

CROYDON COUNCIL HOUSING

Professional Standards Policy



This policy was reviewed with the help of Croydon Housing Residents

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Croydon housing is committed to delivering safe, high quality and resident focused housing services. The quality of services experienced by residents depends on having a competent, professional and continually developing workforce that acts with integrity, accountability and respect.
- 1.2 Professionalism is about more than qualifications or technical knowledge. It is demonstrated through the way we work every day: how we communicate and listen, take ownership, apply our knowledge and skills, exercise professional judgement, make decisions, work collaboratively and deliver consistently high standards of service for residents.
- 1.3 Professionalism should be something residents experience in every interaction with housing, not simply something we describe in a policy. Residents have helped define what good service should look and feel like through the Residents' Charter, wider engagement and the experiences they continue to share with us. They have told us how important it is to be listened to and heard, to be treated with respect, to receive clear and honest communication, to be kept informed and to know that someone will take ownership and follow things through. They should not have to repeatedly tell us the same thing or feel that their concerns are being passed around or ignored. These expectations are at the heart of this policy and what we mean by professionalism in housing.
- 1.4 The Regulator of Social Housing introduced the Competence and Conduct Standard (CCS) to support good quality services and outcomes for residents by strengthening the competence and professional conduct of those delivering social housing services. It sets requirements for how registered providers ensure relevant staff have and maintain the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed for their roles and how these standards are embedded and assured in practice.
- 1.5 Professionalisation in Croydon housing did not begin with the CCS. Housing's improvement journey had already established important foundations for strengthening culture, workforce capability and resident experience, including the Housing Competency Model, Residents' Charter and Customer First Programme.
- 1.6 The CCS builds on the foundations already established in Croydon and provides a framework for further strengthening and formalising our approach. This policy brings together the arrangements through which housing will meet those requirements and continue to strengthen the quality of services experienced by residents

- 1.7 This policy sets out the Housing Directorate's approach to meeting the requirements of the CCS. As part of a local authority, housing also operates within the Council's corporate employment, recruitment, learning, performance and conduct policies and procedures. This policy does not replace or duplicate those arrangements; it explains how they work alongside housing's own arrangements for professional standards, competence and professionalisation.
- 1.8 The policy explains how housing makes clear what competence and professional standards mean, recruits and develops staff against those expectations, reviews and maintains competence, supports staff where standards are not being met, meets statutory professional qualification requirements and obtains assurance about services delivered on its behalf. It also sets out how housing monitors whether these arrangements are working and how residents can influence and scrutinise its approach.
- 1.9 This policy should be read alongside relevant Council policies and procedures and housing arrangements that apply to staff, including the Housing Competency Model and Residents' Charter. Housing also maintains supporting tools and assurance arrangements, including the Housing Competence Matrix, Housing Professional Qualification Register and Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework. Staff do not need to access or use all of these directly; where something applies to an individual's role, this will be made clear to them.
- 1.10 The Council's Code of Conduct continues to apply to all Council employees and sets out the corporate standards and rules of conduct they are required to follow. The CCS also requires housing to have an appropriate Code of Conduct for relevant staff, with a particular focus on the professional behaviours and standards that support good quality landlord services, fair and equitable outcomes and treating residents with fairness, dignity and respect.
- 1.11 Housing meets this requirement through its Housing Professional Standards, which set out what professional conduct and behaviour mean in the context of delivering housing services to residents. The standards apply to all staff working in housing and complement, rather than replace, the Council's Code of Conduct. Section 4.5 explains the Housing Professional Standards and how they apply in practice.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff working within the Housing Directorate, including permanent and fixed term staff, agency workers and interims, where relevant to the work they undertake. For the purposes of this policy, the term "staff" is used collectively to describe these groups unless a requirement applies specifically to Council employees. It sets out the professional standards expected of

everyone working in housing and our approach to developing, maintaining and assuring workforce competence.

