



HOUSING STAFF COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT POLICY

Date of policy	July 2026
Date for review	July 2029
Policy author	Mike Bailey, Tenant Engagement & Independent Living Manager
Policy owner	Gill Butler, Chief Officer (Housing)
Approved by	Cabinet
Risk register rating	Low
Associated documents	Capability Policy Disciplinary Policy Fraud & Corruption Policy People Development Policy Performance & Development Review Policy Recruitment & Selection Policy Housing Staff Code of Conduct

Revision history			
Version	Date	Revision description	Policy author
1	March 2026	New	Mike Bailey

NEW POLICY / POLICY REVIEW	
New policy	Yes
Early review – change in legislation	

Early review – significant changes in practice	
Review due – significant changes	
Review due – cosmetic changes or unchanged	
Other reason	

Reason for new policy / summary of changes

To ensure compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard which comes into effect from October 2026.

CONSULTATION

List of people/roles who have been consulted	Date
Chief Officer (People & Customer Services) Organisational Development & Engagement Manager	March 2026
Housing Leadership Team	April 2026
Housing Management Team	April 2026
Strategic Tenant Advisory Panel	April 2026
All tenants	May 2026
Corporate Leadership Team	June 2026

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Completed	Date
Not applicable	Not applicable

DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Completed	Date
Not applicable	Not applicable

DISSEMINATION

Role	Awareness	Essential
All housing landlord service staff		Yes
All tenants	Yes	

TRAINING

Role	Trainer	Date completed
Awareness	Organisational Development & Engagement	

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE		
Method	Responsibility	Frequency
Staff 1:1s and performance & development reviews	All housing landlord service managers	At least quarterly 1:1s, and annual performance & development reviews

1. Purpose of the Policy

1.1. Folkestone & Hythe District Council (“the council”) recognises that its staff are its most important resource. The council is committed to effective and continuous staff development for the benefit of the residents it serves, its individual staff members, and the council as a whole.

1.2. This policy sets out how the council will:

- Manage and develop the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours of its housing landlord service staff
- Take appropriate steps to ensure that staff employed by partner organisations who deliver housing landlord services on our behalf (e.g. repairs contractors) have the skills, knowledge and experience needed

2. Policy Objectives and Scope

2.1. The council’s objectives are to ensure that:

- Staff in scope of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Competence & Conduct Standard hold, or are working towards, the required level of qualification set out in the standard
- All housing landlord service staff keep their skills, knowledge and experience up-to-date
- All housing landlord service staff comply with the Housing Staff Code of Conduct

2.2. This policy applies to all staff identified as being in scope of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Competence & Conduct Standard. The list of staff in scope of the standard will be reviewed and updated as and when any changes are made to roles, but currently, staff in scope of the standard are:

- *Senior Housing Executives*
 - Director (Housing & Operations)
 - Chief Officer (Housing)
- *Senior Housing Managers*
 - Neighbourhood Services Manager
 - Tenant Engagement & Independent Living Manager
 - Housing Assets Lead Manager
 - Repairs Manager
 - Assets & Major Works Manager
 - Compliance Manager
 - Retrofit & Net Zero Manager
 - Homeownership Specialist
 - Customer Support Team Leader (Housing)

- *Managers of Service Providers*
 - Mears General Manager

3. Legal/Regulatory Framework

- Regulator of Social Housing Competence & Conduct Standard
- HR legislation
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council Constitution / Officer Code of Conduct

4. Responsibilities

4.1. *Corporate Leadership Team* will:

- Consider staff development needs when setting organisational objectives each year
- Ensure that staff are developed to their full potential, for the benefit of tenants, the individual staff member and the council
- Ensure that managers are encouraged to develop staff and are given sufficient resources to do so

4.2. *The Chief Officer (People & Customer Services)* will:

- Provide individually designed training and development activities specific to the needs of individuals, using both internal and external resources
- Provide advice, guidance and information regarding any training and development issues
- Maintain central training records

4.3. *The Chief Officer (Housing) and housing landlord service managers* will:

- Establish training and development needs across the housing landlord service
- Ensure that statutory or essential training is completed by staff so that they operate compliantly and competently, and achieve their individual, team and service objectives
- Identify staff development needs to meet any changes in methods of work, legislation and equipment
- Identify future skills gaps in their teams and ensure the development of staff are aligned with these
- Inform the Organisational Development team of any staff development needs that might be relevant across the council, and associated costs

- Manage and monitor the training budget allocated to them
- Ensure that staff are given the necessary time to complete any training and development activities, both on and off the job
- Keep records of training attended

4.4. All Housing landlord service staff will:

- Attend and participate in training and development activities
- Identify their own training and development needs and be responsible for their own learning and development (supported by their line manager and the Organisational Development team)
- Complete statutory learning and development (as defined by HR and/or line managers, and in line with legislative requirements)

5. Resident Consultation

- 5.1. Initial consultation on this policy was carried out with the Strategic Tenant Advisory Panel (STAP) in April 2026, and they were happy with the draft Code of Conduct as presented to them.
- 5.2. Following feedback from STAP, a tenant-wide consultation was carried out during May 2026, to ensure all tenants had the opportunity to give their views on the draft Code of Conduct. This consultation was conducted via a survey on the council's website, which was promoted via our social media channels and emailed to our database of tenants who have agreed to receive surveys from us. The tenant consultation received just two responses, both of which supported the new documents:

"It is good to see that you will have qualified staff who understand the job and have the confidence to do the job and give correct guidance to tenants and leaseholders."

