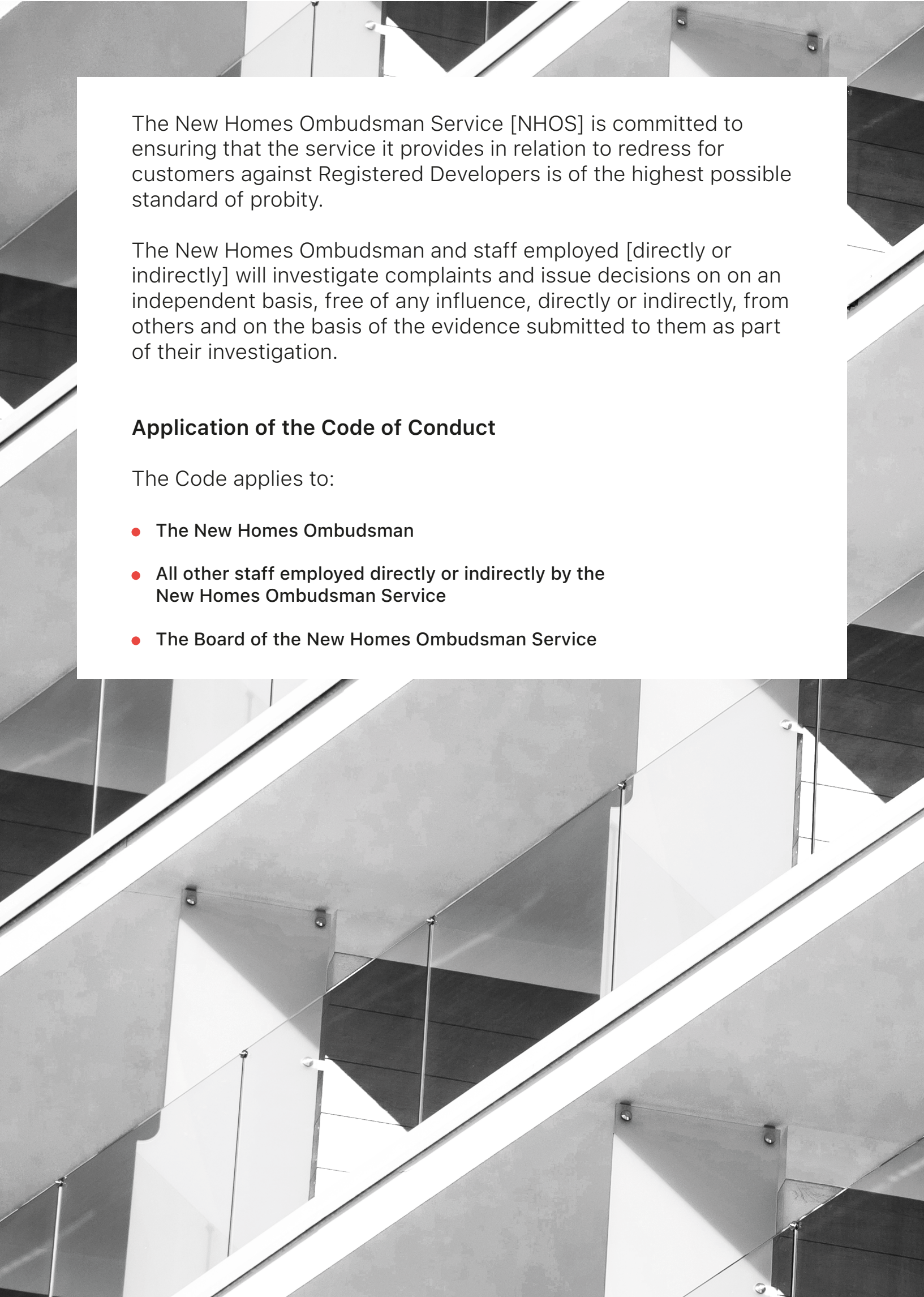




NEW HOMES  
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

# Code of Conduct





The New Homes Ombudsman Service [NHOS] is committed to ensuring that the service it provides in relation to redress for customers against Registered Developers is of the highest possible standard of probity.

The New Homes Ombudsman and staff employed [directly or indirectly] will investigate complaints and issue decisions on an independent basis, free of any influence, directly or indirectly, from others and on the basis of the evidence submitted to them as part of their investigation.

### **Application of the Code of Conduct**

The Code applies to:

- **The New Homes Ombudsman**
- **All other staff employed directly or indirectly by the New Homes Ombudsman Service**
- **The Board of the New Homes Ombudsman Service**

## The New Homes Ombudsman and all staff involved in handling complaints must:

- Have completed an entry in the New Homes Ombudsman Service Register of Interests which is designed to identify whether they may have any potential conflicts of interest in working for the New Homes Ombudsman
- Keep their entries in the Register of Interests up to date at all times
- Make themselves fully aware of all the information/evidence presented in relation to a complaint before they make their decision on a case
- Make decisions only after they have investigated any outstanding issues, which in their judgment may have an impact on the decision they reach
- Reach a decision on a case which is fair and proportionate to the complaint raised
- Communicate and write decisions in a way that is clear and easily understood, taking into account the issues and the needs of the parties to that complaint
- Complete decisions within the required timescales – if there is a reason they cannot do this they must advise the parties that there may be a delay in reaching a decision.
- In addition to completing the Register of Interests, inform the New Homes Ombudsman [or the Board Chair in the case of the New Homes Ombudsman] immediately of any conflict of interest, relationship or other issue affecting their involvement in a complaint which has been allocated to them for review, which is likely [or could be seen to] affect their independence or impartiality. If in doubt, the staff member should excuse themselves from the case so that another member of staff can be appointed to deal with the complaint
- Work within strict principles of confidentiality and not disclose any personal information they have obtained

## The New Homes Ombudsman Board must:

- Be independent of those subject to investigation and should not be an employee, officer or hold a significant shareholding [ $>2\%$ ] in a Registered Developer for at least the previous 5 years
- Have completed a Register of Interests entry which is designed to identify whether that may have any potential conflicts of interest in working for the New Homes Ombudsman
- Keep their entries in the Register of Interests up to date at all times
- Ensure that if they become aware of any conflicts of interest disclose these immediately to the Chair of the Board or the New Homes Ombudsman
- Respect at all times the importance of maintaining the independence of the new Homes Ombudsman and do nothing to interfere with the decisions of the Ombudsman or their independence
- Work within strict principles of confidentiality and not disclose any personal information they have obtained

*Failure to follow this Code of Conduct can result in disciplinary action.*

### **Gifts and hospitality**

In the course of providing services to customers, or in dealings with Registered Developers, or any other person having similar connections to the New Homes Ombudsman Service, employees should under no circumstances accept money, gifts or other forms of reward with a value exceeding £20 without prior consent from their Manager. All such reported gifts shall be recorded. For the purposes of this document, "gifts" includes entertainment outside the bounds of accepted business hospitality.



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