work safely at all times and promote good Health and Safety standards. You must ensure that your work does not interfere with or weaken the fire-stopping measures in our high-rise blocks. You will be responsible for putting right any work you do that does.

Conduct with customers

You should remember at all times that when working in and around someone's home and you must treat it as such. You should ensure that all dealings with tenants, leaseholders, and employees of SCH are conducted in a professional manner.

Additionally, you should recognise that residents are paying for the service you provide through their rent or other charges. If

an occupier tells you that he or she does not want you to enter their home, please contact SCH as soon as possible and alternative arrangements will be made.

Some customers may feel nervous about having a stranger in their home. It is important therefore, to identify yourself, your organisation and purpose of visit before entering the premises.

It is in the interest of both you and the customer that you are approachable but formal and that the customer feels confident about asking you questions.

Noise should always be kept to a minimum.

Normal working times are 8.30 am to 5.30pm

Valuing diversity and inclusion

You have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate in any way in the provision of services to the public and in the way that you deal with our staff. This includes services to our customers.

Contractors must ensure that the same quality of service is delivered fairly to all residents, whatever a person's race, colour, ethnic or national origin nationality, religion, sex, age, sexuality, physical or mental, disability, state of health, disability, state of health, appearance, marital status, family circumstances, background and style of life.

Contractors will respect the diverse nature of SCH residents and will accommodate, so far as possible, any cultural or other particular needs or concerns of residents.

We have an Equality and Diversity Policy which can be found on our website or by calling SCH. We are committed to equal opportunities in the provision of services and in the employment of staff. We wish to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all and expect our contractors to assist us in meeting this objective. We expect you also to afford equal opportunities of employment to your operatives and sub-contractors.

Supporting Customers

On your initial encounter with a customer, you should seek to identify if the customer has any special needs or vulnerabilities which need to be accounted for in delivering your work, for example:

Customers with disabilities

When working within the home of a customer with a physical or mental impairment, it is important to ensure that you don't leave obstacles in their way. If the nature of the work is likely to cause some inconvenience or obstruction, discuss this with the customer. If furniture and other items need to be moved, ask the customer to show you where to put them (where they won't interfere with your work). As soon as the work is finished, replace the items. If it is necessary to leave the premises, ensure that tools and equipment are out of the way.

Clear up rubbish and spillages as quickly as possible. Wet floors, dust and paper pose particular hazards for people using mobility aids.

Visually impaired, blind or partially sighted customers

When working within the home of a visually impaired customer, it is important that contractors give them clear information.

On arrival at the premises, introduce yourself, using (when appropriate an agreed password or by showing your identity card. Explain where you will be working and what you will be doing.

If you need to move items of furniture, ask the customer where you should place them and ensure you replace them in exactly the same position on completion of the job.

Ask the customer to explain to you a place you can safely leave work materials.

If you have to leave the premises for any reason let the customer know, and if possible,

give them an idea of when you will be returning.

Communicating with deaf and hearing impaired customers

There are a number of steps that can be taken to facilitate better communication with a customer who has impaired hearing, including:

- Making sure that you have attracted their attention
- Facing the person when you are talking to them, speaking clearly and using your usual tone. Don't raise your voice unless the person asks you to do so. Raising your voice could distort what you are saying making it difficult to lip read
- Letting the customer know if you will be making excess noise e.g. drilling or hammering
- Giving clues to what you are talking about in your face, body language and the gestures you make
- Being prepared to write things down. This will not always be appropriate, as some people who use sign language may not be able to read written text (sentences in sign languages are structured differently)
- Letting the customer know if you have to leave the premises for example to get work tools and equipment from the van

Safeguarding

We have legal obligations in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Policies are in place for dealing with safeguarding issues and this includes protection from actual (or the risk of) various forms of abuse. Any concerns must be reported to your contract administrator who will investigate.

These reports will be dealt with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Do not enter a property if only minors are present.

Confidentiality

Contractors/operatives should treat tenants' names, telephone numbers and email addresses as strictly confidential and in no circumstances should any information whatsoever regarding tenants' circumstances, lifestyles, health or personal details, including any other information they acquire whilst working at the customer's home etc. be disclosed to any third party. This includes any other person in the customer's household.

