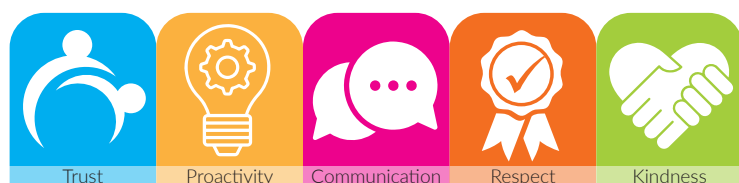


September 2026

Professional Standards for Housing, Wellbeing and Communities staff



Background

From 1 October 2026, the Competence and Conduct Standard requires all social housing providers to ensure that colleagues in housing roles have the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours needed to deliver safe, effective and resident-focused services. Professionalism, continuous development and high standards of conduct are central to these requirements.

To support this, Arun District Council is adopting the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Professional Standards. The standards provide a recognised framework for professional housing practice, setting clear expectations around integrity, inclusion, ethical behaviour, professional knowledge, skills and leadership. They help define what good housing practice looks like and support colleagues to develop and maintain their professional competence.

Who do they apply to?

Every role in Housing, Wellbeing and Communities (HWC) has a direct or indirect impact on the services delivered to tenants. Each role also influences the residents experience whether through direct service delivery or behind the scenes or complimentary support.

Housing outcomes for our residents depend on collaboration across multiple teams and services. Therefore, the CIH Professional Standards apply to all employees in HWC, whether or not they are members of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

The CIH Professional Standards also apply to all workers including, agency, contractors and consultants.

Bringing it all together

The CIH Professional Standards sit alongside Arun's Behaviour and Competency Framework and Code of Conduct.

Together, they provide a clear and consistent framework for how we work, how we behave and the professional standards we are expected to uphold.

- our Behaviour and Competency Framework describes the values, behaviours and skills needed to be successful at Arun
- our Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all employees
- the CIH Professional Standards define the professional knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of all housing services professionals

Together, these frameworks help us deliver excellent services, build trust with residents, support professional development and maintain high standards across our housing services.

How we will use the standards

The Professional Standards will be used as a practical tool to support and drive resident-focused services, and the professional development and performance of HWC colleagues.

Recruitment and on-boarding

The standards will be referenced in HWC role profiles and used during the selection and at interview stage of recruitment to assess suitability of candidates for HWC positions. During the probationary period, the standards will be used to assess performance and support any development needs, as well as monitor progress to ensure new starters demonstrate the professional behaviour expected.

Continuous professional development

The standards encourage colleagues to continuously reflect on their practice, identify development needs as well as solutions for meeting gaps identified, and keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Discussions about the standards will form part of the regular performance and development conversations to identify any gaps and needs. This information will also be used for HWC department review of skills (as and when required).

Professional practice

The standards establish a shared understanding of what good housing practice looks like across all social housing providers. They promote professionalism, accountability, ethical decision-making and leadership, helping us maintain the confidence of residents, colleagues and stakeholders.

Resident experience and voice

The standards reinforce the importance of understanding residents' needs, listening to feedback and making informed decisions that improve experiences and outcomes. They help ensure that residents remain at the heart of the services we provide and that our actions reflect the values of fairness, inclusion and respect.

Decision-making

The standards provide a practical benchmark for everyday choices, helping colleagues to have confidence in their decisions made with sound knowledge and empathy.

CIH professional standards

Integrity



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

A housing professional has a clear understanding of their values and acts in accordance with them - they will do the right thing, for the right reasons, based on the best evidence and without partiality.

As a housing professional who acts with integrity, you will:

Standard Recognise and take responsibility for your actions and mistakes and contribute to putting things right	Standard Visibly and consistently be a role-model for professional principles and values	Standard Challenge behaviours and attitudes that are inconsistent with your professional values	Standard Demonstrate transparency and honesty in your decision-making and communication	Standard Acknowledge your own emotional and professional limits and ask for support or help when necessary	Standard Recognise and Strive to treat everyone fairly, promptly, effectively and sensitively
Descriptor Responsibility	Descriptor Role model	Descriptor Challenge behaviour	Descriptor Honesty	Descriptor Know your limits	Descriptor Attitude

