Addendum:

Additional Expectations for Housing Employees

Bristol City Council is committed to ensuring that employees involved in delivering housing services have the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required to provide safe, effective and resident-focused services.

The code of conduct addendum is aligned with the housing workforce policy and sets out the Council's overarching approach to workforce development, learning, performance management and assurance, in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard.

1 Purpose of this addendum

1.1 This addendum sets out additional expectations for employees who work in, manage, support, commission, inspect, advise on, or otherwise contribute to the delivery of housing services on behalf of Bristol City Council.

1.2 It should be read alongside the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees (also referred in this document as "the Code"), which already sets standards in relation to employee and manager responsibilities.

1.3 The purpose of this addendum is to reflect the additional expectations arising from the Social Housing Regulation Competency and Conduct Standard, including the need for relevant employees to demonstrate appropriate competence, professionalism, behaviours and resident-focused conduct when providing social housing services.

1.4 In creating this Addendum, we remain committed to the '*One Council'* principle in our strategy, and the addendum is not considered a bolt on, rather an opportunity to consolidate the Competency & Conduct Standard in one accessible place.

2 Scope

2.1 This addendum applies to employees whose role involves the provision, management, support, regulation, inspection, commissioning or oversight of housing services.

2.2 For the purposes of this addendum, these employees are referred to as relevant employees.

2.3 The term ‘residents’ is used throughout the addendum to mean all tenants, leaseholders and other occupants of council properties.

3 Core principles

3.1 Employees who provide or support housing services must act in a way that promotes resident safety, dignity, trust, fairness and confidence in the Council as a social landlord.

3.2 Relevant employees are expected to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to provide good-quality housing services. They must treat residents with respect, listen to concerns, respond appropriately, and ensure that professional judgement is informed by evidence, policy, legal requirements and the needs of residents.

3.3 Employees involved in the delivery or support of housing services must both comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct and the additional expectations set out below.

3.4 The Council’s Values and behaviours provide a broader framework of expectations for all employees.

3.5 These expectations are intended to support the Council in meeting its responsibilities as a social housing provider and to promote a culture of professionalism, accountability, respect, safety and continuous improvement.

4 Resident-focused conduct

4.1 Relevant employees must place residents at the centre of service delivery.

4.2 Employees are expected to:

- treat residents, leaseholders and household members with courtesy, dignity and respect;
- listen carefully to concerns, complaints and feedback;
- avoid dismissive, defensive or stigmatising language or behaviour;
- take reasonable steps to understand individual circumstances, vulnerabilities and communication needs;
- respond to enquiries, complaints and service requests in a timely and professional way;
- ensure that residents are given clear, accurate and accessible information;
- recognise the impact that poor housing conditions, delays or unresolved complaints can have on individuals and families.

4.3 Employees must not act in a way that undermines resident confidence, minimises legitimate concerns, or creates barriers to residents raising issues about their home or housing service.

5 Competence and professional standards

5.1 Relevant employees must maintain the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours necessary for their role.

5.2 Employees are expected to:

- understand the standards, policies, procedures and legal duties relevant to their housing-related role;
- participate in required training, learning and development;
- keep their knowledge up to date, particularly where legislation, regulation, policy or professional guidance changes;
- apply Council policies fairly and consistently;
- seek advice where a matter is outside their knowledge or authority;
- recognise the limits of their role and competence;
- take responsibility for continuous professional development;
- cooperate with any assessment of competence, training need or qualification requirement.

5.3 Senior housing managers and senior housing executives may be required to hold, or work towards, relevant housing management qualifications within the applicable transition period.

5.4 Those considered to hold a “substantive housing role” may be required to hold, or work towards, relevant housing management qualifications within the applicable transition period.

6 Respect, fairness and equality

6.1 Relevant employees must ensure that residents are treated fairly and without discrimination.

6.2 Employees are expected to:

- comply with equity, diversity and inclusion requirements;
- make reasonable adjustments where required;
- consider communication needs, disability, language, literacy and digital access;
- use clear, accessible language and avoid jargon when communicating;
- avoid assumptions based on personal characteristics, housing status, income, behaviour, background or previous contact with services;
- ensure decisions are evidence-based, proportionate and fair;
- challenge inappropriate language, stereotypes or behaviour towards residents;
- ensure that enforcement action, tenancy decisions and service responses are applied consistently and lawfully.

6.3 This expectation supports the Code’s existing provisions on equity and customer standards, while recognising the specific regulatory focus on respectful, professional and resident-centred housing services.

7 Health, safety and wellbeing of residents

7.1 Relevant employees must act promptly and responsibly when they become aware of risks to resident health, safety or wellbeing.