- 2.2 Some specific requirements of the CCS apply to relevant staff, as defined by the Standard, who are involved in providing landlord services in connection with the management of Croydon's social housing. Whether an individual is relevant staff is determined by the work they undertake, rather than their employment status. Where a requirement in this policy applies only to relevant staff, this will be made clear.
- 2.3 The statutory professional qualification requirements apply to a narrower group of staff: Senior Housing Managers and Senior Housing Executives who meet the criteria set out in the Government's Policy Statement on Qualification Requirements for Social Housing. Housing will identify the roles and staff within scope, inform affected staff what is required of them and ensure the applicable requirements and timescales are met. Section 4.7 explains the qualification requirements and support available.
- 2.4 Where landlord services are delivered on housing's behalf by services providers, including through relevant subcontracted or third-party delivery arrangements, (for example, repairs, maintenance or specialist compliance services), the CCS also places requirements on housing in relation to relevant staff delivering those services. Section 5 and the Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework explain how housing obtains and maintains appropriate assurance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Shared responsibility

- 3.1.1 Developing, maintaining and demonstrating competence and professional standards is a shared responsibility. Staff are responsible for understanding and meeting the standards relevant to their role, while managers are responsible for reinforcing those expectations, providing appropriate support and regularly reviewing how they are being demonstrated in practice.
- 3.1.2 The Housing Professionalisation and Assurance function is responsible for establishing and maintaining the arrangements needed to implement this policy and meet the requirements of the CCS. Corporate functions provide support within their respective areas of responsibility.

3.2 Staff

- 3.2.1 All staff are responsible for understanding and meeting the competence and professional standards relevant to their role. This includes:

- maintaining and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours needed to carry out their role effectively;
- working in accordance with the Housing Professional Standards and applying them in their day-to-day work with residents and colleagues;
- completing and applying mandatory, housing and role specific learning and maintaining professional qualifications or continuing professional development where applicable;
- participating in induction, supervision, one to one meetings, for Council employees, Performance Development Reviews and other relevant development and assurance activity;
- seeking advice, support or further development where they are unsure or do not have the competence required to undertake something effectively;
- responding constructively to feedback and taking responsibility for agreed development or improvement; and
- keeping their knowledge and skills up to date as the requirements of their role, legislation, regulation or professional practice change.

3.2.2 Where a staff member is not meeting the competence, performance or professional standards required for their role, the approach set out in section 4.10 will apply.

3.3 Managers

3.3.1 Managers are responsible for supporting staff to develop, maintain and demonstrate the competence and professional standards relevant to their roles. This includes ensuring that all staff, regardless of employment or engagement status, are made aware of the Housing Professional Standards and relevant role requirements as part of their induction or onboarding, and that any new or changing requirements are communicated as they arise. This includes:

- ensuring appropriate induction and learning takes place;
- providing regular supervision and feedback;
- reviewing performance and competence, recognising good practice and addressing development needs or concerns at an early stage. making staff aware of role specific learning, professional and qualification requirements;
- managing continuing concerns through the appropriate Council procedure.
- For Council employees, managers are also responsible for reviewing competence and professional standards through the appraisal process and completing the required competency assessment

3.4 Directors and Heads of Service

3.4.1 Directors and Heads of Service are accountable for ensuring effective arrangements are in place within their services to develop, maintain and assure workforce competence and professional standards. This includes:

- promoting a culture of professionalism, learning, accountability and continuous improvement;
- ensuring role requirements remain appropriate as services, legislation, regulation and professional expectations change;
- identifying and addressing workforce capability, capacity and succession risks;
- ensuring appropriate learning, development and professionalisation arrangements are in place;
- ensuring significant or recurring competence and professional standards concerns are addressed; and
- providing assurance through housing governance arrangements that workforce competence and professional standards are being effectively managed.

3.5 Housing professionalisation and assurance

3.5.1 Housing will maintain the arrangements required to coordinate and assure implementation of this policy and the CCS. These include:

- maintaining the Housing Competence Matrix and Housing Professional Qualification Register;
- coordinating the identification and monitoring of statutory professional qualification requirements;
- supporting the development and maintenance of housing competence, professional standards and learning arrangements;
- monitoring relevant workforce competence and professionalisation information;
- coordinating assurance and identifying gaps or risks;
- supporting services to respond to changes in regulatory or professional requirements; and
- reporting through the appropriate housing governance arrangements.

3.6 Human Resources and Learning and Development

3.6.1 Human Resources and Learning and Development support this policy through the Council's corporate employment and learning frameworks.

3.7 Procurement and Contract Managers

3.7.1 Procurement and Contract Managers have responsibilities within their respective roles where landlord services are delivered on housing's behalf by service providers. This includes:

- considering appropriate competence and conduct requirements when relevant services are procured, renewed or varied;
- implementing the Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework where applicable;
- considering relevant existing contractual provisions and contract management arrangements;
- obtaining and maintaining appropriate assurance about the competence and conduct of relevant staff delivering services, including through subcontracted or third-party arrangements where applicable;
- identifying, agreeing and monitoring improvement actions where assurance gaps are identified; and
- escalating significant concerns or risks through appropriate contract management and housing governance arrangements.

