



SHDC Housing Landlord Service – Competence and Conduct Engagement outcome report and detail of changes made.

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Background

As per the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing has placed a greater emphasis on treating tenants with respect and giving tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlords' strategies, policies and services.

The Regulator of Social Housing's, Competence and Conduct standard required outcome states:

1.8.1 Registered providers must a) secure that their relevant staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and exhibit the behaviours needed, for the landlord services to be of good quality. b) take appropriate steps to secure that the relevant staff of their services providers have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and exhibit the behaviours needed, for the landlord services to be of good quality

The specific expectations of the outcome states:

2.6.2 Registered providers must have a written policy which includes:

- a) their approach to managing and developing the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours of their relevant staff and how they will tailor this approach, as appropriate, to the different roles of relevant staff within their organisation;*
- b) their approach to learning and development for their relevant staff. This must include how they ensure that their relevant staff maintain and demonstrate appropriate and up to date skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours in their roles;*
- c) their approach to appraising and regularly reviewing the performance of their relevant staff, including their approach to managing poor performance; and*
- d) the appropriate steps they will take to secure that the relevant staff of their services providers have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and exhibit the behaviours needed, for the landlord services to be of good quality.*

2.6.3 Registered providers must develop or adopt an appropriate code of conduct for their relevant staff and ensure it is embedded within their organisation.

2.6.4 Registered providers must ensure that the written policy and the code of conduct referred to in 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 are kept up to date, fit for purpose and are accessible to tenants. Tenants must be given meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise the development of the written policy and decisions relating to the adoption or development of the code of conduct.



“Relevant staff” refers to all staff involved in the provision of landlord services, meaning anyone contributing to the management of social housing.

The Competence and Conduct Standard requires the Council to set out how it will manage and develop the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours of its staff. While the qualification requirements apply only to senior housing managers and senior housing executives, the Code of Practice makes clear that the competence and conduct expectations apply to all relevant staff. This means our approach must be tailored to different roles across the workforce, including tenant-facing officers, to ensure that all staff delivering landlord services have the competencies needed to provide safe, high-quality and respectful housing services.

The Competence and Conduct Policy introduces an approach to defining, assessing and maintaining competence for all staff involved in delivering landlord services. It also introduces a role specific Housing Code of Conduct that strengthens expectations around communication, respectful behaviour, professionalism, and transparency.

The expectation of the Regulator is that tenants are provided with meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise the development of both the written policy and the Code of Conduct.

To achieve this, we adopted a qualitative engagement approach that enabled richer, more in-depth conversations with tenants. This included attending tenant focus groups and drawing on existing insight such as Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), complaints intelligence, and wider service feedback. This approach ensured that tenants’ lived experiences directly shaped the content of the policy and code. We selected a qualitative approach to minimise additional burden on tenants, as several surveys were already in progress at the same time, including the Repairs Project survey, the Damp, Condensation and Mould (DCM) survey, and the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) survey. Based on the recognised risk of survey fatigue, introducing an additional questionnaire would not have been proportionate or productive for this engagement.

The qualitative approach has provided detailed tenant insight without requiring new surveys. All findings and proposed changes were presented to the new Tenant Influence Panel to ensure continued tenant involvement, influence and oversight.

Introduction

This document summarises the responses to the engagement and scrutiny on the development of the Competence and Conduct Policy and Housing Code of Conduct.

The aim of the engagement was to:

- Provide tenants with an opportunity to share their views on what should be included within the Competence and Conduct Policy and Housing Code of Conduct.



- Give tenants, staff and members an opportunity to shape and make changes to the draft Competence and Conduct Policy and Housing Code of Conduct prior to adoption.
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to acting on tenant feedback and supporting tenant-led scrutiny in shaping housing policy.

To encourage open and maximum possible contribution, the programme of engagement consisted of print, online and face to face communication.

The engagement sought to encourage a broad range of responses from across the tenant group. The programme of engagement took place in person. All information about the engagement was posted on the Council website. Texts and emails were sent to tenants directly promoting all of the face-to-face events happening across the district.

