

Regeneration and Place Directorate

Housing Standards Service

Career Progression Pathway for Housing Standards Officers

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### Policy Statement

* 1. Wirral Council is committed to developing the careers of employees through vocational and academic routes. This provides access to training, learning opportunities and increased professional responsibility based on a thorough assessment of the Employee’s competence and ability via performance review, training, development and the supervisory process.
  2. Progression is directly linked with continued professional development (CPD), job role competencies and to a progression structure that recognises the employee’s knowledge, experience, capabilities, and enthusiasm to deliver a statutory Housing Standards service in Wirral.

**Overview of Housing Standards Officer (HSO) Career Progression Pathway (CPP)**

### Minimum Entry Level



Trainee Housing Standards Officer – Level 1

Progress to next level supported by Managers and meets Competency Framework (CF) requirements



Trainee Housing Standards Officer – Level 2

Progress to next level supported by Managers and meets Competency Framework (CF) requirements



Housing Standards Officer – Level 3

Progress to next level supported by Managers and meets Competency Framework (CF) requirements



Senior Housing Standards Officer -Level 4

Progress to next level supported by Managers and meets Competency Framework (CF) requirements

Specialist Housing Standards Officer -Level 5

1. **Background**
   1. This document reflects a career progression pathway (CPP), which sets out the roles and responsibilities of professional Housing Standards Officers from the point of qualifications, competencies and experience. The progression framework links these requirements to salary scales. The emphasis is on progression through qualification achievement demonstrable experience and increasing professional competence which, in turn, is to be recognised by the appropriate salary range.

### Commitment to Equality

* 1. This progression addresses the Equality Duty: “To advance equality of opportunity”.

### Progression Pathway

* 1. There are a number of stages on the path to progression from Trainee Housing Standards Officer through to Senior Housing Standards Officer as indicated in the table below. The onus is on the individual to be proactive and complete training and framework requirements if they wish to progress. It is an expectation that level 1 & 2 trainees will work towards progressing to at least a level 3 HSO. There is no similar expectation that level 3 HSOs work towards level 4 SHSOs. This will be down to individuals to decide if they want to remain at level 3 or aspire and work towards level 4.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Designation** | **Qualification and competency level for entry to grade and progression** | | **Stage** | **SCP**  **Range\***  **(to be finalised)** |
| **Qualification** | **Competency** |
| Trainee Housing Standards Officer (Level 1) | **ENTRY INTO LEVEL:**  The postholder enters at this level with the attainment of at least 2 GCSE Level 4 (Including Maths, and English) or equivalent. Plus documented evidence (see appendix 1) that they meet all of the competencies at level 1 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework | Level 1 | THSO-L1 | 80% of PO4 |