4. Developing and maintaining professional standards and competence

4.1 What competence means

4.1.1 Being competent means having and applying up-to-date knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours needed to carry out your role effectively and deliver good quality services to residents.

4.1.2 Competence is not achieved simply by holding a qualification or completing training. It must be demonstrated in practice and maintained as requirements change.

4.2 Understanding what is required for your role

4.2.1 Staff should be clear about the knowledge, skills, experience, behaviours and professional standards expected in their role.

4.2.2 These expectations are informed by a range of sources, including:

- the staff job description and person specification or other relevant role requirements;
- the competencies from the Housing Competency Model relevant to the role;

- Housing Professional Standards;
- relevant professional, technical, statutory and regulatory requirements;
- mandatory and role specific learning requirements; and
- changes in legislation, regulation, professional practice or service delivery.

- 4.2.3 Role requirements may develop over time as legislation, regulation, professional standards, service priorities or ways of working change. Relevant changes will be reflected through appropriate role requirements, guidance, learning and management arrangements. Staff are expected to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and work in accordance with the requirements and Housing Professional Standards applicable to their role.
- 4.2.4 Managers have an important role in reinforcing the requirements relevant to an individual's role and discussing relevant learning, development or professional requirements through induction, supervision and ongoing management discussions. Where requirements change, these should be communicated and reflected in relevant learning, guidance or role requirements as appropriate.
- 4.2.5 To support this, the Housing Professionalisation and Assurance function maintains a Housing Competence Matrix. This is a centrally maintained workforce and assurance tool which brings together the learning, qualification and other competence requirements relevant to different roles and role groups. Depending on the role, it identifies:
- housing mandatory learning;
 - technical and role specific learning;
 - relevant legislative and regulatory knowledge;
 - professional or technical qualifications;
 - continuing professional development requirements; and
 - appropriate ways of assuring that competence is being maintained.
- 4.2.6 The Matrix supports workforce planning and assurance and helps housing keep role requirements current. It does not replace the staff's job description, Housing Professional Standards or ongoing management and development discussions.
- 4.2.7 Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the competence requirements for roles within their services remain appropriate, drawing on relevant service, professional and technical expertise. Requirements must be reviewed at least annually and as part of significant organisational or role change, or where changes to legislation, regulation, professional or technical requirements or service delivery may affect the competence required for a role.

4.2.8 The Housing Competence Matrix is maintained centrally as part of the Housing Professionalisation and Assurance function. The central function coordinates the annual review and updates to the Matrix. Heads of Service are accountable for reviewing and confirming that the requirements recorded for roles within their services remain appropriate, at least annually and when significant changes occur.

4.3 Recruiting for competence and professional standards

4.3.1 Housing recruits staff through the Council's recruitment arrangements, including its requirements for safe and fair recruitment. Where staff are engaged through recruitment agencies or other external resourcing arrangements, the relevant competence and professional standards for the role will be communicated as part of the recruitment or engagement process.

4.3.2 Job descriptions and person specifications set out the knowledge, skills, experience, qualifications, behaviours and other requirements needed for the role. Where a statutory professional qualification applies, this will also be identified.

4.3.3 In addition, housing uses competency-based recruitment and selection to assess both an applicant's ability to carry out the role and the behaviours expected when delivering services to residents. Depending on the role, recruitment may assess:

- relevant knowledge and experience;
- technical or professional competence;
- required qualifications or professional registrations;
- behaviours within the Housing Competency Model; and
- the ability to apply knowledge, skills and judgement to situations relevant to the role.

4.3.4 Assessment will be proportionate to the role. Alongside competency-based interview questions, this may also include technical questions, written or practical exercises, presentations, assessment centres or other appropriate methods.

4.3.5 Managers involved in recruitment are supported through competency-based recruitment training and guidance and, where required, support to develop appropriate questions, exercises and assessment methods.

4.3.6 Where a role is subject to a statutory professional qualification requirement, the applicant's qualification status will be established and recorded as part of recruitment and onboarding.

