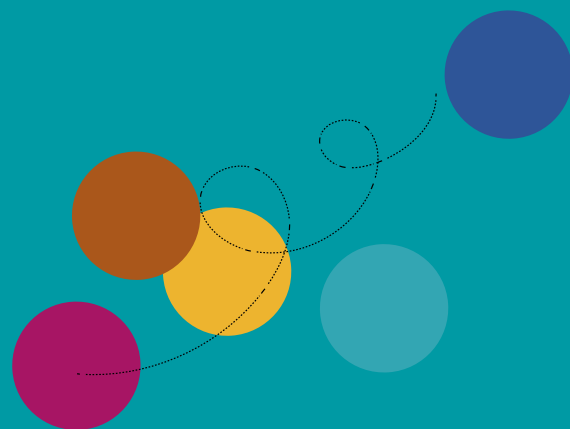




NORWICH
City Council



Competence and Conduct Policy

Housing Service Code of Conduct



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1.Purpose

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a Competence and Conduct Standard as part of its [Consumer Standards](#). The standard recognises that tenants are more likely to receive good-quality services when those delivering housing services have the right skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours. It also places new requirements on social housing landlords to ensure staff are competent, professional and supported to develop throughout their careers.
- 1.1.2 Alongside the [Consumer Standards](#), social housing landlords are required to collect and publish [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#). These provide important information about tenants' experiences of housing services and help landlords understand what is working well and where improvements are needed. The council use this information, alongside complaints, resident feedback and service performance information, to help improve services and identify learning opportunities for staff.
- 1.1.3 This policy has been developed with tenants and leaseholders and reflects what residents told us matters most: communication, competence, respect, accountability, understanding individual needs and getting things right first time.
- 1.1.4 This policy explains how the council will:
- ensure housing staff are competent and professional
 - support learning and development
 - meet national qualification requirements
 - maintain high standards of conduct
 - learn from complaints and feedback
 - ensure contractors and service providers meet the same standards as council employees
 - use resident feedback and performance information to drive continuous improvement

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to anyone involved in delivering housing services relating to the management of council homes.

1.2.2 This includes:

- housing staff
- managers and senior leaders
- agency workers
- contractors
- service providers delivering housing services on our behalf

1.2.3 The council expect everyone delivering housing services to meet the same standards of competence, professionalism and conduct.

1.3 Policy review

1.3.1 The council will review this policy at least every three years to ensure it remains up to date, fit for purpose and accessible.

1.3.2 Tenants and leaseholders will be given meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise the policy and the [Housing Service Code of Conduct](#). Feedback from residents, complaints, performance information and learning from service delivery will be used to help shape future reviews and improvements.

2. Our values

2.1.1 The way the council deliver housing services is guided by our PACE values.

2.2 Pride

- **We will take pride in what we do and demonstrate integrity in how we do things.**

For housing services this means:

- treating residents with respect and dignity
- Keeping you updated and communicating honestly and clearly
- delivering quality services
- acting professionally in every interaction

2.3 Accountability

- **We will take responsibility, do what we say we will and see things through.**

For housing services this means:

- taking ownership of issues
- keeping promises
- learning from mistakes and complaints
- holding contractors and service providers to the same standards

2.4 Collaborative

- **We will work with others and help people to succeed.**

For housing services this means:

- listening to residents
- working across teams
- involving tenants and leaseholders in decision-making
- working effectively with contractors and partners

2.5 Excellence

- **We will strive to do things well and look for ways to improve and learn.**

For housing services this means:

- getting things right first time
- investing in training and development
- learning from feedback
- continuously improving services

3.Code of Conduct

3.1 Our promise to you

3.1.1 The [Housing Service Code of Conduct](#) has been developed with tenants and leaseholders and reflects what residents told us matters most when receiving housing services.

3.1.2 Residents told us they want staff who listen, communicate clearly, take ownership, keep promises, understand individual needs and treat people with

dignity and respect. They also told us that competence is about more than qualifications. It is about how services are delivered and the experience residents receive.

