



VHA Policy Document

Code of Conduct For Contractors

Reviewed: May 2024 Next Review Due: May 2027

Introduction

The Code of Conduct (The Code) outlines VHA's expectations of overall service delivery where a Contractor is employed to undertake work on its behalf.

Whilst we recognise its duty of care to all its appointed contractors, and their employees, whilst undertaking work on its behalf, contractors are expected to reciprocate this duty.

Aims

This code has been prepared to:

- ensure that contractors and tradesmen are aware of the standards required of them when accepting orders for carrying out work on our behalf;
- promote reliability, efficiency and best practice;
- bring about, and retain, the confidence and trust of residents;
- ensure good practice and the highest possible standards of workmanship and customer service generally;
- maintain our reputation as a provider of excellent service to its residents.

Context

The Code forms part of the agreement between Vectis Housing Association Ltd and the contractor, for works and services carried out by the contractor on our behalf.

Any queries the contractor may have regarding the requirements contained within the Code should be taken up with an officer in the our Property Services Department.

Our staff and its appointed contractors are expected to deal with tenants promptly and courteously, and to show patience, understanding, and sensitivity at all times.

THE CODE

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1.1 The image that we present to our residents is important, so our contractors will:

- Be smart and clean in appearance
- Be friendly and courteous
- Be helpful and understanding
- Respect and show our values

1.2 Contractors should avoid.

Any behaviour which is considered by residents to be:

- Rude or objectionable
- Excessively noisy, e.g., use of radios etc.
- Overly familiar, argumentative, harassing or intimidating
- Derogatory comments about customers, contractors, their employer, or Vectis Housing Association

Contractors must not:

- Work under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Smoke in or near residents' properties.

1.3 Identification - the contractor will:

- Wear clear, easy to read, identification cards, in a prominent position on the workers clothing, at all times, which includes:
 - The workers name & photograph
 - The company's name
 - The company's address and telephone number
- Use a password if one has been arranged
- Encourage residents to call the workers company and/or Contractor if they are in any doubt about the work or the worker.
- When requested contractors will be required to carry out DBS checks and provide details to Vectis Housing Association.

1.4 Quality of workmanship

The contractor will carry out work to a high quality and standard as specified and approved by us whatever the general state of the property. This will include and not be limited to compliance with current Building Regulations, British Standards, and any industry best practice guidelines. Contractors will be required to provide photographs and notes of the work carried out, either by way of email, completion report or uploading into a contractor portal.

1.5 Visits to residents' homes

The contractor will:

- Take all reasonable steps to provide an appointment for residents when arranging access to carry out works in their home. All appointments should be booked as soon as possible of the repair being reported to the contractor and should occur within the repair timescale set by Vectis Housing Association.
- Ask permission before entering a resident's home or garden to carry out work.
- Inform and apologise to residents and their neighbours if the work is likely to cause a nuisance due to dust, noise etc.
- Provide residents with a full explanation for any delay in starting or completing work.
- Provide updates on revised dates for starting or completing the work.
- Notify as soon as possible if the visit must be cancelled and apologise for any inconvenience caused. Where possible a minimum of 24 hours' notice will be given.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time to visit for any further work.
- Ensure that sufficient notice is given when any disconnection of services or interruption of access is necessary
- Ensure that, where appropriate, any statutory consents are obtained before work commences and that any statutory notices have been applied for
- Ensure that wherever possible work activities are restricted to normal working hours or that agreement has been received from residents and neighbours for any work outside of this time
- Ensure that they do not attend a property where there is a lone minor (aged 16 or under)
- Leave site immediately and report to Vectis Housing Association whenever they encounter a threatening/potentially violent situation
- Ensure adequate care is taken in the protection of resident's fittings, furniture, and gardens with the use of dustsheets and screens as required
- Provide adequate warning and information notices regarding work in progress as may be required.
- Ensure footpaths and rights of way are maintained in a safe condition at all times.
- Not to use radios or other audio equipment whilst working in residents' homes or their immediate vicinity and to only use mobile telephones for business use
- Take reasonable precautions to prevent pollution from noise, smoke, dust, or rubbish.
- Remove all rubbish generated as a result of working in Vectis Housing Association properties
- Ensure residents and property are left safe and secure before leaving site and that all redundant items are removed from home and garden.
- Leave a card with the caller's details if the tenant is not in, explaining the reason for the call, providing the contact name, address, and telephone number. Take a photo of the card whilst posting.
- Not bring pets into or around residents' property.
- Ensure that appropriate levels of self-hygiene are maintained
- Not park on footpaths, grassed areas and designated resident parking spaces / disabled spaces etc.
- Make Vectis Housing Association aware of any safeguarding concerns through agreed reporting roles or processes.