Personal data about SCH's customers should only be retained for the individual instance of work being carried out. Once work has been completed it is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that the destruction of personal data is carried out in a controlled and secure manner. In line with contract requirements and within the provisions of the most recent Data Protection Act.

Contractors must not discuss with the customer: SCH's business, other customers, other properties, previous workmanship or other contractors. If a customer inquires about SCH's business, please redirect them to SCH.

Hazard Warning Markers

SCH will provide the contractor with information of any potential issue or hazard relating to an individual property or location, before visiting or starting work on site. The appropriate measures will be taken to evaluate and mitigate risks.

Violence at work

Contractors may come across situations where violence or the threat of violence to themselves or others becomes apparent. It is advisable to try and minimise confrontation as soon as possible and not be drawn into arguments with others.

If the situation escalates, for safety reasons, it is acceptable to leave the premises as quickly as possible and tell the customer why. If incidents do occur you must tell SCH as soon

as possible so that the appropriate action can be taken.

Harassment

We have a policy for dealing with incidents of harassment or violence against our customers. Any allegations of harassment by you, your employees or sub-contractors will be investigated.

If proven, you will be removed from our approved list of contractors. Any allegations of harassment against you, your employees or your subcontractors will be treated with equal seriousness.

Customer care

For all day-to-day repairs, the contractor will be provided with a job order containing the name and address of the tenant, as well as the type and priority of work that is required, together with an appointed time to attend the property (if applicable).

The contractor will then contact the tenant to arrange a date and time to carry out the works, or make contact by letter or calling card.

SCH has required targets for completion of works, which are as follows.

Contractors must:

- Be on time for appointments
- Leave a calling card if the customer is out when they arrive
- Tell the customer their name and show photo identification cards before asking to come in, and if asked, give a contact number where the customer can check their identity
- Say clearly what they are going to do, when they will do it and how it will affect the customer

Before starting work in a customer's home

The contractor must:

- Explain to the tenant the nature of the work that is to be carried out

- Check that this agrees with the work the tenant expects to be done. If there is a difference, contact SCH for advice
- Explain how long the work will take and which rooms will be affected
- Let the customer know how work is progressing and give an approximate completion time
- Ask if materials and tools can be left in a particular place, checking they will not cause inconvenience to the tenant
- Tell SCH if the customer refuses to let you in when they need access to carry out work

Conduct whilst in a customer's home

Contractors must not:

- Introduce additional hazards e.g. stored material blocking access routes, tools left in communal areas
- Smoke, eat, drink or play audio equipment
- Consume alcohol or take drugs under any circumstances
- Use the customer's bathroom without permission
- Carry out works if only minors (children) are present at the property
- Use foul or abusive language or threatening behaviour
- Cause offence, inconvenience or personal harassment to a customer under any circumstances. This includes unkind, embarrassing, and inflammatory or damaging words or gestures

Respect and sensitivity should be shown to all customers, their relatives, friends and visitors and their home.

Care of the customer's home and possessions

The contractor must:

- Discuss the removal of delicate or valuable items from the work area with customers, and the moving of furniture and other items if required
- Wherever possible limit any disruption to just one room at a time
- Take the necessary precautions to keep carpets and floors clean and protected by

using dustsheets or plastic floor protection sheets Get permission from the customer before using sinks, electricity and other services in the property

- ensure that all rubbish is removed on completion of works
- Reconnect and test services such as gas, water and electricity at the end of each working day
- Take all reasonable steps to keep the home and possessions safe and secure
- Not remove any of the customer's possessions without permission
- Take all reasonable steps to keep the customer and their household safe whilst work is going on.

The contractor must compensate the customer for any damage to their property resulting from negligence by the contractor, and notify SCH immediately.

