

Competence Standard Policy (Housing Services)

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Policy owner: Director of People

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Canterbury City Council's approach to ensuring all housing employees and contractors delivering housing services:

- are competent, qualified and professional
- demonstrate appropriate behaviours and conduct
- deliver safe, high-quality and respectful services to tenants

The policy will detail the approach to managing and developing the skills of housing employees, how performance will be appraised and reviewed, alongside the approach to managing poor performance.

The policy ensures compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct requirements, effective October 2026.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all employees involved in housing management and landlord services
- senior housing managers and senior housing leadership
- agency staff, contractors, and service providers delivering housing services on behalf of the council

3. Policy statement

Canterbury City Council is committed to:

- ensuring housing employees have the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required to deliver effective housing services
- embedding a culture of professionalism, accountability and respect for tenants

- supporting employees to achieve recognised housing qualifications where they fall into the scope of the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard
- ensuring tenants have meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise services

4. Principles

The council will maintain the following principles:

1. **Professionalism** – staff act with integrity, respect and accountability
2. **Competence** – staff are appropriately trained and supported
3. **Continuous improvement** – learning and development is embedded
4. **Tenant focus** – tenants are treated with dignity and their voices heard
5. **Transparency** – standards and performance are visible and reportable
6. **Mutual respect** – The council recognises effective housing services depend upon respectful interactions between tenants, employees, contractors and representatives of the council. Employees will be supported where they experience abusive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour while carrying out their duties.

5. How we will treat our tenants

✓ With respect and dignity

We will:

- treat our tenants with respect at all times
- listen to them, take their concerns seriously and make every effort to understand their circumstances
- be polite, professional and approachable
- respect their personal circumstances, needs and individual situation

✓ With fairness and equality

We will:

- treat our tenants fairly and without discrimination
- make the services accessible and inclusive

- support tenants with additional needs and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate

✓ Clear communication

We will:

- communicate clearly, accurately and in plain English
- explain decisions so they are easy to understand and explain what is happening and why
- keep tenants informed about progress and provide updates where appropriate
- be honest when things go wrong and explain what will happen next

✓ Professional service

We will:

provide a reliable, consistent and responsive service

know how to resolve issues or refer them to the right person or service

work safely and responsibly in a tenant's home and the community

✓ Accountability

We will:

take responsibility of actions and decisions

take reasonable steps to put things right when they go wrong

provide a clear point of contact where appropriate

learn from complaints and feedback

keep tenants informed about what is happening to resolve issues and any actions being taken

6. Competence requirements

The council will ensure all relevant employees can demonstrate:

- appropriate skills and technical knowledge
- relevant experience
- expected professional behaviours

To ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for their role the council will:

- maintain a housing workforce development plan, which details the training requirements for employees based on job roles
- provide an induction programme for all new employees, which will include mandatory training (eg safeguarding, health and safety, complaints)

- provide training internal or external to meet identified training needs
- conduct annual conversations to identify training needs and ensure staff are demonstrating the required behaviours

Training and development will be provided based on the specific needs of the employee and their role as identified through annual conversations and supervision.

Staff will be expected to:

- complete the council's induction programme
- attend relevant training courses or development opportunities
- identify their own training requirements and maintain a record of their training

Employee's performance will be reviewed through:

- Annual Conversations
- regular supervision

Poor performance will be managed through:

- tailored support plans
- formal HR processes where required

7. Qualification requirements

The council will ensure compliance with statutory qualification expectations:

- **Senior Housing Managers:** Level 4 housing qualification (or working towards)
- **Senior Housing Leadership:** Level 5 housing qualification (or working towards)

Top-up qualifications may be considered subject to them meeting the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements.

The employees identified as being within scope are:

Senior Housing Managers

- Tenancy Policy and Programme Officer
- Lead Building Assets Manager
- Lead Compliance and Building Safety Manager

- Senior Repairs Operations Manager
- Senior Assets Manager
- Locality Services Team Leader (Tenancy)
- Housing Services Manager (Independent Living)
- Corporate Income and Finance Team Leader

Senior Housing Leadership:

- Director of People
- Head of Housing and Community
- Head of Facilities Management

Requirements:

- Employees must enrol within required transition timeframes as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Equivalent prior learning may be recognised where appropriate

When a vacancy occurs which is within scope, the vacancy will be advertised detailing the qualification requirement.

Newly-advertised posts may be subject to career progression to reflect applicants who do not meet the qualification requirements at that time.

8. Code of Conduct

Staff are expected to adhere to the Canterbury City Council Corporate Code of Conduct and Core Behaviours.

9. Tenant involvement and transparency

In July 2026, the council undertook a tenant workshop to help shape the development of this policy and the accompanying Housing Code of Conduct.

Feedback highlighted the importance of respect, dignity, empathy, clear communication, accountability, professionalism and transparency.

Tenant comments have informed revisions to the Housing Code of Conduct, including strengthened references to accountability, communication, staff development, contractor standards and demonstrating how feedback leads to service improvements.

Tenants will continue to be involved in reviewing this document and the Housing Code of Conduct, providing opportunities to scrutinise and

provide feedback on the standards and behaviours expected of housing employees and contractors.

This policy can be made available in different formats (eg alternative languages, large print) upon request.

10. Contractors and service providers

The council works with third party contractors to provide services to tenants, when procuring these contracts, the requirement for having trained employees will be set out and detailed within the contract.

The council's contract managers will ensure each contractor or agency has sufficient policies or procedures in place to ensure the workforce is adequately trained and this will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

11. Governance, assurance and monitoring

Records will be maintained of employee's qualifications, the training they have completed and performance assessments.

Regular reports will be sent to the Senior Housing Leadership Team, which will include the workforce compliance and training completion rates.

12. Equality, diversity and inclusion

The council is committed to promoting equality in its policies and practices, preventing and eliminating discrimination in line with the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

The policy aims to ensure the fair and inclusive treatment of all housing employees and tenants.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if there is a requirement to due to changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard or changes to legislation.

Any changes to the policy will involve tenant consultation.

Associated policies

Disciplinary Policy

Code of Conduct for Employees

Core Behaviour Framework

Dignity at Work (Bullying, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy)

Housing Promise