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|  | **PROGRESSION TOWARDS NEXT LEVEL:**  The postholder will be required to undertake an acceptable course leading to the attainment of a certificate of competence in Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) & HHSRS Enforcement and provide evidence that they meet all of the competencies at level 2 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework. The postholder will be assessed by their Team Leader and Section Manager and progression to be Signed off by the Senior Manager.  To include the completion of a minimum of 6 property inspections using HHSRS (6 scored and undertaken on own (supervised) and 24 cases shadowed). The submission of a portfolio detailing the findings of the 6 scored surveys. |  |  |  |
| Trainee Housing Standards Officer (Level 2) | **ENTRY INTO LEVEL:**  The postholder enters at this level with evidence that they meet all of the competencies at level 2 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework.  **PROGRESSION TOWARDS NEXT LEVEL:**  The postholder will be required to undertake training including PACE/ gathering and presenting evidence, damp and mould, gas and electrical safety and HMOs. The postholder to provide evidence that they meet all of the competencies at level 3 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework. The postholder will be assessed by their Team Leader and Section Manager and progression to be signed off by Senior Manager.  To include shadowed inspections of:  4 HMO/ HMO licensing compliance visits and inspections  4 Selective Licensing visits and inspections  4 empty property visits  4 financial assistance cases (EPGs/HRAs)  The submission of a portfolio detailing the actions taken, findings and recommended actions (including reasoning for these recommendations) in all above cases. | Level 2 | TAHSO-L2 | 90% of PO4 |
| Housing Standards Officer  (Level 3) | **ENTRY INTO LEVEL:**  The postholder enters at this level with evidence that they meet all of the competencies at level 3 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework  **PROGRESSION TOWARDS NEXT LEVEL**  The postholder will be required to evidence that they have achieved a minimum of 20 hours continuing professional development during the 12 months prior to submitting a request to progress top level 4. This CPD must be related to the work of the Housing Standards Team and can include attending training, presenting at training events or staff briefings. The postholder to provide evidence that they meet all the competencies at level 4 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework The post holder will be assessed by their Team Leader and Section Manager and progression to be signed off by the Senior Manager | Level 3 | HSO-L3 | PO4 |
| Senior Housing Standards Officer  (Level 4) | **ENTRY INTO LEVEL:**  The postholder enters at this level with evidence that they meet all of the competencies at level 4 of the Housing Standards Competencies framework. | Level 4 | SHSO-L4 | PO6 |
| Specialist Housing Standards Officer  (Level 5 | Progression through the pay scale from Level 4 to 5 will be dependent on experience gained across all disciplines within the Team to which the post is assigned to. All SHSOs will initially start on SCP 33. A bar will be set at SCP 35 at which point an officer will have to meet the following, in order progress beyond the bar (Level 5):   * SHSO having a minimum of 3 years of experience in this role. * Competency demonstrated across all specialisms within the team at the highest technical and professional level, to direct staff in the Team and advise Team Leaders and Managers in project specific areas of expertise, new legislative requirements, and guidance. * Experience of multi-agency or cross authority working * Ability to deputise from time to time in Team Leader’s absence and therefore will have an awareness HR policies and procedures. * Specialism within a technical field where skills that are not readily available are required to enable the service to be delivered. This will be subject to funding being available and may follow changes in legislation, or additional service requirements where Senior HSOs are unable to undertake specialist additional training within required timescales or experience of delivery at a high level is required in order to train other staff in the section.   Progression beyond the bar will be considered by the section manager in conjunction with the relevant Team Leader once funding has been confirmed and a vacancy exists | Level 5 | SHSO-L4 | P08 |

## These roles have been graded to allow for:

* + - The appointment of less qualified and/or experienced individuals within a scale designed to allow staff to develop within the Housing Standards profession.
    - Rewarding staff who gain further experience and qualifications
    - Fast tracking high calibre staff into more senior level positions
    - Maintaining motivation and aiding staff retention
    - Enabling staff to gain a broad range of professional experience
    - Allowing for flexibility in resource planning with regards to recruitment and retention
  1. Appointment and progression through the scheme will depend on an individual meeting the criteria as set out below, as determined through the performance appraisal process and continuous assessment and endorsed by both Housing Standards Manager and Housing Standards Team Leader, as applicable.
  2. Progression will be subject to a 2-stage process as follows:

1. Employee completes Request for Career Progression (Appendix 1)
2. Panel professional interview (Appendix 3)
   1. If you consider that achieved the competencies at a particular level and are confident you can progress, you should complete the Progression Request Form (Appendix 1). This is completed against the relevant level of the Competency Framework (CF) at the level of progression being requested. You must have the support of your line manager before you submit the form to the Housing Standards Manager.
   2. Assessment is conducted by an internal Career Progression Panel comprising of the Housing Standards Manager and relevant Team Leader. This panel will examine evidence of capability of the employee. The panel will consider the employee’s written and verbal evidence of practice.
   3. The interview participants will be a panel, chaired by the Section Manager, and the candidate. The interview will be the basis of a professional discussion reflecting on the employee’s practice and professional development, their career aspirations and a celebration of achievements since the point of qualification.
   4. At the conclusion of the interview those on the panel will give verbal feedback. Within fifteen working days of the interview, you will receive written confirmation of the discussion, offering constructive feedback, highlighting areas of good practice and guidance on future development. The Manager, who chaired the interview, will confirm the outcome to Human Resources in writing.