7.2 Employees are expected to:

- take concerns about property condition, damp, mould, disrepair, hazards, fire safety, building safety, safeguarding or vulnerability seriously;
- escalate urgent or serious risks without delay;
- follow relevant reporting, inspection, repair, safeguarding and compliance procedures;
- ensure accurate records are made of concerns, actions and decisions;
- avoid closing or downgrading concerns without appropriate evidence;
- understand that failure to respond appropriately to housing-related risks may have serious consequences for residents and the Council.

7.3 Where an employee is unsure whether a matter presents a risk, they must seek advice from an appropriate manager or specialist service.

7.4 Our Corporate health safety and wellbeing policy sets out the council's responsibilities and commitments.

8 Complaints, concerns and resident voice

8.1 Relevant employees must support a culture where complaints, concerns and feedback are welcomed, recorded and acted upon.

8.2 Employees are expected to:

- help residents understand how to raise a complaint or concern;
- ensure complaints are handled in line with the Council's relevant complaints procedures (see Complaints and feedback);
- avoid discouraging or obstructing complaints;
- ensure that complaints are recorded accurately and not treated as a nuisance or inconvenience;
- learn from complaints, service failures and Ombudsman findings;
- support meaningful resident engagement and scrutiny where relevant to their role;
- actively seek, consider and use resident feedback to improve services and inform decision making.

8.3 The Competency and Conduct Standard places emphasis on resident influence and on ensuring codes of conduct and competence policies are accessible, current and shaped through meaningful resident input.

8.4 Relevant employees should recognise and support the role of elected members in representing residents and helping to facilitate constructive relationships between residents and officers.

9 Accountability and record keeping

9.1 Relevant employees must maintain accurate, complete and timely records.

9.2 Employees are expected to:

- record contact with residents accurately;
- document decisions, actions, inspections, advice and escalations;
- ensure records are factual, professional and capable of audit;
- avoid subjective, dismissive or inappropriate comments on case files or systems;
- correct errors promptly where identified;
- identify and record reasonable adjustments for resident's access to services
- ensure that records support transparency, accountability and effective service delivery.

9.3 Employees must not alter, omit or create records in a way that is misleading or could conceal service failure, risk or poor practice. Doing so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

10 Confidentiality, information sharing and data protection

10.1 Relevant employees must handle resident, household and property information lawfully and securely.

10.2 Employees are expected to:

- comply with data protection and information governance requirements;
- only access information where they have a legitimate work reason;
- share information only where lawful, necessary and proportionate;
- protect confidential, sensitive and safeguarding information;
- ensure information is not disclosed inappropriately to neighbours, contractors, councillors, partners or other third parties;
- seek advice where they are unsure whether information can be shared.

10.3 This expectation reflects the existing Code provisions on confidentiality, information security, data protection and use of Council information.

11 Working with contractors, agents and service providers

11.1 Employees who commission, manage, supervise or work with contractors (and sub-contractors) and service providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that those acting on behalf of the Council meet appropriate standards of competence and conduct.

11.2 Employees are expected to:

- ensure contractors understand expected standards of behaviour when working in or around residents' homes;
- challenge poor conduct, poor quality of work, missed appointments or inappropriate behaviour;
- escalate concerns about contractor competence, safety or professionalism so that they can be addressed appropriately;
- ensure contract management arrangements consider resident impact and service quality;
- take resident complaints about contractors seriously;
- ensure contractors treat residents with dignity and respect.

11.3 The Competency and Conduct Standard expects registered providers to take appropriate steps to secure that relevant service provider staff also have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours to deliver good-quality services.

12 Safeguarding and vulnerability

12.1 Relevant employees must be alert to safeguarding concerns and signs of vulnerability.

12.2 Employees are expected to:

- understand safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role;
- follow Council safeguarding procedures (Report a concern about an adult ; Report a concern about a child or young person)
- escalate concerns about adults, children or households at risk;
- consider whether housing issues may be linked to vulnerability, neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation, disability, mental health, hoarding, financial abuse or social isolation;
- work appropriately with internal and external partners where concerns arise;
- avoid making assumptions about a resident's circumstances without appropriate evidence.
- record vulnerability and reasonable adjustments at relevant points of customer contact

12.3 This supports the existing Code provisions on safeguarding and reinforces the heightened responsibility of employees who may enter residents' homes or receive information about household circumstances.

13 Professional behaviour in residents' homes and communities

13.1 Employees working in residents' homes, estates, communal areas or neighbourhoods must behave professionally at all times.

13.2 Employees are expected to:

- identify themselves appropriately; showing relevant identification
- explain the purpose of visits or contact clearly;

- respect privacy, dignity, cultural needs and personal circumstances;
- avoid inappropriate comments about a resident's home, lifestyle, income, family or personal circumstances;
- take care when discussing confidential matters in communal or public spaces;
- follow lone working, health and safety and personal safety procedures;
- report any concerns about property condition, safety, safeguarding or behaviour.

