



BTR Code of Practice

BTR Code of Practice

**Setting the Standard:
A Principles-Based Code
for Excellence in Build-to-Rent**

**Developed by
the Association for Rental Living
Rev 2: Jan 2025**



THE
GOOD
ECONOMY



BTR Code of Practice

Introduction

This Code of Practice aims to elevate standards across the Build to Rent (BTR) sector, establishing a social contract with consumers, and building trust with all stakeholders including the public sector.

It defines a new benchmark for service, quality, sustainability, security, and good governance.

By adhering to the Code, BTR signatories commit to creating homes and communities that enrich lives, benefit society, alleviate the housing crisis, and reduce environmental impact.

Definition of Build to Rent (BTR)

BTR is purpose built, institutionally owned and professionally managed residential property which is rented on the open market.

Application

The Code sets a shared standard for stakeholders across the BTR sector, recognising the diverse roles within the industry and various BTR typologies.

While the Principles apply universally, stakeholders are expected to act where they have levers and responsibility.

Principles

1. Adopt fair, flexible and responsible terms
2. Embed professional standards
3. Design and maintain high quality homes and neighbourhoods
4. Create strong communities
5. Materially respond to the climate crisis
6. Adopt a responsible, transparent culture and robust corporate governance
7. Promote adoption of this Code.



BTR Code of Practice

1.

Adopt fair, flexible and responsible terms

Signatories will:

1. Adopt the Customer Charter (see Annex 1), or develop a bespoke Customer Charter that aligns with it in terms of commitments to:
 1. take a responsible approach to rents and affordability.
 2. ensure leases support tenant security.
 3. require housing standards that align with the new Decent Homes Standard as a minimum.
 4. require sustainability, with the Future Homes Standard to be applied as a minimum;
 5. ensure liveability; and
 6. abide by responsible consumer standards and will be transparent in our dealings.

Rationale:

1. Adopt best practice in terms of engagement with, and treatment of, customers:
 1. ensuring rents and other charges (e.g. energy) are set in a consistent, fair and transparent manner;
 2. providing security of tenure for customers;
 3. ensuring renters have high quality, sustainable homes to live in;
 4. being open and transparent in communications, including addressing any issues for customers; and
 - e. promoting a culture of continuous improvement across the sector.



BTR Code of Practice

2.

Embed professional standards

Signatories will:

1. Ensure recognised exacting standards of health, safety and security are met.
2. Manage and/or oversee property management teams that adopt a responsive, accountable and accessible culture.
3. Ensure all property management staff participate in Association for Rental Living-recognised qualifications and professional development programs suitable to their roles.
4. Require all work to be performed by qualified personnel, hired through processes that promote EDI, and require outsourced suppliers to meet equivalent standards.

Rationale:

1. Protect employees, residents and other stakeholders.
2. Demonstrate the professionalism and technical competence of the service offered through relevant qualifications. (e.g. Property Institute minimum level 4 qualification for Building Managers).
3. Promote residential property management as a career option with appropriate pay, CPD options (as appropriate), recognition, and promotion opportunities.
4. Proactively manage underperformance, ensuring employees who fail required exams or programs do not interact with customers unaccompanied until compliant.



BTR Code of Practice

3.

Design and maintain high quality homes and neighbourhoods

Signatories will:

1. Deliver quality BTR homes that align with recognised standards of design and specification, always prioritising safety, security, health, wellbeing, and actively pursuing liveability.
2. Create homes, places and communities that promote positive wellbeing and are attractive, adaptable and resilient.

Rationale:

1. Highlight the ambition of BTR to raise the bar or across the rented sector to deliver schemes focused on quality and wellbeing.



BTR Code of Practice

4.

Create strong communities

Signatories will:

1. Develop homes and foster vibrant scheme communities which encourage connection and generate a sense of belonging for the long term.
2. Curate targeted engagement programmes aimed to enhance residents' lives across mixed demographic, interests and needs.
3. Engage with the local community to ensure developments are contextually relevant for the long term, meeting underserved local needs as far as possible and respecting cultural heritage and ancestry.
4. Prioritise the creation of meaningful economic and social opportunities that support local businesses, organisations and communities..
5. Measure, monitor and manage schemes' actual and potential positive and negative social impacts for residents and local communities.