### Ensuring a successful progression

A number of factors need to be taken into account in order to ensure you successfully progress through the varying levels within each designation:

* **Ownership:** Taking ownership in your preparation for progress and taking responsibility for your own professional training and development.
* **Evidence:** Providing clear evidence that you meet the level of competence necessary at each progression stage. This includes evidence that relevant academic/professional development has been achieved.
* **Demonstrable experience:** You have satisfactorily completed any qualifications/training, professional experience and demonstrated your capabilities via the professional interview and assessment process.
* **Management Support:** You have your Line Manager’s support and support from your peers to support on-the job training
  1. It is the expectation that Level 1 trainees will work to progress to Level 2 and Level 3 as an employee with the appropriate support from the Department. If your progression is reported as unsatisfactory by your Line Manager, then this could be an indication of some gaps in your knowledge and skills. Therefore, your Senior Manager will be informed to ensure the necessary and appropriate support can be arranged to help you address these gaps. A plan will be agreed with clear actions, targets and realistic timescales to help you progress.
  2. Progression through the pay scale from Level 4 to 5 will depend on length of time in this role combined with experience gained across all disciplines within the Team to which the post is assigned to. All SHSOs will initially start on SCP 33. A bar will be set at SCP 35 at which point an officer will have to meet the following, in order progress beyond the bar (Level 5):
* SHSO having a minimum of 3 years of experience in this role.
* Competency demonstrated across all specialisms within the team at the highest technical and professional level, to direct staff in the Team and advise Team Leaders and Managers in project specific areas of expertise, new legislative requirements, and guidance.
* Experience of multi-agency or cross authority working
* Ability to deputise from time to time in Team Leader’s absence and therefore will have an awareness HR policies and procedures.

This progression beyond the bar will be considered by the section manager in conjunction with the relevant Team Leader.

* 1. Whilst a last resort, employing formal procedures to address professional capability issues are sometimes necessary. The expectations of the Council justify this. Therefore, where appropriate, outstanding capability issues will be considered via Wirral’s formal procedures. You will be fully involved in this process and will be advised about any formal action that may affect you.
  2. If you attend your progression interview and you disagree with the decision made, you can appeal in writing to the Senior Manager Strategic Housing Services. The Senior Manager Strategic Housing Services decision is final.

# Appendix 1



REQUEST FOR CAREER PROGRESSION

To be completed by the Employee:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Employee Name |  | |
| Team |  | |
| Employee Number |  | |
| Workplace |  | |
| Manager’s Name |  | |
| Work Address |  | |
| Request for Progression to  (Delete as Appropriate) | | Level 2 Level 3 Level 4 |

SECTION 1: THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (CF)

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| --- |
| Using the Competency Framework at the appropriate level, please list all competencies below and provide information to evidence compliance with each competency to support progression. Please refer to the Progression Pathway and Competency Framework using Appendix 2. |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |

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| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
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| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |
| Competency (insert) |
| Evidence of compliance |

|  |
| --- |
| Portfolio provided |
|  |

Date of submission

Please forward the completed form and copies of the portfolio to your line manager for consideration

# Appendix 2 – Competency Framework

**Wirral Council – Housing Standards Officer Competency Framework**

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| **Level 1 Competencies – Trainee Housing Standards Officer working under full supervision for all projects** |
| **Level 2 Competencies - Trainee Housing Standards Officer working with supervision** |
| **Level 3 Competencies – Housing Standards Officer with proven capability to work without supervision** |
| **Level 4 Competencies – Housing Standards Officer with proven capability to work unsupervised on higher risk, more complex cases, enhanced technical expertise and supervisory, mentoring responsibilities** |
|  |
|  |

**Evidence: Other than both the specific portfolio requirements mentioned in 4.0 and any requirements detailed in the table below, it is down to individuals to provide sufficient evidence that they meet the competencies at the relevant level. Such evidence is not defined. Some examples of possible evidence include:**

**An understanding of….. written submission of no more than 2000 words outlining your understanding of the subject matter listed, including local real world examples [historical or current]**

**Experience of…. written submission summarising relevant case(s)/work that you have been involved in or responsible for whichever is relevant. Each case should be limited to one side of A4 and reference ant computer record for further detail. Officer should be prepared to discuss cases at assessment stage**