3.1.3 The [Housing Service Code of Conduct](#) sets out the standards of behaviour, professionalism and customer service that residents can expect from everyone delivering housing services on behalf of the council, including our staff, contractors and service providers.

3.1.4 It represents the council's commitment to providing services that are respectful, accountable, inclusive and focused on achieving positive outcomes for residents.

3.2 Housing Service Code of Conduct

3.2.1 We will listen and communicate clearly

We will:

- listen carefully to what matters to you
- take your concerns seriously
- explain decisions clearly and in plain English
- tell you what will happen next
- keep you informed about progress
- let you know if things change or are delayed
- provide updates without you needing to chase us

3.2.2 We will treat you and your home with respect

We will:

- be polite, professional and approachable
- treat everyone fairly and with respect
- respect your privacy, personal circumstances and home
- recognise and respect people's different backgrounds, experiences and needs
- challenge discrimination, prejudice and inappropriate behaviour

3.2.3 We will have the skills and knowledge to help

We will:

- maintain the skills needed for our role
- understand housing services, our responsibilities and residents' rights
- keep our knowledge up to date
- use our professional judgement to solve problems
- seek advice and support when needed

- provide accurate information and advice

3.2.4 We will take ownership

We will:

- take responsibility for issues you raise
- do what we say we will do
- follow issues through to completion
- work across teams to find solutions
- focus on resolving problems
- avoid passing responsibility unnecessarily

3.2.5 We will understand your needs

We will:

- recognise that everyone has different needs and circumstances
- understand vulnerabilities and support needs
- make reasonable adjustments where needed
- adapt our communication to meet individual needs
- consider how our services affect different people
- ensure our services are accessible and fair

3.2.6 We will deliver quality services

We will:

- aim to get things right first time
- provide safe, reliable and good-quality services
- focus on achieving positive outcomes for residents
- learn from good practice
- monitor our performance and service quality
- continuously improve our services

3.2.7 We will be open, honest and transparent

We will:

- explain our decisions and actions
- be realistic about what we can and cannot do
- let you know if something changes or goes wrong
- be accountable for the service we provide

3.2.8 We will put things right

When we fall short, we will:

- acknowledge it
- apologise
- explain what happened
- put things right as quickly as possible
- identify what we can learn
- use that learning to improve services

3.2.9 We will keep you safe

We will:

- take safety concerns seriously
- respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- act where there is a risk of harm
- protect vulnerable residents
- prioritise issues that affect the safety of residents and their homes

3.2.10 We will learn and improve

We will:

- use complaints and compliments to improve services
- use tenant and leaseholder feedback to improve services
- monitor performance and resident satisfaction
- identify opportunities to improve
- make changes where improvements are needed
- share learning across our services

3.3 How this Code of Conduct works with our other standards

3.3.1 The Housing Services Code of Conduct sits alongside the council's Customer Service Standards, Housing Service Standards and Constitution Employee Code of Conduct. It does not replace them.

3.3.2 Our Customer Service Standards set out the level of service everyone can expect when contacting or receiving services from the council.

3.3.3 Our Housing Service Standards provide more detailed commitments for specific housing services, such as repairs, tenancy management and neighbourhood

services. They explain what residents can expect when using a particular housing service.

3.3.4 The council's [Constitution Employee Code of Conduct](#) applies to all employees and sets out the standards of conduct expected across the organisation.

3.3.5 This [Housing Services Code of Conduct](#) is different. It focuses on how housing services are delivered and the behaviours residents can expect from the people providing them. It sets out the standards of professionalism expected from our staff, contractors and service providers when working with residents.

4. Our approach to managing knowledge, skills and behaviours

4.1 Recruitment and induction

4.1.1 The council want residents to receive services from people who have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours for their role.