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Delivering on your commitments within agreed/ appropriate timeframes
- Acting in a way that does not compromise your personal or professional values
- Showing professional respect for others in all circumstances
- Building and extending trust with tenants and residents
- Working out the most effective way to raise concerns if you are worried about others' professional behaviour
- Providing information and advice based on evidence and accurately presenting the options and facts
- Exercising professional judgment and acting with discretion and autonomy
- Recognising conflicts of interest and take action to reduce and/or remove the presence of such actions where feasible
- Recognising the impact that failure to deliver will have on service users
- Looking critically at your mistakes and working to ensure they are not repeated
- Understanding and acting in the best interest of your tenants, colleagues and partners
- Being open, honest and transparent in your dealing with tenants, colleagues and partners

Self-reflection

- Am I clear on what my values are both personally and professionally?
- Would be happy if my actions were made public in the press or on social media?
- Is my behaviour in the workplace is respected by my colleagues?
- Do I ever gossip about my colleagues?
- Do people trust my professional judgement?
- Do I own up to my mistakes and learn from them?
- Do I do what I say I am going to do?
- If I can't meet a commitment, do I take corrective action?
- Do I always understand and act in the best interest of tenants/customers/partners?
- Do I provide information and advice based on evidence and facts?

CIH professional standards

Inclusive



A housing professional acts transparently and fairly; builds good relationships; and works collaboratively with partners, customers and communities to achieve better outcomes.

As an inclusive housing professional, you will:

Standard Address your own behaviours and assumptions (unconscious bias) in how you work	Standard Recognise, value and draw on a wide range of perspectives to ensure that you deliver the best service	Standard Demonstrate sensitivity to the customs, cultures and beliefs of others	Standard Build collaborative relationships across organisation boundaries, cultures and other disciplines	Standard Have a zero-tolerance approach towards inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory behaviour	Standard Promote diversity of views and experiences, ensuring you understand variations and listen to all relevant voices
Descriptor Unconscious bias	Descriptor Perspective	Descriptor Inclusive	Descriptor Collaboration	Descriptor Challenge	Descriptor Holistic

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Understanding and valuing the diversity of your tenants, customers, clients and stakeholders and making sure the delivery of services meets their requirements
- Understanding and valuing the diversity of colleagues within your own organisation
- Recognising the causes and sources of discrimination and unequal treatment;
- Being impartial in your treatment of others
- Challenging inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory behaviour
- Taking the time to understand the context of the situation and the needs of those involved
- Selecting the right communication channels to meet the needs of a diverse audience
- Recognising the challenges and influences that drive and affect the behaviour of others
- Understanding the multiple and intersecting oppressions and disadvantages that impact people, families and communities.
- Seeking to adopt an open mind and continually challenging personal assumptions held to promote and maximise benefits of diverse groups

Self-reflection

- Can I see things from another person's perspective/step into their shoes?
- Do my personal preferences or views influence my behaviour or decisions?
- Do I create unnecessary obstacles by not considering circumstances or needs?
- Am I confident that that I don't have any unconscious biases? How would I know if I do?
- Am I comfortable asking what may be perceived as awkward or difficult questions in the interest of inclusion?
- How would I ensure that I did this with sensitivity to the person/situation?
- Do I know what unacceptable behaviour looks like in practice?
- Am I comfortable to challenge inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory behaviour?
- Do I have access to equality, diversity and inclusion training?

CIH professional standards

Ethical



A housing professional acts fairly and makes choices and decisions by applying principles and values consistently. They understand the impact that poor decisions can have both on people's lives and the reputation of their organisation and they challenge unethical practice in a fair and considered way.

As an ethical housing professional, you will

Standard Understand what ethical working practice means in the context of both your role and your organisation	Standard Make responsible decisions by considering different ethical perspectives and finding the best possible way forward	Standard Challenge decisions and actions which are not consistent with the ethical framework of your professional body and/or organisation	Standard Be a role model and promote ethical leadership and professional principles and values across your organisation and the wider housing profession	Standard Ensure that your private, personal, political and financial interests do not conflict with your professional duties
Descriptor Ethical working	Descriptor Ethical perspectives	Descriptor Challenge behaviour	Descriptor Role model	Descriptor Conflict of interest

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Understanding and applying CIH's codes of ethics and practice and understanding what this means in practice for you and your role
- Understanding and upholding the values of your organisation
- Adopting a tenure neutral perspective, challenging negative stereotypes and promoting positive role models
- Seeing beyond the rules to do what is right