Tenant Engagement

Existing Tenant engagement events were attended across South Holland district in a variety of Council estates attended by Officers of the Housing Landlord Service and members of the Tenant Forum.

The sessions offered the opportunity for tenants to engage with Officers and discuss the engagement.

Officers attended the following existing events on dates shown below to discuss the Competence and Conduct Standard as part of the scheduled agendas.

Event	Location	Date	Time	Tenants in attendance
Property Focus Group	Fleet Hargate Community Centre	10 th February 2026	2-4pm	7
Tenancy Focus Group	Lime Court Community Centre	4 th March 2026	9-11am	5
Complaints and Performance Focus Group	Lyndis Walk Holbeach	11 th March 2026	2-4pm	5
Tenant Forum	St Matthews	18 th March 2026	10-12pm	8
Tenant Influence Panel	Sezanne Walk	6 th May 2026	2pm-4.30pm	6



Tenant Feedback	Proposed Policy / Code of Conduct development areas	Document for inclusion
<p><i>Officers polite and helpful but need to “close the loop.”</i></p> <p><i>Tenants want staff to take ownership, not pass on and not follow through.</i></p>	<p>Add a communication standard to require proactive updates and ownership until completion.</p> <p>Add a “close the loop” section to include confirming completion, explaining actions, and ensuring the tenant knows next steps and contacts.</p> <p>Add “case ownership” rule: first officer keeps responsibility until confirmed handover.</p>	<p>Competence and Conduct Policy</p>
<p><i>Call transfers fail – tenant left ringing out.</i></p>	<p>Add guidance that Customer Contact or Transferring Officer must stay on the line until the transfer is successful or arrange a callback.</p>	<p>Competence and Conduct Policy</p>
<p><i>Face to face support appreciated especially if delivering a negative response.</i></p>	<p>Add requirement to offer face-to-face support for complex/vulnerable cases in the code of conduct.</p>	<p>Housing Code of Conduct</p>
<p><i>No notification when repairs staff are coming.</i></p>	<p>Requirement included for advance notice of visits and same day notification of delays/changes.</p>	<p>Housing Code of Conduct</p>
<p><i>Need standard response times.</i></p>	<p>Minimum expectations added of 5 working days where no timeframe has been agreed</p>	<p>Competence and Conduct Policy</p>
<p><i>Confusion about what is an emergency repair.</i></p>	<p>Clear definitions of emergency, urgent, and routine repairs and that their timescales are in the Repairs Policy however inclusion in the Code of Conduct that Employees and Operatives must tell tenants the repair category (Emergency/Urgent/Routine) and the expected timescales as set out in the Council’s Repairs Policy</p>	<p>Housing Code of Conduct</p>
<p><i>Safeguarding awareness seen in operatives was valued.</i></p>	<p>Reinforce safeguarding competence in repairs team requirements as part of the competence framework</p>	<p>Skills work</p>



<i>Repairs staff sometimes undertake tasks beyond what they were planned to carry out.</i>	Explicit boundaries: staff must not perform work outside job order unless additional work is both within their competency and approved by the Councils repairs team or manager before proceeding	Housing Code of Conduct
<i>Customer Contact praised for asking “anything else we can help with?”</i>	This has been added as a standard expectation across all housing-facing roles.	Housing Code of Conduct
<i>We would like staff to park considerately when visiting properties</i>	Section included on vehicle conduct and parking	Housing Code of Conduct
<i>We think the code of conduct should include reference to</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not taking personal phone calls</i> • <i>Do not swear</i> 	Section included on appropriate conduct in the code of conduct which covers this areas.	Housing Code of Conduct

Tenant Influence Panel – 6th May 2026

The Tenant Influence Panel was asked to review the Competence and Conduct Policy and the Code of Conduct. Overall, tenants were supportive of both documents and felt that they were fair and transparent from a tenant perspective. When asked specifically about fairness, panel members agreed that the expectations set out for officers were reasonable and proportionate.

The panel also confirmed that tenant engagement on the development of these documents had been meaningful. They recognised that genuine efforts had been made to attend a wide variety of tenant groups, hear from different voices, and use a range of other data and insight to inform the final content.