Rationale:

1. Support and promote placemaking.
2. Partner with local authorities to prioritise long-term positive social impact and community benefits, maintaining commitments like Affordable housing provision without compromise (unless there are exceptional viability challenges).
3. Enhance health, happiness and wellbeing across a mixed resident base.
4. Strengthen engagement with local businesses through promoting access to local retailers to residents.
5. Undertake impact measurement and management, in line with best practice such as The Good Economy's best practice guidelines or equivalent robust approach.
6. Implement data collection and sharing to enable benchmarking and evidence-based decisions.



BTR Code of Practice

5.

Materially respond to the climate crisis

Signatories will:

1. Demonstrate a clearly identified published approach to decarbonisation and the minimisation of the use of natural resources.
2. Publicly adopt a Net Zero target by 2050 (if not earlier), underpinned by a clear pathway, including a 'retrofit first' approach to legacy assets where practicable. From 2025 all new buildings will be designed as operationally neutral.
3. Measure, monitor, manage and benchmark energy, waste and natural resource use performance.
4. Educate, advocate and incentivise all key stakeholders about their responsibilities with respect to the climate crisis.
5. Design building management and maintenance programmes to improve asset operational efficiency.
6. Achieve institutional quality sustainability/ environmental standards.
7. Promote continuous improvement on circular economy principles.
8. Apply all available levers to minimise carbon in design, operations and materials.
9. Seek to minimise any negative impact on biodiversity and natural resources, and seek any positive gains.
10. Set equivalent environmental and quality expectations through supply chains.
11. Meet the Future Home Standard as a minimum benchmark for lowering carbon emissions in use.

Rationale:

1. Maintain proactive awareness of new and emerging regulatory and policy requirements at local and national levels.
2. Drive forward operational energy efficiencies of assets.
3. Cultivate a culture of continuous enhancements towards improved sustainability performance.
4. Require suppliers and contractors to align with net zero ambitions.
5. Promote positive engagement with customers on the topic.
6. Share best practice.



BTR Code of Practice

6.

Adopt a responsible, transparent culture and robust corporate governance.

Signatories will:

- 1.** Ensure robust governance structures are in place to ensure accountability and transparency including adherence to this Code with performance overseen at Board level.
- 2.** Adopt integrated systems for risk management, performance assessment, communication, leadership and employee competency curriculum.
- 3.** Adhere to best practice standards for employee relations including reward (at least equivalent to) Real Living Wage with personalised sector training programmes and career paths.
- 4.** Build a corporate culture which promotes wellbeing, workplace diversity, equity and inclusion and empowers innovation with regular employee surveys to turn policy into action.
- 5.** Promote best practice governance standards across supply chains.
- 6.** Uphold best practice for Equality and Diversity.
- 7.** Adopt these Code Principles through supply chain management.

Rationale:

- 1.** Promote transparency and integrity.
- 2.** Align with best practice standards regarding employees, suppliers, and customers.
- 3.** Adopt a culture of continuous improvement.
- 4.** Promote quality jobs, including Real Living Wage accreditation.
- 5.** Ensure supply chains meet appropriate standards.



BTR Code of Practice

7.

Promote adoption of this Code.

Signatories will:

1. Educate and advocate to improve BTR standards.
2. Ensure corporate values do not conflict with the Code.
3. Embed Code expectations within their organisations and across all stakeholders.
4. Encourage the use of Code kitemark on published material.
5. Adopt the Code as a baseline for minimum standards in the BTR sector.

Rationale:

1. Articulate and promote the distinctiveness of BTR offer.
2. Encourage all parties to mutually support one another in pursuit of the Code's Principles.
3. Aim to achieve a minimum standard across the BTR sector.



BTR Code of Practice

BTR Code of Practice

To ask for more information about the
Code email: info@theARL.org.uk



THE
GOOD
ECONOMY