4.4 Starting your role: induction and probation

4.4.1 Induction

All staff, including agency workers and interims, will be introduced to the Housing Professional Standards and the competence requirements relevant to their role as part of their induction or onboarding. All new Council employees are also required to complete the Council corporate induction and attend the dedicated Housing Directorate induction.

4.4.2 Managers must also ensure every new staff receives an appropriate local induction for their service and role. This is where the requirements and expectations of the individual's particular role should be made clear.

4.4.3 Together, these induction arrangements should ensure staff understand:

- their role, responsibilities and what is expected of them;
- the Council's corporate expectations, policies and ways of working;
- the Housing Directorate, its services and responsibilities to residents;
- Housing Professional Standards and the conduct expected of them;
- the Housing Competency Model and the behaviours expected in their role;
- the Residents' Charter and what residents should experience from housing;
- relevant legislation, regulation, policies, procedures and systems;
- mandatory, housing and role specific learning;
- any technical, professional or qualification requirements relevant to their role;
- relevant safeguarding, health and safety and resident vulnerability requirements; and
- where to seek advice, support or escalate concerns.

4.4.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring local induction is planned, completed and recorded and that outstanding learning or development requirements are followed through.

4.4.5 Probation

Where a Council employee is subject to a probationary period, probation provides an opportunity to ensure they are settling into their role and demonstrating the required standards of performance, competence and behaviour in practice.

4.4.6 During probation, managers should:

- schedule regular meetings and key review dates
- make expectations clear;
- review progress with induction and required learning;
- provide regular feedback and support;
- consider how knowledge and skills are being applied in practice;
- review behaviours against the Housing Competency Model and Housing Professional Standards;
- identify and discuss development needs or concerns early; and
- record agreed actions and progress through the Council's probation documents.

4.4.7 Where a concern arises, including where a concern is identified through a formal resident complaint or other relevant feedback, it should be discussed with the staff at the earliest opportunity so that the issue, the standard required and any appropriate support are clear.

4.4.8 Where a Council employee does not demonstrate the required standard during probation, the matter will be addressed through the Council's probation procedure. Concerns relating to agency workers, interims or other non-Council employees will be addressed through the arrangements applicable to their engagement.

4.5 Housing Professional Standards

4.5.1 For the purposes of this policy, references to “Housing Professional Standards” mean the combined expectations set out through the Council's Code of Conduct, Housing Competency Model and Residents' Charter. Together, these establish the conduct, behaviours and service standards expected of Housing staff. Everyone working in housing is expected to act professionally and contribute to good quality services for residents.

4.5.2 The CCS requires housing to have an appropriate Code of Conduct and to ensure it is embedded within the organisation. Housing fulfils this requirement through its Housing Professional Standards.

4.5.3 The Housing Professional Standards bring together:

- the Council's Code of Conduct, which sets the corporate standards and rules of conduct all Council employee must follow;
- the Housing Competency Model, which sets out the behaviours and ways of working expected in housing roles; and

- the Residents' Charter, which sets out what residents should experience when receiving housing services.

4.5.4 Together, these elements define the professional conduct and behaviours expected in housing. The full expectations are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct, Housing Competency Model and Residents' Charter and should be read together. The Housing Professional Standards framework below shows how these elements come together to define what professionalism means in housing.



4.5.5 In practice, staff are expected to demonstrate these standards through the way they carry out their role and deliver services to residents, including applying the competencies relevant to their role and contributing to the experience set out in the Residents' Charter.

4.5.6 The Housing Professional Standards apply to all housing staff. They fulfil the Code of Conduct requirement of the CCS for relevant staff and complement, rather than replace, the Council's Code of Conduct.

4.5.7 The Housing Professional Standards are embedded throughout the employee lifecycle and in everyday practice. They are introduced through recruitment and induction, reinforced through everyday management, supervision, Customer First and learning and development, and reviewed through appraisal and

competency assessment. Resident feedback, complaints and other service learning are also used to understand how the standards are being demonstrated in practice and to identify where further learning or improvement is needed.

4.5.8 Where required standards are not met, the approach set out in section 4.10 will apply.

4.6 Learning and development

4.6.1 Learning and development helps staff build, maintain and update the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours they need for their role.

4.6.2 What is required will vary between roles and may include:

- Council and housing mandatory learning;
- technical and role specific learning;
- legislative and regulatory updates;
- professional or technical qualifications;
- continuing professional development;
- coaching, mentoring and supervision;
- reflective practice;
- peer and knowledge sharing; and
- professional networks and communities of practice.