Self-reflection

- Can I clearly identify what an ethical dilemma might be in the context of my role? In the context of the wider organisation?
- Do I use the CIH ethical framework when faced with an ethical dilemma?
- Am I prepared to raise concerns when I feel practices, policies or activities are inconsistent with the values and practices of my organisation?
- Do I understand what a conflict of interest would be in my role or organisation? Who would I talk to if I felt a conflict of interest had arisen?
- Do my personal preferences or views influence my behaviour or decisions?
- Do I challenge false assumptions made about people who live in rented housing (both inside and outside of work)?
- Do I know and uphold the values of my organisation?

CIH professional standards



**Chartered
Institute of
Housing**

Knowledgeable

A housing professional has relevant and up-to-date practical and specialist knowledge as required by their job role, understands the bigger picture and has a passion for continuous learning.

As a knowledgeable housing professional, you will:

Standard Understand the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills you need to do your job	Standard Understand the bigger picture to set your role in context	Standard Keep up to date, stay aware of current issues, trends and changes in best practice	Standard Demonstrate awareness of your own strengths, areas for development and the limits of your ability and expertise	Standard Assess and commit to your continuing professional development and reflective learning	Standard Share your knowledge, skills and expertise freely with others
Descriptor Breadth and depth	Descriptor Contextual understanding	Descriptor Currency	Descriptor Self-aware	Descriptor Reflection	Descriptor Sharing

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Being clear on the general and specialist knowledge and skills that you need to do your job - this includes the relevant regulation, legislation, and practice
- Understanding the role, purpose and function of your organisation
- Acting within the scope of your knowledge and skills and your role
- Understanding your personal limitations (e.g., when to seek advice from others).
- Not acting beyond the limits of your competence
- Continually assessing the breadth and depth of knowledge required to do your job
- Having a structured plan to enable you to stay up to date and address knowledge and skills gaps
- Developing contacts and networks through facilitated events, online networks, social media avenues
- Taking responsibility for your development and not waiting for others to direct you
- Sharing your knowledge with others to create a learning environment among your colleagues
- Continuing your professional development to build, maintain and learn new skills and knowledge
- Recognising how your role connects with the bigger picture
- Using knowledge, research and data to make evidence-based decisions
- Being clear about the skills required beyond technical knowledge
- Sharing good practice

Self-reflection

- Do I stay up to date with the latest policy and practice developments in housing?
- Do I regularly review my own development and progress, how am I doing, what do I need to do more of?
- Am I clear about the knowledge I need to effectively do my job?
- Am I aware of all my legal and professional obligations?
- Am I clear about personal limitations (e.g. when to seek advice from others)?
- Do I share my knowledge with others to create a learning environment among my colleagues?
- Do I use my knowledge, research and data to make evidence-based decisions?

CIH professional standards

Skilled



A housing professional equips themselves with the relevant skills to deliver effective services to tenants, customers, colleagues, and partners.

As a skilled housing professional, you will:

Standard Pioneer and champion excellent customer service	Standard Understand what factors affect resilience in yourself and others	Standard Create change and actively support others to embrace and take the opportunities that change presents	Standard Making the best use of technology where this enhance the quality and effectiveness of services provided	Standard Be able to influence and negotiate to achieve positive outcomes	Standard Solve problems, be flexible, adaptable and respond to situations creatively, in the moment
Descriptor Customer service	Descriptor Resilience	Descriptor Change	Descriptor Technology	Descriptor Influence	Descriptor Problem-solving

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Using customer insight intelligence to shape your actions and prepare for future challenges
- Understanding what challenges or triggers your ability to be resilient and to ensure you are supported
- Scanning the horizon to predict future challenges and preparing effectively
- Responding according to the situation (situational decision-making)
- Taking pre-emptive action and proactively problem solving
- Finding solutions, even if they lie outside of 'normal' activity
- Making a positive contribution to team culture
- Recognising the need to balance commercial awareness with social purpose
- Developing effective listening and communication skills, and an ability to demonstrate empathy in respect of the circumstances of others
- Being adept and influential in virtual communication
- Being digitally savvy and skilled in multi-platform and communication tools

Self-reflection

- Do I stay up to date with developments in my profession?
- Do I regularly review the skills I need and plan how to address the gaps I identify?
- Do I take advantage of networks to support my development?
- Do I actively listen and really hear what people are saying?
- Do I understand what challenges or triggers impact on my ability to be resilient?
- Do I make a positive contribution to team culture?
- Do I embrace current and future technologies and digital working?
- Do I adapt to change well?
- Do I respond quickly according to the situation (situational decision-making)?