Vectis Housing Association will:

- Inform the contractor of any residents who are vulnerable or who should not be approached alone
- For those residents identified as vulnerable or who should not be visited alone, agree a suitable approach with the contractor to ensure the repair / works are completed with the contractor and resident safety being prioritised.

1.6 Covid compliance or any such transmissible viruses

All visits must comply with the current guidelines set out by Government and Public Health England. This may include ensuring that only operatives with up-to date vaccination status are sent to care homes, evidence of testing and wearing PPE. If you are unsure what the current requirements are you must contact and agree the necessary action with Vectis Housing Association.

1.7 Appointments

Appointments must be booked with the resident within 24 hours of having been notified of the job and attended to within the set priority timescale. Should a revisit be required with parts ordering, following the initial appointment the revisit should be within a 21-day period.

1.8 Protection of resident's belongings

The contractor will make sure that:

- Furniture, fittings, and carpets are protected by dustsheets. If items of furniture or other possessions cannot be moved by the resident, they will be moved with residents' permission if this offers further protection.
- If items are breakable or valuable residents should be advised that it would be wiser to move them.
- Damage to plants, trees etc. shall be avoided as far as possible. If some damage is inevitable this should be discussed and agreed with the resident.
- The area of the residents home, which is affected by the work, should be left clean and free from any debris.
- Equipment and materials must be removed wherever possible each day unless this is impracticable. In this case it should be stored in a position agreed with the resident.
- If the property is made unsafe or hazardous, the contractor will give the resident and any neighbours who may be affected, adequate warning and the contractor will minimise the risk. The contractor will also inform Vectis Housing Association of the issue immediately.
- Operatives must use cover guards to shoes / boots when working in residents' property.

1.9 Leaving residents' homes.

When completing works, contractors will:

- Explain to the resident what has been done and check to see that they are satisfied. If new equipment is installed contractors will leave operating instructions and provide a full demonstration on how to use the equipment.
- Check that all services are in working condition at the end of each day, during works and when the work is finished.
- Make sure that the resident's home is safe and habitable overnight and at weekends when the work cannot be completed within one working day.
- Contractors may also be asked to provide resident satisfaction documentation as part of the post-job process.

2. Safety Standards for Contractors

2.1 Protection of the Public

Protection of the public is of paramount concern and any arrangements must allow for the reduced level of awareness of safety risks amongst members of the public.

2.2 Responsibilities

Contractors are required to co-operate with Vectis Housing Association and individuals in discharging their responsibilities. They must:

- Ensure that a relevant risk assessment is completed before commencing work and notified of any subsequent changes to these assessments and ensure that persons likely to be

affected are identified, are informed of the risks and appropriate control measures are taken.

- Ensure that persons under their control follow any rules and procedures (including provision and use of Personal Protective Equipment).
- Ensure that any other person likely to be affected by their operation is informed of the risks and the measures necessary to remain unharmed.
- Prepare a specific method statement where required. It must include all the measures necessary to ensure that the operation can be carried out safely and must be submitted and agreed before any work commences.
- Contractors must satisfy themselves that all tools, plant, or equipment are suitable for the purpose to which the Contractor intends to use them and that they are in good condition and any defects reported without delay. The users must be trained, competent and supervised.
- Every effort must be made to segregate the general public, especially children, from work areas.
- Co-operate with Vectis Housing Association to enable them to carry out their statutory duties.
- The contractor will be required to comply with the requirements of CDM principal contractor / designer.

2.3 Accident / Incident Reporting / Safeguarding

Contractors must have their own Accident Book and they must record details of all injuries to their employees. All accidents are to be immediately reported to Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association. The Contractor must inform the Health & Safety Executive and submit an F2508 in the event of a reportable accident to direct or agency employees as defined in RIDDOR. A copy of the F2508 document must be forwarded to Vectis Housing Association and/or the Contractor.

Contractors are also required to keep Vectis Housing Association, or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association informed of the subsequent developments of long term injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences. Contractors are also required to notify Vectis Housing Association where there are any concerns in relation to safeguarding issues that they may encounter when accessing residents' properties.

2.4 Welfare

Any facilities provided by the contractor are to be maintained in a safe and clean condition and any person wilfully damaging such facilities will be removed from site and subsequently be liable to being charged for making good. Contractors must assess their first aid needs to ensure adequate and appropriate first aid provision is made for their employees. Smoking and vaping is not permitted on any Vectis Housing Association sites or properties.