**Awareness of….**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Competency** | **Level** | **Requirement to be worked through, with exception of level 1 which staff must meet as a minimum to start as a Level 1Trainee HSO** | **THSO-L1** | **THSO-L2** | **HSO-L3** | **SHSO-L4** |
| **Trainee housing Standards Officer**  **Level 1** | **Level 1** | Demonstrate awareness of government policies and legislation  relating to housing standards |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Be able to demonstrate Excellent customer care skills |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Ability to produce accurate financial and written reports |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Willingness to learn new areas of work relating to housing standards |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Be capable of undertaking a basic housing inspection under supervision and recording findings accurately |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Be capable of engaging with property owners and agents to explain what is required to improve housing standards. |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Have a basic technical knowledge of housing construction |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Basic knowledge of enforcement powers available to local housing authorities and financial assistance |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Ability to manage a caseload of work, set priorities and work to own initiative |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Good awareness of equality and diversity issues |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Understanding of H&S risk assessments for Housing Standards including loan working |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Able to demonstrate sound IT skills including use of database for recording of work |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Able to demonstrate awareness of GDPR and its application to Housing Standards work |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 1** | Able to use initiative to resolve customer complaints and queries |  |  |  |  |
| **Trainee Housing Standards Officer**  **Level 2** | **Level 2** | Understanding of Housing Health & Safety Rating System Operational Guidance and its application for Housing Inspections |  |  |  |  |
| **Level 2** | Experience of managing own cases for Grants or Loans under supervision |  |  |  |
| **Level 2** | Experience of responding to Empty property complaint and taking appropriate action, under supervision |  |  |  |
| **Level 2** | Experience of undertaking a Selective Licensing compliance Inspection and taking appropriate action if non-compliant |  |  |  |
| **Level 2** | |  | | --- | | Be able to manage simple cases unsupervised through to resolution (Evidence could include an A4 page summaries of five cases (one for each case) including ability to discuss case at assessment stage) | | Preparing schedules of work, procuring works, analysing costs and supervising implementation of works under supervision (provide at least 2 worked examples explaining the process followed at each stage) | | Completion of HHSRS 2-day Accredited training | | Completion of HHSRS Enforcement training | | Attend legal case conferences and demonstrate understanding of legal process and be able to present case to TL/HSM | | Attend Court / Tribunal if available or be able to present a case as case study showing understanding of legislative powers | | Completion of PACE training | |  |  |  |
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| **Level 2** | Awareness of Strategic Context - interdependency of Housing Standards and wider housing services (Evidence could be 30 minute presentation at assessment stage or written submission of no more than 200o words) |  |  |  |
| **Level 2** | Completion of special project demonstrating competency in research, policy and report writing (agree in advance with line manager) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Traineee TraTTraineeHHousinda  Housing Standards Officer  Level 3 | **Level 3** | Ability to manage full caseload of inspections in different specialist areas. (workload on Tascomi Public Protection clearly showing ongoing and historical service requests (or other)) |  |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Understand and interpret electrical safety certification and how to report concerns with certification (provide examples of at least 2 EICRs received in line of duty with a written breakdown of how to interpret these reports, in addition to your understanding of the process involved in reporting any concerns with the certifications) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | High level of competency with application of HHSRS (see portfolio requirements) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Competency of serving statutory notices and/or CPNs (provide examples of a minimum of 2 statutory notices you have served under different sections of relevant legislation or a minimum of 1 statutory notice and a Civil Penalty Notice) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Understand and interpret gas safety certification and how to report concerns (provide examples of at least 2 Gas safety Reports received in line of duty with a written breakdown of how to interpret these reports, in addition to your understanding of the process involved in reporting any concerns with the certifications) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Ability to put a case bundle together accurately and consistently to provide robust evidence to support legal action (this could be an actual case being worked on or worked example) (provide copy of bundle) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Sound understanding of building construction, disrepair and specification to remove hazards, including costing remedial works, assessing