Leaving and returning to a property

Contractors must inform the customer when leaving the property and on return to the property. This includes leaving the property to collect materials or to obtain further instructions. If it is necessary to leave, advise the customer:

- Of the anticipated return time to complete the work
- Why it is necessary to leave the property before the work is completed

On completion of the job

Contractors must ensure that:

- All works are complete to a satisfactory standard
- Remove all surplus material, equipment and rubbish, leaving the area of work clean and tidy
- Instruct the tenant how to operate and maintain all new equipment and provide operation manuals
- If an item needs to be left for a while before it can be used, ensure that protection or a notice is in place and that an explanation is given to the tenant e.g. 'Do not walk on the newly laid paving slabs for two or three hours'

- Inform SCH that the work is complete, and provide any associated paperwork

Religious and ethnic considerations

Try not to disturb anything you think might be a religious object without first asking the customer if it can be moved.

If a tenant asks you to comply with a particular practice related to their religion or ethnicity respect their request whenever possible.

If this is going to have implications for your safety or ability to carry out the work, contact SCH. An example of this may be if you are asked to remove your safety shoes before entering a room.

Identification passes

All Contractors must carry the SCH Contractors identification card with them at all times. The customer will have the right to check with SCH that you have the right to enter the property.

Dress Code

Contractors are required to wear an appropriate form of clothing, which is clean and tidy and meets health and safety requirements.

Difficult situations

There may be occasions, particularly when working in occupied properties, when a contractor may feel uncomfortable about the circumstances or the behavior of the customer or their guests (for example, if the customer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is verbally abusive, or makes sexual advances). If a situation like this occurs, and you feel you cannot work in the circumstances, explain to the customer, if possible, why you are leaving and report the problem to SCH.

If valuables are left within your working area (for example purses, cheque books or

jewellery), ask the customer to move them to somewhere more secure. This is to protect you in case the valuables go missing.

Sub-Contractors

The use of Sub-Contractors is only permitted by prior arrangement with SCH. The Contractor will provide SCH with a list of all Sub-Contractors under the contract, and draw their attention to these requirements.

Fire integrity of high-rise blocks managed by SCH

Our high-rise blocks have rising service ducts containing water ,gas ,electrical ,soil and vent pipes ,CCTV, data, telephone and television services .Where pipes ,cables and ducts pass through walls and floors, fire compartment integrity is maintained by Nullifire compound, or Nullifire collars in the case of larger pipes or ducts , to provide the required *fire protection.

When service providers are cutting or drilling new holes through walls and floors to provide services to customers, Contractors are to ensure that:

- SCH are made aware of the works to be undertaken and location
- If you complete the works by the use of an existing protected aperture, then the required *fire projection is to be reinstated

If your work involves forming new holes through any wall or floor, then on completion of the works the required *fire projection must be in place, before leaving site.

*The Contractor must contact SCH regarding the type of fire projection required for repair and new installation work.

SCH is currently reviewing management arrangements in this area. If we find unprotected works, and can identify the service provider responsible, we will carry out the necessary fire protection work and forward the appropriate claims for the cost to the responsible Contractor.

Work with Asbestos

SCH will provide the Contractor with information held within our database regarding the known locations of asbestos containing materials (ACMs), or will arrange for a suitable asbestos survey to be carried out specific to the works to be undertaken. The Contractor must ensure the effective planning of works to ensure sufficient time to carry out the survey, or to manage known ACMs prior to work commencing. The Contractor will inform their own operatives of the presence of asbestos and or materials in the property presumed to be asbestos together with their own Safe Systems of Work (SSoW). Contractor operatives and Managers need to be trained to a minimum of 'Category A' level Asbestos Awareness and hold a valid certificate.

Asbestos must be removed and disposed of in strict accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR2012), THE Approved Code of Practice for Managing and working with Asbestos 2012 and HSE approved codes of practice.

Health and Safety Due Diligence

All contractors are monitored and audited by the SCH Project Team pre and post contract, regarding health and safety, planning, compliance, conformance and performance standards.

Reporting of accidents

All accidents and dangerous occurrences affecting Contractors or Sub-Contractors employees, shall be notified in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 and a copy of such notification shall be forwarded to SCH.

All accidents occurring to SCH employees or members of the public will be notified to SCH.



Get in touch

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Publication Date: June 2019