2.5 Minimum Acceptable Standards

All tradesmen and operatives employed on behalf of Vectis Housing Association, or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association will have a demonstrable skill level incorporating Health & Safety training at the appropriate level for the activities to be undertaken. Contractors are required to declare and be able to demonstrate the level of Health & Safety training that has been completed by their managers and supervisors, relevant to their responsibilities.

2.6 Risk Assessments

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations requires employers and self-employed persons to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to employees and any others who may be affected by their undertaking and record the significant findings. All risk assessments will be reviewed by Vectis Housing Association or the contractor prior to

commencing work on site. A period must be allowed for this process and therefore method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed. Failure to comply may result in a delayed start to the operation.

2.7 Method Statements

All method statements will be reviewed by Vectis Housing Association or the contractor prior to commencing work on site. To allow review method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed.

2.8 Fire Precautions

Contractors retain the primary duty to ensure that all its workers fully understand and are familiar with the fire precautions. Care must be taken when using any equipment that generates flames, sparks, heat or other similar ignition sources and hot work permits will be required for all such activities. No hot works should be carried out within the final hour of the day's work activity. Flammable substances must not be brought onto any site without notification in the relevant method statement. Fire call points, exits and roadways must be kept clear at all times. Where work may obstruct/affect access to fire exits, call points and fire equipment, notification must be given before this situation arises. Contractors must identify and provide their own fire extinguishers/equipment on site which must be in a serviceable condition and suitable for the risks involved. Waste materials must be removed from the premises at the end of each day, high risk items must be removed upon completion of their use.

2.9 Asbestos

For any work that involves disturbance of the fabric of the building the contractor must make reasonable efforts to identify the likelihood of presence of asbestos in the area to be worked or disturbed, for example:

- look for adhesive labels warning of the presence of asbestos,
- ask for the site asbestos register,

If contractors are working with asbestos containing materials the activities must be in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, associated government codes of practice and company requirements. When working with asbestos containing materials, contractors should ensure that their workers are competent to carry out their work and are aware of all associated risks and control measures. Where risk assessments and method statements have been provided workers must be aware and work in accordance with them. Records of training and competency should be provided when requested. For further information please refer to the Asbestos Management document. Particular attention should be made to asbestos waste and the correct process and procedures are adhered to.

2.10 Dress code

Contractor work employees will ensure compliance with the company dress code, as a minimum all workers must wear:

- Identifiable uniform
- Appropriate safety footwear with mid-sole protection

2.11 Personal Protective Equipment

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations require every employer to provide their employees with suitable personal protective equipment to be used at work when they may be exposed to a hazard where there is a risk to their health or safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means. PPE must be fit for purpose, kept clean, maintained, and stored in good condition, with any defects reported.

2.12 Disciplinary procedure

Contractors will, when necessary, invoke their disciplinary procedures. Repeat infringements or serious offences may result in individuals being removed from site and may be precluded from other work for that contractor.

2.13 Drugs and alcohol

It is the policy of Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association to seek to ensure that all its sites are free of the use of alcohol and non-prescribed drugs. Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association will exclude from its sites any person under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.

2.14 Good order – housekeeping

Site tidiness is an essential part of accident reduction and fire prevention programs. Areas where Contractors are undertaking work will be kept in a reasonable state of cleanliness to prevent slips, trips, and fire hazards. Waste, debris, and off-cuts of materials are to be cleared as is necessary but at least daily to ensure other users of the site are not put in danger and that floor areas or structures are not overloaded. No timber or other material with projecting nails

shall be allowed to remain in place

where they are a source of danger. A good order strategy should be in place to manage this requirement. All materials / waste removed from site in the first instance should be recycled, or if this is not possible, should be disposed of via an approved waste transfer site and all waste transfer documentation made available to Vectis Housing Association on request.

2.15 Manual handling

Contractors are to assess the risk and avoid manual handling where reasonably practicable by the use of mechanical aids. Where mechanical aids are not used the contractor is responsible for undertaking a detailed assessment of the residual risks to be carried out and a safe system of work used to ensure the health and safety of the employee. Suitable PPE should be issued where appropriate.

2.16 Access equipment / ladders and step ladders

All access equipment must be assessed for suitability. Ladders (step and lean to) may only be used for access where there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that:

- the equipment used is suitable for the task and regularly inspected
- workers are suitable trained in working at height procedures.

