

Staff Competence and Professional Conduct Policy

Summary

We are committed to providing safe, respectful, professional and resident-focused housing services.

This policy explains how we make sure staff and others working on our behalf have the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver high-quality housing services. It also sets out the standards of professional conduct we expect when working with residents, colleagues, contractors, councillors, partners and the wider community.

The standards set out in this policy form Portsmouth Homes' housing-specific code of conduct for staff and others delivering housing services on our behalf. They complement Portsmouth City Council's Employee Code of Conduct and help ensure residents receive safe, respectful, consistent and high-quality services.

Effective date

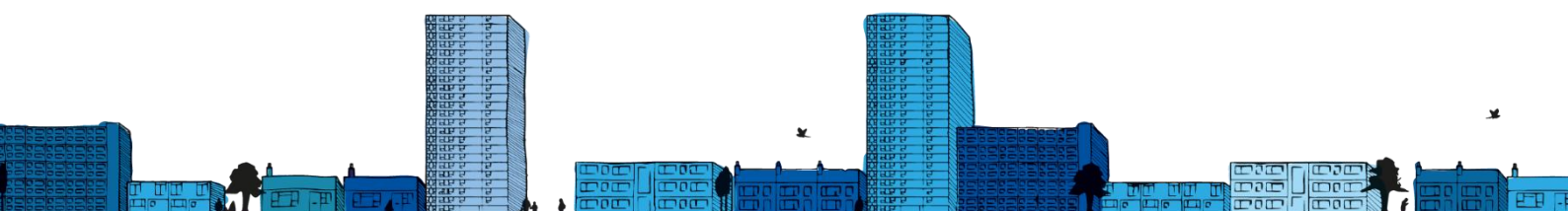
Review

Latest Review Date:

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.0



Staff Competence and Professional Conduct Policy

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Who this policy applies to?

This policy applies to all Portsmouth Homes employees, including permanent, temporary and fixed-term staff, temporary agency workers, contractors, consultants, partner organisations delivering housing services on our behalf and anyone representing Portsmouth Homes, including volunteers where applicable.

Where a third party delivers housing services on our behalf, we will take reasonable steps to make sure those services are delivered by people who meet appropriate competence and conduct standards. We remain responsible for the quality of services delivered on our behalf and will monitor performance accordingly.

Any reference in this policy to “we”, “our” or “us” means Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference to “resident” means a Portsmouth Homes tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

Why we have a Staff Competence and Professional Conduct Policy?

The purpose of this policy is to set clear expectations for staff competence and professional conduct across Portsmouth Homes. It supports a culture where residents are listened to, valued and treated fairly and with respect.

The policy helps make sure staff have the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to carry out their roles effectively and provides a framework for learning, development, supervision and performance management.

It also sets expectations for contractors and other organisations delivering services on our behalf and enables residents to influence and scrutinise our approach to competence and professional conduct.

This policy supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard and helps ensure residents receive services from competent, professional and accountable staff.

This policy supports the development of professional knowledge, skills, conduct and behaviours across all staff delivering housing services.



Definitions

Term	What it means
Competence	Competence means having the right skills, knowledge, training and experience to do a job safely, effectively and professionally.
Professional Conduct	Professional conduct means behaving in a respectful, honest and professional way when working on behalf of Portsmouth Homes. It includes how we communicate, make decisions, treat people fairly, handle information and meet our responsibilities to residents, colleagues and partners.

Our professional standards and code of conduct

We are committed to creating and maintaining a positive culture where residents are at the heart of everything we do. We expect everyone delivering housing services on our behalf to demonstrate behaviours that promote trust, respect, accountability and continuous improvement.

We are committed to delivering housing services in line with Portsmouth City Council's Customer Promise. The standards of competence and conduct set out in this policy support that commitment and help ensure residents receive professional, respectful and resident-focused services.

We expect everyone covered by this policy to follow the standards set out below at all times when carrying out work on behalf of us.

These standards form our housing specific professional standards and code of conduct.

They set out the behaviours, attitudes and expectations required when delivering housing services and should be followed alongside Portsmouth City Council's Employee Code of Conduct. Together, they help ensure residents receive safe, respectful, fair and high-quality services.

We encourage everyone to engage with professional bodies, professional networks, continuous professional development and industry best practice to support ongoing competence and professional growth.



