

THREE BOROUGHES HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

Resident Dispute Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure outlines the steps Three Boroughs Housing Co-operative will take in response to a report of a Resident Dispute.

The procedure covers situations when a minor dispute arises between residents and does not cover incidents classed as Anti-Social Behaviour, which will be dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

2. Responding to a report of a Resident Dispute

Members should initially report all Resident Disputes to the Co-operative Housing Manager. The report can be made by telephone, by email or in writing.

Stage 1 – Initial Assessment

The Co-operative Housing Manager will carry out an initial assessment to establish the nature of the situation and assess whether the behaviour qualifies as a Resident Dispute or Anti-Social Behaviour. All parties will be sent a copy of this procedure and Incident Log sheets (if deemed necessary). Members living in shared housing will also be sent a copy of the Shared House Guidelines. The Co-operative Housing Manager will report any such disputes to the Management Committee.

Stage 2 – Information Gathering

All the parties involved will be contacted by the Co-operative Housing Manager to gather as much information as possible and provide everyone with the opportunity to present their own account of events.

Stage 3 – Agreement on an Informal Approach

The Co-operative Housing Manager will ask both parties how they wish to proceed and what outcome they would like to see. The aim is to establish which method of resolving the dispute would be agreeable and be most beneficial for all parties. This is likely to involve compromise on both sides. The following options should be explored:

- The willingness of those involved to have a face to face chat to resolve any differences.
- The agreement of those involved to modify or change their behaviours to prevent future conflict.

Stage 4 – Agreement on a Mediated Approach

If one or both parties decide it is not possible to resolve the dispute through the informal approach outlined above, the Management Committee will appoint two Members of the Co-operative (accepted by both parties as an independent arbiters) to facilitate informal mediation between the parties.

The Members who have been appointed as mediators will normally meet with both parties first on an individual basis. This provides the opportunity for each party to explain the situation and discuss any particular concerns they may have and to give the mediators a clear understanding of the grievances.

The mediators should make it clear they are completely impartial and will not take sides. The mediators only role is to help everyone involved find a solution they can agree to and are satisfied with.

A meeting will then be arranged with all parties with the aim of:

- Finding solutions that everyone agrees to.
- Improving communication between all parties.
- Allowing everyone involved to have control of what is finally agreed.

Each party will be asked whether they would prefer the meeting to take place online or in person. If the parties agree to meet in person, the meeting should be arranged at a mutually agreed venue.

The Mediation Meeting

The mediators will open the meeting and advise both parties they should be prepared to discuss matters calmly and proactively and genuinely want to achieve a positive outcome. The goal is to achieve a final and durable settlement of the dispute. Each party will be allowed to speak without interruption and outline any grievances or concerns they have.

The outcome of a mediation meeting is flexible and can only be decided by the parties involved. Outcomes might include:

- An acknowledgement of each party's views.
- An overall commitment to modify or change behaviour.
- Agreements in relation to specific issues, such as reducing noise or sharing the cleaning of communal areas or facilities.

Following the meeting, the mediators will write to both parties outlining what was agreed. Each party is expected to strictly honour any commitments or agreements made.

If it is not possible to reach an agreement or compromise at the informal mediation meeting, it may be agreed (subject to approval from the Management Committee) to source a trained external mediator. This step would only be taken with the agreement of both parties and with the understanding that the mediator has no powers to impose a solution.

3. Confidentiality and Impartiality

All those involved in a Resident Dispute are expected to treat the matter in the strictest confidence and only disclose the information necessary to those involved in an official capacity in resolving the dispute.

In a small organisation, it is recognised that conflicts of interest may arise and close personal relationships may contribute to bias in decision making. Members tasked with mediating in Resident Disputes must ensure they remain impartial.

4. Record Keeping

All the parties involved in Resident Disputes, must be kept informed of the decisions made, actions taken and any outcomes.

At every point of this procedure the Co-operative Housing Manager must be kept informed of all decisions and actions and provided with copies of all correspondence, minutes of meetings etc. The Co-operative Housing Manager will record a chronological summary of events, meetings and actions.

It is imperative that accurate records of all file notes, correspondence and evidence is kept on the tenancy files of the relevant individuals, as resident disputes may not be fully resolved and may re-emerge at a future date.

All actions and outcomes will be reported to the Management Committee.

It is also recommended that both parties keep a record of any problems, detailing when and what happened, as it is recognised that a dispute between parties may sometimes escalate into anti-social behaviour.

5. Policy Review

This procedure will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice and to address legislative, regulatory or operational changes.

Approved by the Management Committee on	5th April 2022
Signed	
Position of Signatory	
For review on	5th April 2025