

Housing Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

This Housing Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards and behaviours expected of all employees, contractors and relevant individuals delivering housing services on behalf of the Council.

The Code supports:

- The Housing Competence Framework.
- The Housing Learning & Development Policy.
- The Regulator of Social Housing Competence & Conduct Standard.
- The Council's Corporate Code of Conduct & Officer Standards.

This Code should be read alongside the Council's wider policies and procedures.

2. Scope

This Code applies to:

- Housing employees.
- Agency workers.
- Apprentices.
- Contractors delivering housing services.
- Any other relevant individuals acting on behalf of Housing Services.

3. Our Professional Standards

Housing staff are expected to demonstrate the following standards in all aspects of their work.

3.1 Resident Focus

We will:

- Put residents at the centre of service delivery.
- Treat residents fairly, respectfully and consistently.
- Listen actively and respond constructively.
- Actively seek and use resident feedback to improve services
- Provide residents with meaningful opportunities to get involved, have their say and influence decisions in ways that are accessible and appropriate to their needs and preferences.
- Support resident influence, scrutiny and challenge, recognising the important role residents play in improving services and holding the Council to account.
- Collect, maintain, review and use accurate information about our residents to better understand their needs, identify barriers, monitor outcomes and help ensure services are accessible, fair, inclusive and responsive.
- Communicate openly with residents about service performance, improvements and actions taken in response to resident feedback.

- Take ownership of issues and concerns.
- Promote trust and confidence in Housing Services.

3.2 Professionalism

We will:

- Act professionally at all times.
- Demonstrate competence in our role.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills.
- Participate in learning and development activities.
- Seek support where additional development is required.

3.3 CIH Professional Characteristics

Housing staff are expected to demonstrate the professional characteristics promoted by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH):

- Integrity – acting honestly, transparently and in the public interest.
- Inclusive – promoting fairness, respect and equality for residents, colleagues and partners.
- Ethical – using professional judgement and acting in accordance with high standards of conduct.
- Knowledgeable – maintaining up-to-date professional knowledge relevant to housing services.
- Skilled – applying knowledge and experience to deliver high-quality services and achieve positive outcomes.
- Advocate – championing resident needs, promoting resident voice and supporting fair access to services.
- Leadership – demonstrating personal responsibility, accountability and positive influence regardless of role or seniority.

These characteristics should be reflected in day-to-day decision making, service delivery, learning and development, and professional conduct.

3.4 Respect and Inclusion

We will:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Recognise the diverse needs of residents and seek to ensure that services, communications and opportunities for involvement are accessible, fair and inclusive.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to individual needs.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Support a culture that values difference.

3.5 Integrity

We will:

- Act honestly and ethically.
- Be transparent in our decision making.
- Declare conflicts of interest.
- Avoid situations that could compromise public trust.
- Use public resources responsibly.

3.6 Accountability

We will:

- Accept responsibility for our actions and decisions.
- Learn from feedback, complaints and mistakes.
- Escalate concerns appropriately.
- Cooperate with audits, investigations and reviews.
- Act on lessons learned from resident feedback, complaints, compliments, service performance and assurance activities to improve services and outcomes for residents.
- Support residents to access information and services through a range of channels and communicate in ways that are accessible and appropriate to their needs and preferences.

3.7 Communication

We will:

- Support residents to access information and services through a range of channels and communicate in ways that are accessible and appropriate to their needs and preferences.
- Use language appropriate to our audience.
- Provide accurate information.
- Explain decisions where appropriate.
- Respond to enquiries in a timely and helpful manner.

3.8 Safeguarding and Vulnerability

We will:

- Recognise potential safeguarding concerns.
- Act in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Consider the needs of vulnerable residents.
- Escalate concerns without delay.
- Support residents to access appropriate assistance.

3.9 Confidentiality and Information Management

We will:

- Protect personal and sensitive information.

- Comply with data protection requirements.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

3.10 Health, Safety and Compliance

We will:

- Promote safe service delivery.
- Follow health and safety requirements.
- Report risks and hazards.
- Comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements.
- Support a culture of compliance and continuous improvement.

4. Working with Residents

Housing staff must:

- Be approachable and respectful.
- Avoid discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate behaviour.
- Manage challenging situations professionally.
- Recognise the impact of housing services on residents' lives.
- Support positive and professional relationships with residents.

5. Relationships with Colleagues and Partners

Housing staff must:

- Work collaboratively.
- Share knowledge and good practice.
- Support colleagues appropriately.
- Behave professionally when dealing with contractors, partners and stakeholders.
- Promote positive working relationships.

6. Learning and Professional Development

Employees are expected to:

- Maintain competence relevant to their role.
- Participate in mandatory learning.
- Undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Support the achievement of professional qualifications where required.
- Apply learning within the workplace.

Managers are expected to support employees in maintaining and developing competence.

Relevant contractors and service providers delivering housing services on behalf of the Council are expected to maintain competence appropriate to their role.

7. Breaches of this Code

Breaches of this Code may be addressed through:

- Informal management action.
- Learning and development interventions.
- Performance or capability processes.
- Disciplinary procedures.
- Other appropriate Council procedures.

The Council will distinguish between:

Capability Concerns

Where an employee requires additional development, learning or support.

Conduct Concerns

Where an employee knowingly fails to meet expected standards of behaviour or professional conduct.

Detailed arrangements are set out within the Housing Learning & Development Policy and Qualification Support & Escalation Procedure.

8. Monitoring and Review

Adherence to this Code will be considered through:

- Performance and Development Appraisals (PADA).
- Competence reviews.
- Learning and development discussions.
- Qualification reviews.
- Management supervision and one-to-one meetings.

9. Commitment

All Housing employees are expected to:

Demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, competence and conduct, acting in the best interests of residents and always maintaining public confidence in Housing Services.

This Code supplements, and does not replace, the Council's Corporate Code of Conduct & Officer Standards.