

Housing Competence and Conduct Standard

1. Purpose

This Housing Competence and Conduct Standard sets out the professional standards and behaviours expected of all employees, agency workers, contractors and relevant individuals delivering housing services on behalf of the council.

The Housing Competence and Conduct Standard supports:

- the Housing Competence and Conduct Standard Framework
- the Housing Competence and Conduct Standard Policy
- the Regulator of Social Housing Competence and Conduct Standard
- the council's Corporate Code of Conduct and Officer Standards.

This Housing Competence and Conduct Standard should be read alongside the council's wider policies and procedures.

2. Scope

This Housing Competence and Conduct Standard applies to:

- housing employees
- agency workers
- apprentices

- contractors delivering housing services
- any other relevant individuals acting on behalf of Housing Services.

Relevant contractors and service providers delivering housing services on behalf of the council are expected to meet the same standards of competence, conduct, professionalism and respect set out in this Housing Competence and Conduct Standard.

3. Our professional standards

Housing employees/workers 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, respond constructively within agreed timescales specified in the service standards and ensure residents feel heard and understood
- 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 by helping residents understand the standards expected of Housing Services and how they can provide feedback where those standards are not met, enabling residents to help improve services and hold 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, including the reasons for decisions where feedback or suggestions are not taken forward
- 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 and provide accurate information
- maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills
- participate in learning and development activities
- apply our knowledge, skills and professional judgement in practice, following through on commitments and delivering services to the best of our ability
- seek support where additional development or advice 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
- treat residents with empathy, patience, courtesy and compassion, taking concerns seriously and responding in a professional, fair and non-judgemental manner
- make decisions fairly, impartially and based on evidence and individual circumstances, and will not engage in discriminatory, prejudicial, intimidating, aggressive or retaliatory behaviour
- 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, making reasonable adjustments where appropriate and respecting agreed communication preferences
- 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
- maintain complete, accurate and timely records and never knowingly record misleading, inaccurate or incomplete information
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and relationships with residents, colleagues, contractors and partners.

3.6 Accountability

We will:

- accept responsibility for our actions and decisions
- take ownership of enquiries and issues, following agreed actions through to resolution or an appropriate documented handover
- reflect on feedback and service outcomes, learn from mistakes and apply that learning to improve future practice and service delivery
- communicate feedback to residents on key learning themes and the actions taken to improve future practice and service delivery
- escalate concerns appropriately
- cooperate with audits, investigations and reviews
- 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.

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns in good faith about service quality, safety, compliance, management decisions or resident welfare. Concerns will be handled in line with the council's Whistleblowing Policy, including protection from detriment where applicable.

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 clear, accessible and appropriate language that residents can easily understand
- provide accurate, clear and accessible information, avoiding unnecessary technical language or jargon wherever possible
- explain decisions where appropriate
- keep residents informed of progress on matters affecting them
- explain delays where they occur and provide revised expectations where possible
- respond to enquiries in a timely and helpful manner and in accordance with published service standards
- explain who is responsible for dealing with an enquiry or issue and provide an appropriate contact route where possible.

3.8 Safeguarding and vulnerability

We will:

- recognise potential safeguarding concerns
- act in accordance with safeguarding procedures
- consider the needs of vulnerable residents
- take health, safety and safeguarding concerns seriously, act in accordance with relevant procedures and 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 employees/workers 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 employees/workers 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 and complete regular refresher training where required
- undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- support the achievement of professional qualifications where required
- apply learning, knowledge and skills within the workplace to support effective service delivery and positive outcomes for residents.

Managers are expected to support employees in maintaining and developing competence and measure performance against service standards.

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 Standard

Breaches of this Standard may be addressed through:

- informal management action
- learning and development interventions
- performance management and the Capability procedures
- disciplinary procedures
- other appropriate council procedures.

Compliance concerns will be managed through existing organisational procedures. Managers will use themes arising from breaches, complaints, audits, investigations and reviews to inform staff development, service improvement and future practice.

Complaints or concerns raised by residents will not, on their own, be treated as evidence of misconduct, incompetence or a breach of this Standard. Any concerns will be considered fairly and objectively, with appropriate investigation and supporting evidence, before any decision is made about further action.

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.

Capability concerns may include difficulty completing a required qualification despite genuine engagement or needing additional support to apply learning in practice.

Conduct concerns may include refusing without reasonable justification to complete mandatory training, failing to engage with agreed development requirements, or falsifying training or qualification records.

Managers should consider whether the issue arises from a genuine development need or a deliberate failure to meet expected standards.

Detailed arrangements are set out within the Housing Competence and Conduct Standard

8. Monitoring and review

Adherence to this Standard will be considered through:

- performance appraisals
- competence reviews
- learning and development discussions
- qualification reviews
- management supervision and one-to-one meetings.

Monitoring information relating to protected characteristics will be reviewed, where available and appropriate, to assess whether the application of competence, qualification or conduct requirements is creating unintended adverse impacts. Any identified concerns will inform appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and improvements to implementation.

This Housing Competence and Conduct Standard will be reviewed annually, or sooner where required due to legislative, regulatory or organisational change. Recognised trade unions will be consulted as part of any substantive review or proposed material change to the Housing Competence and Conduct Standard.

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 Housing Competence and Conduct Standard supplements, and does not replace, the council's Code of Conduct.