Note: Ladders (step and lean to) can be used as working platforms where there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

2.17 Lifting operations, excavators, hoists, and MEWP's

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all lifting equipment and accessories whilst working on behalf of Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association are in compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations. All lifting operations must be fully assessed and planned by a competent, appointed person who has adequate practical and theoretical knowledge and carried out in compliance with BS 7121 Safe Use of Cranes. All lifting equipment including excavators, hoists, and MEWP's, must be accompanied with all current examination, inspection and test certificates and reports for retention by the Principal Contractor.

2.18 Spraying and misting

All contractors and suppliers utilising misting and spraying techniques will comply with the and be trained in the relevant guidance and British Standards and legislations and will provide evidence on request.

2.19 Tools

It is the contractor's responsibility to train its' employees in the use of any tools that they utilise in the execution of any services for Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association to the relevant guidance and standard and consider all relevant areas of health and safety.

2.20 Monitoring contractor Health & Safety.

Although the ongoing monitoring of health and safety is the contractor's responsibility, formal inspection and / or auditing may be carried out by Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association to monitor safety standards.

Further information on our commitment to health and safety can be found in our Health & Safety Policy.

3. Equality & Diversity

3.1 Vectis Housing Association or any client or contractor of Vectis Housing Association is committed to equality and diversity and to the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in all our dealings as an employer and provider of housing and related services. Vectis Housing Association will reflect its duty to promote equality in its procurement functions and will ensure that the protected characteristics are integrated into its procurement processes. More information can be

found in our Equality,

Diversity & Inclusion Policy

4. Anti-Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy Summary

4.1 Vectis Housing Association operates a counter fraud, corruption and bribery policy that details the steps that must be taken where fraud, corruption or bribery is suspected or discovered. Any person who becomes aware of any fraud, corruption, bribery, or other illegal act and does not follow this policy could be subject to disciplinary action.

The key objectives of this policy are for Vectis Housing Association to:

- demonstrate commitment to minimise the risk of these incidents occurring
- safeguard assets and reputation
- provide a framework for whistleblowing
- ensure Employers and employees can declare private interests which potentially conflict with the activities of Vectis Housing Association

4.2 Fraud and bribery are criminal offences, and the police are likely to be involved.

Any individual committing acts of fraud or bribery could be subject to both criminal and disciplinary action.

4.3 More information can be found in our Anti-Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy.

5. Modern Slavery

5.1 Vectis Housing Association will continue to take appropriate steps to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. This includes continuing to review our existing policies and procedures in light of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. All contractors and suppliers must comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

6. Social Value

6.1 The Social Value Act applies to Housing Associations and requires us to consider how social value can be provided in service contracts in local areas. Contractors and suppliers consider how they can help fulfil the requirements by working in partnership with the Welfare and Communities Officer at Vectis Housing Association. This may include providing working opportunities, e.g. apprenticeships if available or to provide local neighbourhood improvement support.

6.2 As a requirement of any formal tender exercise, contractors will need to demonstrate to Vectis Housing Association that they have implemented a clear Corporate Social Responsibility policy and/or culture at their company.

7. Contractor understanding and compliance

7.1 This policy will form a part of any subsequent Subcontract or Purchase order.

7.2 Contractors are deemed to have read and have understood all the above and will comply with all the requirements of the Code of Practice and Safety Standards when working on behalf of Vectis Housing Association.

7.3 Contractor policies and procedure shall comply with the Equality Act 2010 and cover the 9 protected characteristics.

7.4 Contractors are deemed to have read and have understood Vectis Housing Association Policies:

- Health and Safety
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Asbestos Management
- Electric Safety
- Gas Safety
- Water Hygiene & Legionella
- Fire Safety
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Anti-Fraud, Theft & Bribery Policy
- Data Protection

7.5 Vectis Housing Association reserve the right to remove or suspend contractors from our approved supplier list if we find them to be in breach of these standards or bring Vectis Housing Association into disrepute.

8. Probity

8.1 Contractors will carry out their work in an accountable and transparent manner and in accordance with the highest standards of probity, professionalism, and integrity.

8.2 Contractors will not exploit their positions and relationship with Vectis Housing Association.

8.3 Contractors will disclose any known relationships with Vectis Housing Association staff or residents where these may overlap with work carried out on behalf of the organisation.

8.4 Contractors will disclose any other potential conflict of interest arising from work to be carried out on behalf of the organisation.

9. Failure to comply with The Code of Conduct

Where contractors are found to repeatedly breach this Code of Conduct without having reasonable mitigating circumstances, the contractor will be suspended from working with the Association for a period of 3 months. If further instances of breaching the Code are found, the contractor will be removed from the Approved List.

Any queries concerning the content of this Code should be addressed to the VHA Property Services Department.

**Vectis Housing Association Limited
May 2024**