estimates/tenders. (see portfolio requirement related to provision of financial assistance or alternatively use example of default work cases that you have been involved in) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Provide access to information and training to landlords and developers by facilitating forums, seminars and training events or providing articles to newsletters (evidence of direct involvement in landlord forum/landlord training events/landlord newsletter or similar) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Basic understanding of Building Regulations and how to refer concerns to BC |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Ability to assess quality of Fire Risk Assessments and challenge findings where necessary. (Evidence could include a critical appraisal of 4 FRAs that have been submitted) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Sound Knowledge of the Decent Homes Standard (Evidence could be a minimum 20 minute presentation and follow-up questions as assessment stage) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Demonstrate understanding of wider housing services/external agencies and their relationship with Housing Standards (evidence could include a minimum 20 minute presentation of your understanding) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Understanding of wider landlord & tenant law, environmental health powers and illegal eviction in the context of Private Rented Sector (evidence could include a four A4 page summary of your understanding to be discussed at assessment stage) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Competently respond to formal complaints and political enquiries including evidence of written replies (Evidence could be summary of at least 4 complaints/political enquiries including detail of complaint/enquiry and your dealings including your reply) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Understanding of HMO, SL and the enforcement powers related to licensing conditions and evidence of involvement in issuing licences (in addition to portfolio requirements, evidence could include a four A4 page summary of your understanding to be discussed at assessment stage in addition to evidence of at least 2 HMO and 2 Selective Licences having been issued showing a the procedure used including associated paperwork) |  |  |
| **Level 3** | Understand the range of legal powers to tackle empty properties and evidence the use of such powers (in addition to portfolio requirements evidence could include a four A4 page summary of the legislation and why it is appropriate and examples of cases that you have been involved in where appropriate power(s) have been used) |  |  |
| SENIOR  Housing Standards Officer  Level 4 | **Level 4** | Understanding of additional relevant legislation and it’s application e.g. Fire Safety Order and Building Safety Act 2022 or Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1989 |  |  |
| **Level 4** | Supervisory experience – ability to delegate work and monitor performance of team members, including the Collation, monitoring and reporting of performance management data |  |
| **Level 4** | High level of technical expertise in specialist area |  |
| **Level 4** | Sound knowledge of Case-law, tribunal decisions and policy changes relating to specialism and/or Ombudsman decisions to inform policy and procedures |  |
| **Level 4** | Awareness of best practice nationally to contribute to service development |  |
| **Level 4** | Demonstration of successful outcomes with Court/Tribunal/Public Enquiry and default works |  |
| **Level 4** | Demonstration of experience of training and mentoring officers in areas of expertise to develop their competencies |  |
| **Level 4** | Evidence of contribution to service evaluation, development, and improvements |  |
| **Level 4** | Evidence of inter-departmental / multi-agency working |  |
| **Level 4** | **Evidence of support given to Team Leader in a specific area related to service delivery** |  |
| **Level 4** | **Good understanding of Compulsory Purchase Powers related to housing , including the process involved** |  |
| **Level 4**  15 | **Experience of maintaining and monitoring financial records** to ensure financial resources are fully utilised and in accordance with internal/external audit requirements |  |
| SENIOR  Housing Standards Officer  Level 5 | **Level 5** | A minimum of 3 years of experience in this role, across all disciplines covered by the Team that the role is assigned to, to be able to direct staff in the Team Leaders absence |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Level 5** | Competency demonstrated across all specialisms within the team at the highest technical and professional level, and evidence of cascading expertise to staff in the team. |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Level 5** | Ability to produce concise and accurate reports and briefings to advise Team Leaders and Managers in project specific areas of expertise, new legislative requirements, and guidance. |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Level 5** | Experience of multi-agency or cross authority working |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Level 5** | Ability to deputise from time to time in Team Leader’s absence and therefore will have an awareness HR policies and procedures. |  |  |  |  |



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Appendix 3



PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW COMMENTARY

Summary of discussion about competencies including whether or not it is considered that they have been met

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Professional Interview: |  |
| Progression Stage: |  |
| Employee’s Name: |  |
| Manager recommending Progression Interview: |  |



Decision

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Position | Signature |
|  | Manager |  |
|  | Team Leader |  |