4.6.3 Learning and development needs may be identified by staff, managers or through wider service and assurance activity. This may include induction, supervision, appraisal, training needs analysis, changes to roles, quality assurance, service performance, complaints and resident feedback, incidents, inspections, and changes in regulatory or professional requirements. Where gaps or recurring themes in knowledge, skills, behaviours or professional standards are identified, these will be considered to determine the appropriate response. This may include individual development, team or service-wide learning, changes to guidance or practice, or other improvement activity.

4.6.4 Managers are responsible for discussing learning and development needs with staff and ensuring required learning is completed and followed through. Staff are responsible for engaging with the learning and development required for their role and applying it in practice.

4.7 Professional qualifications

- 4.7.1 Statutory professional qualification requirements apply only to certain housing roles. Housing will comply with the applicable requirements set out in the Government's Policy Statement on Qualification Requirements for Social Housing.
- 4.7.2 The Housing Professionalisation and Assurance function will identify which Senior Housing Managers and Senior Housing Executives are within scope based on their actual functions and responsibilities and the statutory criteria, rather than job title or grade alone.
- 4.7.3 Staff will be told if a statutory qualification requirement applies to their role, what qualification they need and the timescale for achieving it.
- 4.7.4 The Housing Professional Qualification Register will be maintained centrally to record and monitor:
- which roles and staff are within scope;
 - the qualification required;
 - qualifications already held and supporting evidence;
 - any relevant equivalency, exemption or flexibility;
 - enrolment and progress;
 - completion; and
 - compliance with applicable statutory timescales.
- 4.7.5 Qualification requirements will also be considered when:
- recruiting to an in-scope role;
 - a member of staff is promoted or moves into an in-scope role;
 - organisational change materially changes the responsibilities of a role; or
 - changes to a role bring it into, or remove it from, the statutory qualification requirements.
- 4.7.6 Holding a professional qualification is only one element of competence. Staff must continue to maintain and demonstrate the current knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required for their role.

4.7.7 Supporting staff to achieve their qualification

Where a member of staff is required to obtain a statutory qualification, housing will support them by:

- identifying the appropriate qualification route;
- funding the agreed qualification required to meet the statutory requirement;
- supporting enrolment within the required timescale;
- providing appropriate manager and learning support;
- monitoring progress;
- considering reasonable adjustments and other appropriate support where required.

4.7.8 Council employees undertaking the agreed full CIH qualification route will be provided with up to eight paid study days to support completion of assignments. Study time must be planned and agreed with the staff's manager, balancing the time needed to make reasonable progress with service requirements.

4.7.9 Staff are responsible for engaging with their programme, completing required learning and assessments and maintaining appropriate progress. Managers are responsible for supporting staff and discussing progress throughout the qualification.

4.7.10 If a member of staff does not pass - Not passing an assessment or qualification at the first attempt will not automatically be treated as a performance or conduct matter.

4.7.11 Housing will first consider the circumstances, feedback from the qualification provider and whether additional support or reasonable adjustments are appropriate.

4.7.12 Where a member of staff is not awarded the required qualification, they will be required to retake the course or enrol on another relevant qualification within six months of failing, in accordance with the Government's Policy Statement.

4.7.13 Where a member of staff persistently does not complete or pass the required qualification, does not make the required progress and there are no circumstances that would justify further time or support, or refuses to undertake a qualification that is a statutory requirement of their role, this will normally result in formal action under the relevant Council employment procedure. Depending on the circumstances, this may include capability or disciplinary action. The appropriate procedure will depend on the circumstances, including whether the issue relates to capability, performance or conduct. HR advice must be sought early on.

4.8 How competence is demonstrated and reviewed

4.8.1 Competence is developed and reviewed throughout a member of staff's time in housing. It is not demonstrated simply by completing training or holding a qualification.

4.8.2 Staff are expected to apply the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required for their role in their everyday work. Managers are responsible for providing feedback and using appropriate evidence to understand whether these requirements are being demonstrated in practice.

4.8.3 The evidence used will depend on the role and may include:

- everyday work and observed practice;
- supervision and one to one discussions;
- case, file or record reviews;
- quality assurance, technical audits or inspections;
- completion and application of learning;
- professional qualifications and CPD;
- assessment against the Housing Competency Model;
- complaints, compliments and resident feedback;
- service performance and outcomes;
- compliance information;
- learning from incidents or service reviews; and
- other relevant professional or technical assurance.