Act with integrity and respect

Staff and others working on our behalf must:

- Treat residents, colleagues, councillors, contractors and everyone fairly and with respect
- Communicate clearly, honestly and professionally
- Listen to residents and take their concerns, views and feedback seriously.
- Act openly, lawfully and in line with Portsmouth Homes and Portsmouth City Council policies
- Declare conflicts of interest where required
- Protect confidential and personal information
- Never use their position for personal gain
- Challenge or report inappropriate, discriminatory, unlawful or unethical behaviour

Maintain professional competence

Staff must:

- Be responsible for keeping their knowledge and skills up to date
- Complete required training and look to continuously develop their skills
- Take responsibility for their own learning and development
- Ask for advice or support when needed
- Work within their role, skills and authority
- Share learning and good practice with colleagues
- Be open to feedback, coaching and supervision and use it to improve performance and service delivery.
- Keep up to date with relevant legislation, regulation, policies, guidance and good practice relevant to their role.

Be responsible and accountable

Staff must:

- Take responsibility for their actions, decisions and professional conduct
- Ask questions and investigate concerns rather than making assumptions.
- Keep clear, accurate and appropriate records where required.
- Apply learning from complaints, feedback, audits, inspections and service reviews.
- Follow relevant policies, procedures and legislation and regulatory requirements



- Respond to resident enquiries and concerns professionally and within agreed timescales
- Raise concerns where something may be unsafe, unfair, unlawful or inappropriate
- Recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns and follow safeguarding procedures where required

Make resident-focused decisions

Staff should make decisions that are fair, evidence based and focused on good outcomes for residents in line with Portsmouth Homes policies

This means staff should:

- Listen to residents and take their views or concerns seriously
- Consider resident feedback, lived experience and service outcomes when making decisions and improving services.
- Consider the impact of decisions on residents
- Explain decisions and next steps clearly
- Take account of individual circumstances, communication needs, accessibility requirements, vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Signpost residents to relevant complaints, review or appeal routes
- Use feedback to improve services

We recognise that culture is shaped by everyday actions, behaviours and leadership. Managers and leaders are expected to lead by example, promote these values and behaviours, and create an environment where residents and colleagues feel listened to, valued and respected.

We will regularly seek feedback from residents and staff to understand whether these expectations are being achieved in practice and will use this learning to drive service improvement.

How We Support, Assess and Maintain Staff Competence

We are committed to ensuring that everyone delivering housing services on our behalf has the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to provide high-quality, resident-focused services.

We support, assess and maintain competence throughout employment through recruitment and induction, learning and development records, supervision and appraisal, quality assurance activities, learning from feedback and service reviews, and supporting everyone to achieve required professional qualifications where applicable.

We expect staff to take responsibility for their own professional development and to actively engage with opportunities to maintain and enhance their competence.



Workforce Planning

We will regularly review the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed across our workforce to ensure we can continue to deliver safe, effective and resident-focused services.

This includes planning for future service needs, developing staff and supporting succession planning where appropriate.

Recruitment and Induction

We support competence from the start of employment through clear role profiles, robust recruitment processes, appropriate pre-employment checks and structured induction programmes.

Induction helps staff understand their responsibilities, the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them, the needs of our residents, our Customer Promise, and the policies, procedures, legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to their role.

Learning and Development

We provide learning and development opportunities to support staff in maintaining and developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their roles.

This may include mandatory and role-specific training, refresher training, coaching, mentoring, continuous professional development, professional qualifications, team briefings, policy updates, peer learning and learning from complaints, audits, inspections, Ombudsman decisions and resident feedback.

Learning and development needs may be identified through supervision, appraisal, competency assessments, quality assurance activities, service reviews, resident feedback, complaints, changes in legislation or regulation, organisational priorities or changes to job roles and responsibilities.

We will support talent development and succession planning by providing opportunities for staff to develop leadership, management and specialist housing skills where appropriate.

Supervision, One-to-One Meetings and Appraisals

Managers will support staff competence through regular supervision, one-to-one meetings, feedback and appraisal.

These arrangements provide opportunities to review performance, behaviours and outcomes, discuss strengths and development needs, reflect on resident feedback and complaint learning, and agree actions to support continuous improvement.

When assessing competence, managers will consider not only what has been achieved but also how services have been delivered, including whether behaviours are consistent with this policy, our organisational values and Portsmouth City Council's Customer Promise.



Competence Assessment and Quality Assurance

We will assess competence using a range of information, which may include supervision and appraisal discussions, quality assurance reviews, case audits, observation, performance information, training records, professional qualifications, resident feedback, complaints, compliments and service outcomes.

Where gaps in competence are identified, we will take proportionate action to provide support, development and improvement opportunities, helping staff to achieve and maintain the standards expected within their role.