4.1.2 To achieve this, the council will:

- recruit people who demonstrate the right values, behaviours and competence for the role
- carry out qualification, reference and other pre-employment checks
- clearly define the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for each housing role through job descriptions and person specifications
- provide a structured induction for new employees
- ensure staff understand our [PACE values](#), [Housing Services Code of Conduct](#) and [service standards](#) and how they apply to their role
- provide additional support, training and supervision during probation periods for new employees

4.1.3 Our induction process helps new employees understand their responsibilities, develop the skills they need and deliver services in line with resident expectations from the start.

4.2 Learning and development

4.2.1 Learning and development are essential to maintaining good-quality housing services and ensuring staff remain competent in their roles.

4.2.2 The council are committed to helping staff maintain and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to deliver good-quality housing services and keep their knowledge up to date.

4.2.3 Learning and development opportunities may include:

- mandatory training and refresher training
- role-specific training and development
- professional qualifications and accredited learning
- continuing professional development
- coaching, mentoring and leadership development
- access to professional guidance, good practice and sector learning
- opportunities to learn from colleagues, projects and service improvement activities

4.2.4 The council will use information from residents, service performance and regulatory requirements to identify learning and development priorities. This includes:

- resident feedback and [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#)
- complaints, compliments and lessons learned
- audits, inspections and service reviews
- service performance and quality assurance checks
- changes in legislation, regulation and professional standards
- emerging risks, service priorities and workforce needs

4.2.5 By investing in learning and development, the council help ensure our staff remain competent, confident and able to deliver the standards of service residents expect.

4.3 Qualification requirements for senior housing managers and executives

4.3.1 The Competence and Conduct Standard introduces qualification requirements for certain senior housing management and leadership roles.

4.3.2 These requirements help ensure housing services are led by people with the appropriate knowledge, skills and professional expertise to deliver good-quality services for tenants and leaseholders.

4.3.3 The council will ensure that:

- senior housing manager and executive roles are assessed against the criteria set out in the Competence and Conduct Standard
- relevant senior housing managers hold, or are working towards, the required housing management qualification in accordance with the requirements
- relevant senior housing executives hold, or are working towards, the required housing management qualification in accordance with the requirements
- qualification requirements are achieved within the timescales set by the regulator
- evidence of compliance is maintained and reviewed
- relevant service providers comply with qualification requirements where applicable

4.3.4 The council will support managers and senior leaders to achieve and maintain the qualifications required by the Competence and Conduct Standard and to continue developing the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours needed to deliver good-quality housing services.

4.3.5 Support will include:

- protected time for study, training and learning activities
- regular supervision, coaching and mentoring
- opportunities to share knowledge, learning and good practice across services
- access to professional guidance, sector updates and industry best practice
- access to recognised housing qualifications and continuing professional development opportunities
- annual appraisal and development discussions to identify learning and training needs

- ongoing learning to ensure knowledge remains up to date with changes in legislation and regulation

4.3.6 The council will monitor progress towards qualification requirements and support managers and senior leaders to achieve compliance within the timescales set by the Competence and Conduct Standard.

4.4 Managing staff performance

4.4.1 Residents have the right to expect services that are delivered safely, professionally and to a consistently high standard.

4.4.2 The council regularly reviews performance to ensure staff continue to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to deliver good-quality housing services and meet the commitments set out in our [Housing Services Code of Conduct](#).

4.4.3 The council's approach to performance monitoring includes:

- regular one-to-one meetings
- annual performance and development reviews
- agreed objectives and development plans
- review of learning and training needs
- quality assurance checks and audits
- service reviews and performance monitoring
- feedback from tenants, leaseholders, colleagues and partners

4.4.4 Performance discussions are not simply about measuring results. They are also an opportunity to provide support, recognise good performance, discuss learning needs and help staff continue to develop. This reflects the council's approach of ongoing performance conversations, regular one-to-ones and annual reviews.

4.4.5 Where performance, conduct or competence concerns are identified, managers will work with staff to understand the issue and provide appropriate support. This may include additional supervision, coaching, training or development opportunities.