4.8.4 No single piece of evidence demonstrates competence on its own. Managers should consider the available evidence as a whole and in the context of the requirements of the staff's role.

4.8.5 Where evidence identifies a development need or concern, this should be discussed with the staff and appropriate learning, support or action agreed.

4.8.6 Formal review of performance, competence and behaviours also takes place through the appraisal process.

4.9 Performance Development Review

4.9.1 For Council employees, the appraisal process provides the formal opportunity to review performance and development. In housing, appraisal is also used to review how employees are demonstrating the competencies and professional

standards expected in their role and contributing to good quality services and outcomes for residents.

- 4.9.2 All housing Council employees are expected to participate in the established appraisal cycle, including mid-year and end of year reviews.
- 4.9.3 Appraisal discussions should be evidence based and proportionate to the employee's role. They should consider performance against objectives and relevant KPIs (key performance indicator), quality and service information, complaints and resident feedback where relevant, demonstration of the Housing Professional Standards and role competencies, required learning and qualifications, and development or support needs.
- 4.9.4 The evidence considered should be proportionate and relevant to the employee's role. No single measure should be considered in isolation when assessing a member of staff's overall performance or competence.
- 4.9.5 At both the mid-year and end of year review, managers and employee will complete an assessment against the competencies identified for the staff's role using the housing competency assessment form. The completed assessment will be attached to the staff's appraisal record in accordance with housing's agreed process.
- 4.9.6 One- to one discussions should result in a clear understanding of what is going well, where development or improvement is needed, and the objectives, development actions and support agreed for the next period.
- 4.9.7 Appraisal is not the only point at which performance or competence is reviewed and should not be the first time a member of staff becomes aware of a concern. Managers are expected to provide regular feedback, recognise good performance and address development needs or concerns as they arise. in accordance with the Council's appraisal and relevant employment procedures.

4.10 What happens when the required standard is not being met

- 4.10.1 Housing is committed to ensuring that all staff meet and maintain the competence, performance and professional standards required for their role. Where a concern arises, it will be addressed appropriately, taking account of the nature and seriousness of the concern and the individual's employment or engagement status.
- 4.10.2 Where a member of staff is not meeting the required standard, the manager should establish the nature and extent of the concern, the standard expected and any relevant circumstances. This should include considering whether the required standard has been made clear and whether the concern relates to knowledge, skills, experience, behaviours, conduct or wider performance.

- 4.10.3 For Council employees, managers should consider what support, or improvement may be appropriate, including whether appropriate induction, learning, supervision and support have been provided, whether reasonable adjustments should be considered and what improvement is required. The employee should be given clear feedback about the concern; the standard expected any support to be provided and how improvement will be reviewed.
- 4.10.4 Where appropriate, support may include additional or refresher learning, coaching or mentoring, increased supervision, technical or professional support, shadowing or observed practice, clearer objectives and feedback, reasonable adjustments or an agreed development or improvement plan. Timescales and review arrangements will be determined in accordance with the relevant Council procedure.
- 4.10.5 Where a Council employee is in probation, concerns will be managed through the Council's probation arrangements. Where an established Council employee does not demonstrate the required level of competence or performance, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Council's Capability Performance Policy and Procedure, unless another Council procedure is more appropriate to the circumstances. Advice should be sought from HR.
- 4.10.6 Where a concern relating to a Council employee involves misconduct, a failure to meet required standards of conduct or an employment requirement, the Council's disciplinary arrangements may apply. Depending on the nature or seriousness of the concern, it may not be appropriate to follow the development and support approach described above before considering formal action. Advice should be sought from HR in these circumstances.
- 4.10.7 For agency workers, interims and other non-Council employees, concerns will be addressed through the management, contractual or agency arrangements applicable to their engagement. Managers should make the concern and required standard clear and determine the appropriate action having regard to the circumstances and the terms of the engagement. The Council's employee capability, disciplinary and probation procedures do not apply.
- 4.10.8 Managers should seek HR or other appropriate advice where required, particularly where formal action or ending an engagement is being considered.

5. Service Providers

5.1 Services delivered on our behalf

- 5.1.1 Some landlord services are delivered by external organisations on behalf of housing. Residents should be able to expect good quality services regardless of

whether those services are delivered directly by housing staff or by a services provider.