"It all looks good and easy to understand."

- 5.3. As such, no changes have been made to the draft which was consulted on.
- 5.4. Following approval of this policy, it will be published on the council website, and communicated to tenants via tenant newsletters, bulletins and on the council's social media channels.
- 5.5. This policy can be made available to tenants in alternative formats (e.g. large print, alternative languages) upon request.

6. The Policy

- 6.1. In line with the council's Performance & Development Review Policy, all staff have an annual Performance & Development Review (PDR). This is supplemented by a minimum of 3 further formal 1:1 meetings with their line manager during the year.
- 6.2. Line managers will discuss training and development needs with all housing landlord service staff in their PDR and 1:1 meetings.
- 6.3. These PDR and 1:1 meetings discuss not just the staff member's performance, but also their behaviours, in line with the council's behaviour framework. It is the line manager's responsibility to support the staff member to improve their performance and behaviour where needed. Early intervention is essential, and any improvement actions deemed necessary will be taken in line with the council's Capability Policy.
- 6.4. All staff will maintain a live Performance & Development Plan as part of their PDR, and will request and accept training to help them achieve what is required.
- 6.5. There are a wide range of training and development opportunities available to staff, and requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of the individual staff member and the organisation.
- 6.6. All Senior Housing Executives are required to hold a foundation degree or Level 5 qualification regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), such as the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 5 Diploma in Housing.
- 6.7. All Senior Housing Managers are required to hold a Level 4 qualification regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). The specific qualifications available to staff vary according to their role:
 - Staff who work on "general housing management functions" (i.e. tenancy management activities) are required to hold a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 4 Certificate in Housing
 - Staff who work on "technical housing management functions" (i.e. property management activities) may hold either a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 4 Certificate in Housing, or a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 4 Certificate in Managing Housing Maintenance, or a Level 4 qualification which covers one or more of the following areas and is broadly relevant to their role:
 - Quantity or building surveying
 - Building management / maintenance, or building studies
 - Construction
 - Building safety or fire safety
 - Estate management
 - Facilities management
 - Property management

Staff who work on both social housing and leasehold properties may hold either a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 4 Certificate in Housing, or a Level 4 qualification which covers leasehold and/or residential property management and is broadly relevant to their role.

- 6.8. The council encourages staff development and progression, and staff who wish to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience by undertaking training and development at a higher level than is required in their current role will be supported to do so wherever possible.
- 6.9. Development opportunities open to all housing landlord service staff (again considered on a case-by-case basis and depending on the staff member's skills, knowledge, experience, current role and career aspirations) include, but are not limited to:
 - Chartered Institute of Housing qualifications, e.g. Level 2, 3, 4 or 5
 - Role-specific qualifications e.g. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), leadership & management etc
 - Role-specific training courses e.g. anti-social behaviour, health and safety, damp and mould etc
- 6.10. Where a vacancy occurs and the position being recruited to is identified as being in scope of the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence & Conduct Standard, the job advert will specify the level of qualification required and make it clear that applicants must either (a) already possess this qualification or (b) be willing to obtain it prior to the Regulator of Social Housing's Transition Period ending in September 2029.
- 6.11. The council also contracts third party organisations to deliver housing landlord services on its behalf (primarily repairs and maintenance services). The council is also required to ensure that:
 - staff employed by those third party organisations who are in scope of the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence & Conduct Standard possess the required level of qualification
 - those third party organisations have a policy in place to manage and develop their staff's skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours, and that their approach is tailored to the staff member's individual role
- 6.12. The council's lead officers for each contract will monitor compliance with this throughout the duration of the contract. The need for service providers to comply with these requirements will also be made clear at the outset when procuring new contracts.

7. Key Controls and Reporting

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless changes to the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence & Conduct Standard and/or any other legislation require it to be reviewed earlier.
- 7.2. Tenants will be consulted on any proposed changes to this policy before they are adopted.

8. Equality and Diversity

- 8.1. The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic or any other difference that could lead to discrimination or unfair treatment, considering the principles of the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.2. The provisions set out within this policy aim to have a positive impact for all tenants, including vulnerable tenants, and those who have one or more protected characteristics. As such, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.