CIH professional standards

Advocate



A housing professional acts as an ambassador for the wider housing sector and an advocate for the housing profession.

As an advocate for the housing profession, you will:

Standard Enhance the reputation of the housing profession	Standard Understand the impact of your language, behaviour and conduct on the broader image of rented housing, negative stereotyping and stigma	Standard Generate a sense of public pride in the importance and value of rented housing as a positive housing choice	Standard Act as an ambassador for the wider profession by maximising the positive impact you make on individuals and communities
Descriptor Reputation	Descriptor Stigma	Descriptor Public pride	Descriptor Ambassador

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Speaking up when faced with attitudes and behaviour that stereotype and stigmatise rented housing and people who live in rented housing
- Contributing to the profession, sharing experience, and supporting innovation
- Getting involved with CIH networks, influencing, public affairs and policy work
- Creating sense of loyalty and cohesion among fellow housing professionals
- Challenging the behaviours of colleagues and organisations that undermine the reputation of the profession
- Challenging organisational practices that contribute to tenants' experience of stigma
- Championing the role that good quality, affordable homes play in the wider socio-economic context
- Building a network of relationships with current and future influencers and stakeholders
- Encouraging and welcoming others into the profession
- Creating and contributing to a sense of community

Self-reflection

- Am I a publicly positive representative of my organisation and the wider profession?
- How do I contribute to the profession, sharing experience, and supporting innovation?
- How would I describe the profession to somebody from outside?
- Do I call out unprofessional behaviour in my colleagues?
- How do I support others to be advocates for the housing profession?
- How do I respond when I hear criticism by others about the sector?
- Do I ever use inappropriate language or behaviour which might undermine the aims and objectives of the sector or my organisation?

CIH professional standards

Leadership



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

Housing professionals at all levels should demonstrate leadership, be forward thinking and create opportunities. They find solutions to improve outcomes for their organisation, tenants and communities and demonstrate their ability to adapt to the latest ideas, situations, and change.

Housing professionals who demonstrate leadership will:

Standard Drive positive outcomes for people, organisations and communities	Standard Pursue opportunities to test insight, develop new approaches and innovate	Standard Take a broader external view, forecast trends and issues, have a future focus	Standard Be self-aware and critically reflective and have a desire to keep learning	Standard Work effectively with others inside and outside your organisation	Standard Take responsibility for your mistakes, learn from them and demonstrate ownership for the actions to put things right
Descriptor Achievement	Descriptor Innovation	Descriptor Vision	Descriptor Authenticity	Descriptor Collaboration	Descriptor Ownership

Practical application

In practice, this means:

- Reflecting on the outcomes of your decisions and learning from them to improve your skills in the future
- Reflecting on experiences, seeking feedback and actively applying lessons learnt
- Giving and receiving feedback constructively in a co-operative manner
- Not being precious about rank or job boundaries, but being prepared to take responsibility and get things done
- Having a 'can do' improvement-focused attitude
- Having a strong virtual presence
- Driving leadership in the new virtual working environment
- Being able to identify practices that are no longer relevant
- Understand your own and team well-being needs
- Being able to unlearn and re-learn at pace to succeed in a continually evolving operating environment

Self-reflection

- Do I give feedback constructively in a co-operative manner?
- Do I receive constructive feedback well?
- Have I changed how I work because of feedback I have received?
- What kind of leader am I? Where have I made a change/impact? Where could I suggest improvement?
- How can I further develop my leadership skills?
- Who are my leadership role models? How can I learn from them?
- Am I confident in being a critical friend and am able to raise issues and concerns?
- How do I react when things don't go to plan?
- How do I support my colleagues to be leaders in their roles?
- Am I prepared to champion new ways of working
- Am I prepared to take responsibility and get things done?

Relevant policies and procedures

- Behaviour and Competency Framework (including Arun Values)
- Code of Conduct
- Resolution Framework
- Learning and Development Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Probation Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Anti bullying and harassment Policy