- 5.1.2 Where an organisation provides, or arranges the provision of, services in connection with the management of Croydon's social housing, housing will take appropriate steps to obtain assurance that relevant staff of the services provider have the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver good quality landlord services.
- 5.1.3 Services providers remain responsible for managing and assuring the competence and conduct of their workforce. Housing is responsible for obtaining appropriate assurance that effective arrangements are in place.

5.2 How we obtain assurance

- 5.2.1 The Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework sets out how housing obtains and maintains this assurance and must be followed by contract managers responsible for services within scope.
- 5.2.2 Assurance will be proportionate to the nature of the service and may draw on information provided by the services provider alongside existing contract management evidence, including performance and quality information, audits, complaints and resident feedback, incidents, health and safety and compliance information, and relevant regulatory or enforcement findings.
- 5.2.3 Assurance will include relevant staff delivering services through subcontracted or third-party arrangements where these fall within scope.

5.3 Professional qualification requirements

- 5.3.1 Statutory professional qualification requirements are separate from the wider requirement to assure workforce competence and do not automatically apply to every services provider or manager employed by a services provider.
- 5.3.2 Where these requirements may apply, services providers will be expected to determine whether relevant managers are within scope in accordance with the Government's Policy Statement on Qualification Requirements for Social Housing and provide appropriate information and evidence to housing.
- 5.3.3 Housing will bring applicable qualification requirements to the attention of relevant services providers and obtain appropriate assurance through the Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework.

5.4 Procurement, contracts and subcontracting

- 5.4.1 Appropriate competence and conduct requirements should be considered when relevant services are procured and when contracts are renewed or varied.
- 5.4.2 The absence of specific competence or conduct provisions within an existing contract does not remove housing's responsibility to obtain appropriate assurance. Where gaps are identified, these should be addressed through the appropriate contract management, assurance or future procurement arrangements.

6. Governance, assurance and resident influence

6.1 How we know our approach is working

- 6.1.1 Housing will monitor how this policy is working and whether workforce competence and professional standards are being maintained in practice and supporting good quality services for residents.
- 6.1.2 Assurance will draw on relevant workforce, learning, qualification, performance and resident experience information. This may include learning compliance, professional qualification progress, appraisal and competency assessment, workforce capability risks, service performance and quality, complaints and resident feedback, and service provider assurance.
- 6.1.3 Heads of Service are responsible for providing assurance within their services and identifying significant gaps, risks or areas for improvement. Directors provide oversight and challenge across their areas of responsibility.
- 6.1.4 Directorate level assurance will be reported through Housing Directorate Management Team and the Housing Assurance Board, providing oversight and challenge of implementation, key risks and areas requiring improvement.
- 6.1.5 Where gaps or risks are identified, actions will be agreed, owned and monitored through the appropriate governance arrangements, with significant issues escalated where required.

6.2 Learning and improvement

- 6.2.1 Where assurance identifies gaps, risks or opportunities for improvement, appropriate action will be agreed, owned and monitored through housing governance arrangements.
- 6.2.2 Resident experience is an important part of this assurance. Themes and learning from complaints, resident feedback and other resident insight will be considered alongside performance, workforce, audit, incident and service information.

- 6.2.3 Where this identifies a gap in knowledge, skills, behaviours or professional standards, appropriate individual, team or service action will be taken. This may include changes to learning, management support, processes or wider service improvement.
- 6.2.4 Where appropriate, subsequent evidence will be reviewed to understand whether the action taken has been effective, learning has been embedded and service delivery or resident experience has improved.

6.3 Resident influence and scrutiny

- 6.3.1 Residents have played a direct role in defining the standards they expect from housing. The Residents' Charter was developed by members of the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel and informed by wider resident feedback through surveys and workshops. These residents defined expectations have informed the Housing Competency Model and Housing Professional Standards.
- 6.3.2 As part of the development of this policy, the draft will be considered through established resident engagement and scrutiny arrangements, including the Residents' Readers Panel and Customer Influence and Assurance Panel. Feedback will be considered before the policy is finalised and adopted.
- 6.3.3 Resident influence does not end when the policy is adopted. Residents will continue to have meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise its future development and decisions relating to the adoption or development of Housing Professional Standards.
- 6.3.4 Resident feedback, complaints and other resident insight will also help housing understand whether the professional standards set out in this policy are being experienced consistently in practice and where further learning or improvement is needed.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1. Croydon Housing is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace where all employees are treated with fairness, dignity and respect, and where diversity is valued as a strength.
- 7.2. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in recruitment, induction, learning and development, career progression and all other aspects of employment. Employment decisions will be based on merit, capability and professional standards, free from unlawful discrimination.
- 7.3. All employees are expected to contribute to an inclusive working environment and demonstrate behaviours consistent with the Housing Professional Standards, Housing Competency Model and the Council's Code of Conduct.