14 Raising concerns and speaking up

14.1 Relevant employees must raise concerns where they believe service standards, safety, resident welfare, legal compliance or professional conduct may be compromised.

14.2 Employees are expected to:

- report poor practice, unsafe conditions, service failure or inappropriate behaviour.
- escalate unresolved resident safety or compliance concerns;
- cooperate with audits, investigations, inspections and regulatory enquiries;
- use appropriate whistleblowing or public concern procedures where necessary;
- avoid ignoring, concealing or minimising issues that could affect residents or the Council's regulatory compliance.

14.3 The existing Code includes provisions relating to public concern and whistleblowing, and this addendum reinforces the expectation that employees act where resident safety, service quality or regulatory compliance may be at risk. Concerns can be raised here: Whistleblowing policy and procedure for all staff.

15 Manager responsibilities

15.1 Managers of relevant employees have additional responsibilities to support compliance with this addendum.

15.2 Managers are expected to:

- ensure employees understand the conduct and competence expectations relevant to their role;
- identify training, supervision, qualification and development needs;
- support employees to maintain professional standards;
- address poor performance, conduct concerns or gaps in competence promptly;
- ensure appropriate records are kept of training, supervision and development;
- promote a culture where resident concerns are taken seriously;
- ensure employees are not placed in roles or situations where they lack the required competence without appropriate support;
- take action where behaviour is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct or this addendum.

15.3 The Standard expects providers to have a written policy setting out how they manage and develop the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours of relevant staff, and how poor performance is addressed.

16 Compliance

16.1 Failure to comply with this addendum may be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct and may result in management action or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances.

16.2 Potential breaches may include, but are not limited to:

- treating residents or residents disrespectfully;
- dismissing or failing to escalate serious concerns about safety, disrepair, damp, mould, safeguarding or vulnerability;
- failing to complete required training or qualification requirements without reasonable justification;
- making inaccurate, inappropriate or misleading records;
- ignoring complaints or discouraging residents from raising concerns;
- failing to act on known risks;
- misusing resident information;
- failing to challenge or report poor contractor (or sub-contractor) conduct;
- acting outside the limits of competence or authority;
- conduct that damages trust and confidence in the Council as a social landlord.

Additional guidance and support

- Bristol City Council, Code of Conduct Policy for Employees.
- GOV.UK, Direction on the Regulatory Standards (Competence and Conduct) 2025.
- GOV.UK, Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing: government response.
- Chartered Institute of Housing, Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing.

Appendix

Definition of Professional in the context of RSH and Competency and Conduct

In the context of the **Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)** in England, the term **"professional"** refers to individuals who work in social housing and are required to demonstrate a combination of **competence, conduct, knowledge, skills, and ethical behaviours** in delivering housing management services. This concept has been formalised through the **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023** and implemented via the **Competence and Conduct Standard**, which sets clear expectations for professionals in the sector.

Core Elements of Professionalism:

Role Competence

Professionals must have the technical proficiency needed for the specific housing role they perform. This includes:

- Knowledge of housing law, tenancy management, and maintenance practices.
- Practical skills to deliver safe, high-quality, and tenant-focused services.
- Relevant experience in housing management or service provision.

Professional Conduct

Individuals must exhibit behaviours aligned with ethical and respectful engagement with tenants and colleagues, including:

- Acting with integrity, courtesy, and empathy.
- Listening to tenants and responding appropriately to concerns.
- Maintaining transparency and accountability in decision-making.

Qualifications and Training Requirements

The RSH specifies qualification levels depending on seniority:

- Senior Housing Managers: Level 4 housing management qualification or regulated equivalent (Ofqual-regulated).
- Senior Housing Executives: Level 5 qualification or regulated equivalent.
- Other relevant managers: Must hold, or work towards, an appropriate qualification that ensures competence to perform their duties.

Workforce Development and Learning

Professionals are expected to participate in ongoing development:

- Continuous learning and skills enhancement.
- Application of a code of conduct across the organisation.
- Performance appraisal and management of underperformance.
- Support for staff through peer learning, on the job learning and organisational oversight

Tenant-Centred Approach

Professionalism also implies enabling meaningful tenant influence on service

provision and ensuring that residents' needs shape staff behaviours and organisational practices.

Regulatory and Legal Context

Competence and Conduct Standard: Sets mandatory minimum standards for staff competence and conduct under the RSH.

Relevant Individuals/Managers: Professionals in scope include senior housing executives, senior housing managers, and relevant managers in service provider organisations.

Enforcement: Compliance is monitored by the Regulator of Social Housing, with registered providers responsible for ensuring their staff meet the prescribed professional standards.

Summary

Under the RSH framework, a professional in social housing is defined not just by formal qualifications, but by a combination of technical competence, ethical conduct, accountability, continuous development, and responsiveness to tenants. It embodies a holistic standard of excellence intended to safeguard residents and improve sector-wide trust and performance.