4.5 What happens if an employee does not meet these standards?

- 4.5.1 Where an employee does not meet the standards expected, the council will seek to understand the reasons and provide appropriate support to help them improve.
- 4.5.2 Where concerns arise, it is important that they are addressed promptly and fairly.
- 4.5.3 Depending on the circumstances, this may include:
- additional supervision, coaching or guidance
 - further learning, training or development
 - agreed improvement actions and progress reviews
 - performance or capability procedures where competence concerns are identified
 - conduct or disciplinary procedures where behavioural or misconduct concerns are identified
- 4.5.4 Our aim is to support staff to succeed wherever possible. However, where standards continue to fall below expectations, the council will take appropriate action in line with council policies and procedures.
- 4.5.5 This approach helps ensure residents receive services from people who are competent, professional and accountable, while supporting a culture of learning, improvement and high standards.

5. Our approach to service providers

- 5.1.1 Anyone delivering housing services on behalf of the council should meet the same standards of competence, professionalism and conduct as our own employees. This includes contractors, agency workers and other service providers delivering housing services on our behalf.
- 5.1.2 The council will take reasonable steps to ensure that people working for service providers have the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver safe, respectful and good-quality services. The council also expect them to follow our [Housing Services Code of Conduct](#) and provide services that reflect the standards tenants and leaseholders expect.

5.1.3 To achieve this, the council will:

- include competence and conduct requirements in relevant contracts, specifications and procurement processes
- require service providers to ensure their staff have the training, knowledge and experience needed for their role
- require relevant qualifications, accreditations or evidence of competence where appropriate
- communicate our expectations for customer service, professionalism and resident engagement
- expect service providers to support equality, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding responsibilities and the needs of vulnerable residents
- review service quality, performance, complaints and resident feedback
- work with service providers to address any concerns about competence, conduct or service performance
- take appropriate action where expected standards are not met

5.2 Managing service providers

5.2.1 While service providers are responsible for managing their own employees, the council remains accountable for the quality of housing services delivered on its behalf. The council will therefore maintain oversight to ensure expected standards are being achieved.

5.2.2 The council will seek assurance through:

- contract management and performance review meetings
- monitoring of service performance and resident outcomes
- review of complaints, compliments, audits, inspections and service reviews
- tenant and leaseholder feedback
- evidence of training, qualifications or professional competence where appropriate
- monitoring compliance with this policy and the [Housing Services Code of Conduct](#)

5.3 What happens if a service provider does not meet these standards?

- 5.3.1 Where concerns are identified, the council will work with service providers to understand the issue and agree appropriate improvement actions. The council will monitor progress and support continuous improvement where needed.
- 5.3.2 Where standards continue to fall below expectations, the council may take further action in line with contractual arrangements. This could include requiring improvement plans, undertaking additional monitoring, escalating concerns through governance arrangements or taking other contractual action where appropriate.
- 5.3.3 This helps ensure that tenants and leaseholders can have confidence that anyone delivering housing services on behalf of the council is working to the same high standards expected of council employees.

6. Learning from resident feedback

- 6.1.1 The council will use information from complaints alongside resident feedback, [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#), [service performance information](#) and quality assurance checks to help identify learning opportunities and drive continuous improvement.
- 6.1.2 The council recognise that when something goes wrong, it is important not only to put things right, but also to understand why it happened and what we can do to prevent it from happening again. Complaints and resident feedback help us identify areas where services can be improved and where staff may need additional support, learning or development.
- 6.1.3 The council will:
- listen to complaints and feedback and take them seriously
 - identify themes, trends and recurring issues
 - understand the causes of service failures and where improvements are needed
 - use learning from complaints to improve services, policies, procedures and ways of working
 - use learning from complaints to inform staff training, development and professional learning
 - share lessons learned across teams and services

- consider findings from the [Housing Ombudsman](#) and other reviews where relevant
- monitor whether improvements have been effective
- tell residents about changes we have made as a result of feedback where appropriate

6.1.4 Learning from resident feedback forms an important part of how the council develop the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours of staff. It helps us improve communication, accountability, decision-making and service quality, ensuring we continue to deliver services that meet the needs of residents.



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