This includes treating colleagues, residents and partners with respect, valuing different perspectives and challenging inappropriate behaviour where it occurs.

- 7.4. Managers are responsible for promoting inclusion within their teams, ensuring employees have equitable access to development opportunities, addressing inappropriate conduct and supporting a culture of professionalism, accountability and continuous improvement.
- 7.5. Housing recognises that a diverse and inclusive workforce strengthens decision-making, improves service delivery and helps us better understand and respond to the needs of residents and communities.
- 7.6. Employees are responsible for complying with the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies and for conducting themselves in a manner that supports a positive, respectful and inclusive workplace. Any concerns relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will be addressed through the appropriate Council procedures.
- 7.7. Workforce information, employee feedback, learning needs analysis, performance information and staff engagement activity will be used to help identify opportunities for improvement and support the continued development of an inclusive workplace culture.

8. Monitoring and review

- 8.1 Assurance will be reported through the appropriate housing governance arrangements.
- 8.2 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner where required in response to legislation or regulation, learning from implementation, workforce or service changes, resident experience, assurance findings or other relevant evidence.
- 8.3 Where this policy or the Housing Professional Standards are reviewed or developed, residents will be provided with appropriate opportunities to influence and scrutinise those changes in accordance with the CCS.

9. Document Control

- 9.1. This is a controlled document and should not be changed unless by authorisation of the policy owner.

Monitoring	
Approved Date:	27 August 2026
Next Review Date:	August 2029
Effective date:	28 August 2026

Consultation Review	
Stakeholders review:	25 August 2026
Residents reading group:	31 August 2026
Policy owner:	Director of Housing
Ratified by:	Housing DMT
Equality impact assessment:	The impact of this policy will be measured as it is implemented and used as part of a scheduled 1-year implementation compliance review.

Appendix A –How our arrangements fit together

Document / Arrangement	Purpose
Housing Professional Standards policy	Sets out housing's overall approach to meeting the CCS and developing, maintaining and assuring professional standards and workforce competence.
Housing Professional Standards – adopted Code of Conduct for CCS purposes	Brings together the Council Code of Conduct, housing Competency Model and Residents' Charter to establish the conduct, behaviours and professional standards expected of all housing staff.
Housing Competence Matrix	Defines role-based learning, knowledge, technical competence, qualifications, CPD and relevant assurance requirements and supports recruitment, induction, development, appraisal and workforce assurance.
Housing Professional Qualification Register	Records statutory qualification scope decisions, requirements, evidence, enrolment, progress, completion, exemptions/flexibilities and compliance with applicable statutory timescales.
Service Provider Competence Assurance Framework	Sets out how housing takes appropriate steps to obtain and maintain competence and conduct assurance in relation to relevant services-provider staff.
Housing Competency Model	Defines the behavioural competencies and ways of working expected across housing and is used through recruitment, induction, appraisal, development and performance management.
Council Code of Conduct	Sets out the corporate standards and rules of conduct that Council employees are required to follow and forms part of housing's Professional Standards.
Residents' Charter	Resident-developed Charter setting out the standards of service and behaviours residents should expect from housing and those delivering services on its behalf.
Corporate Recruitment arrangements	Provide the corporate framework for safe, fair and effective recruitment, supplemented in housing by competency-based recruitment and selection.
Mandatory Training policy / corporate learning arrangements	Provide the corporate framework for mandatory learning, supplemented by housing and role-specific requirements identified through the housing Competence Matrix.

Appraisal arrangements	Provide the corporate framework for reviewing performance and development, supplemented in housing by mid-year and end-of-year assessment against the housing Competency Model.
Probation arrangements	Provide the process for establishing, supporting and reviewing performance, competence and behaviours during a member of staff's probationary period.
Capability / performance arrangements	Provide the corporate process for supporting improvement and managing continuing competence or performance concerns.
Disciplinary arrangements	Provide the corporate process for addressing misconduct or breaches of required standards of conduct where applicable.