Continuous Learning and Improvement

We are committed to creating a positive learning culture where feedback, challenge and scrutiny are valued and used to improve services.

We will use information from complaints, compliments, resident feedback, audits, inspections, Ombudsman decisions, service reviews and performance monitoring to identify learning opportunities and improvements to service delivery, training, policies and working practices.

Learning will be shared with staff and, where appropriate, with residents to demonstrate how feedback has informed improvements and helped shape our services.

Senior housing qualification requirements

Some senior housing managers and leaders are required to hold, or be working towards, professional housing qualifications.

These qualifications help ensure housing services are led by people with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions and deliver high-quality services.

We will identify affected roles, maintain qualification records and support staff to meet these requirements.

Contractors and Others working on our behalf

Where services are delivered on our behalf, we will take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate competence and conduct standards are in place through procurement, contract management, performance monitoring, quality checks and review of complaints and resident feedback.

Where appropriate, contracts and service specifications will include requirements relating to staff competence, professional conduct, training, qualifications and compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Everyone delivering services on behalf of us are expected to act professionally and meet the standards set out in this policy.



Raising and Managing Concerns

Residents, staff, managers, councillors, contractors and others can raise concerns about competence, conduct, behaviour or professionalism.

Concerns raised by residents about the actions, behaviour or service provided by staff or those working on our behalf may be considered through our complaints process where appropriate.

We will investigate concerns fairly, proportionately and in line with our policies and procedures.

Where appropriate, support may include coaching, mentoring, additional supervision, training or improvement plans.

Serious, repeated or high-risk concerns may result in formal action.

Where concerns relate to individual employment matters, these may be managed through separate internal procedures. Any action relating to individual staff members will remain confidential.

We will ensure that concerns about competence, conduct or behaviour are considered objectively and fairly. Where lessons can be learned from concerns raised, we will use this information to improve services, training and working practices.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to fair treatment and inclusive services.

Staff and others working on our behalf must:

- Treat people fairly and without discrimination
- Respect individual needs and circumstances
- Challenge discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour
- Support services that are accessible and inclusive

Information handling and confidentiality

Staff and others covered by this policy must handle information responsibly by:

- Protecting resident, staff and our information
- Only accessing and sharing information when authorised, lawful and necessary
- Following data protection and confidentiality requirements
- Reporting data breaches or concerns through the appropriate process



Monitoring and Assurance

We will monitor compliance with this policy through supervision, appraisal, training records, qualifications, competency assessments, resident feedback, complaints, audits, contractor monitoring, service reviews and performance reporting.

Information gathered through these arrangements will be used to identify risks, monitor compliance, support learning and development, improve service delivery and inform workforce planning.

We will use this information to identify learning, address risks and support continuous improvement.

Responsibilities

Our Responsibilities

We will:

- Promote professionalism, accountability and continuous improvement across our services
- Provide the training, support and resources staff need to carry out their roles effectively
- Monitor competence, professional conduct and compliance with this policy and expected standards
- Respond appropriately when concerns are identified
- Involve residents in reviewing and shaping this policy
- Encourage staff to raise concerns, share learning and use feedback to improve services

Responsibilities of Staff and Others Working on Our Behalf

Everyone covered by this policy is responsible for meeting the standards expected of them.

Staff and others working on our behalf must:

- Understand and follow this policy
- Follow Portsmouth City Council's Employee Code of Conduct where applicable
Where services are delivered by contractors, consultants or agency workers, individuals are expected to comply with the conduct requirements of their own organisation as well as the standards set out in this policy.
- Complete required training



- Seek advice or support when needed
- Treat people with respect
- Act honestly, fairly and professionally
- Protect confidential information
- Declare conflicts of interest where required
- Raise concerns promptly and appropriately
- Take part in supervision, appraisal and service improvement activities

Additional Responsibilities of Managers

Managers must also:

- Lead by example and model professional behaviour
- Set clear expectations
- Support learning and development through regular supervision and feedback
- Identify and address competence gaps
- Manage concerns fairly and proportionately
- Escalate risks or repeated concerns where necessary

Your voice

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website: visit the [Resident engagement and community resources on our website](#)

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.



Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Direction on the Regulatory Standards (Competence and Conduct) 2025
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Bribery Act 2010
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports](#)
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Portsmouth City Council Policies
- Portsmouth City Council Employee Code of Conduct
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Code of Conduct
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Code of Ethics

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available [translation, interpreting and audio information](#).

Compliments



To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at [Make a housing complaint](#)
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on [the Housing Ombudsman Service website](#)
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#)