When discussing the Code of Conduct in more detail, panel members requested clearer information about what the “no access procedure” involves. In response to this feedback, an explanation of the no access procedure has been added to provide greater transparency for tenants.

Panel members discussed access arrangements. They understood that officers may be working nearby and seek to attend earlier than planned for efficiency, which the Panel supported. However, they noted that, for some tenants, a courtesy phone call in advance would be preferable to an unannounced visit where possible, this was included.



There was also discussion about officer identification. Panel members asked what Council ID cards look like, and the Tenant Engagement Team took an action to follow this up.

Finally, while feedback on both the policy and the code was very positive, tenants described the documents as “very good but dry”. The panel strongly recommended the development of an easy-read guide to the Code of Conduct, similar to the existing easy-read guide for the Contractor Code of Conduct, to make expectations clearer and more accessible to tenants.

Working with Tenants to Define “What Good Looks Like” in Practice

Tenant engagement has begun to inform the design of the supporting approach to training and development. Through qualitative engagement, tenants have shared what they feel good conduct and professionalism look like in practice, particularly in tenant-facing roles.

This work is being taken forward on a phased basis. Initial engagement has focused on key tenant facing roles such as Housing Officers and Repairs, where tenant interaction is most frequent, this has been carried out in the Tenancy Focus Group initially. Feedback gathered to date has helped to identify priority areas for development and has informed the early design of role specific competence requirements.

Tenant feedback is being used to:

- Shape the behavioural standards set out in the Housing Code of Conduct.
- Inform priority training themes
- Support the ongoing development of a skills and training matrix, which is primarily focused on skills, knowledge and experience and will continue to be expanded across the service over time.

This approach recognises that defining “what good looks like” across all roles cannot be achieved in a single phase and that behavioural expectations and training arrangements need to be embedded and reviewed over time. Engagement with tenants will continue as training approaches are rolled out and refined, ensuring that tenant insight remains central to how competence and conduct expectations are applied across the Housing Landlord Service.

Member Consultation

Informal Member briefings

An All-Member Briefing was hosted on 25th March 2026 to inform Members about the Competence and Conduct Standard and the work being undertaken by the team to engage tenants and to provide them with meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise the development of the Policy and the Code of Conduct.

Members supportive of the engagement being carried out.

Policy Development Panel - 2nd June 2026



Staff Engagement

SLT – 30th March 2026.

Senior Officers were supportive of the Policy development, recognising the importance of compliance with Regulatory expectations and ongoing workforce development.

Staff sessions

Feedback on the Policy and Code of Conduct was gathered through a series of targeted engagement activities with staff, including briefings with Housing Team Leaders and Managers, an all-staff email consultation, drop-in sessions, and a dedicated workshop with Repairs Operatives.

Colleagues provided constructive feedback on clarity, practicality, and consistency, with a particular focus on communication timeframes, safeguarding (including DBS requirements), lone working, conflict management, use of plain English and translation services, escalation routes, social media engagement, and operational items such as access to homes, scheduling of appointments, and vehicle parking when on-site.

In response, the Policy and Code were refined to clarify service-specific timeframes, strengthen provisions around contact details, communication preferences, safeguarding, notice requirements for home visits, and tenant engagement, and to ensure language was consistent and non-contradictory. Where feedback related to operational practice or training needs such as lone working arrangements, recording notes consistently, and how staff are supported to meet behavioural expectations these have been identified for inclusion in supporting procedures, training, and rollout activity. Overall, the changes made reflect staff feedback and aim to ensure the documents are clear, practical, and supportive of high-quality, tenant-focused service delivery.

Corporate Readers Panel (including Unions)

The draft Policy and Code was sent to the Readers Panel on 31st March 2026 for 2 weeks. No feedback was received, suggesting the documents were clear and raised no immediate issues.

Union engagement

A suite of HR policies including the draft Policy and Code was shared with the three recognised unions (GMB, Unison and Unite) on 31st March 2026 for 2 weeks. No feedback was received during the review period, indicating that there were no concerns with the proposals.