Employee Code of Conduct

		Author:	AD of People Services
Scope:	Housing Solutions employees Contractors and suppliers and all others acting on behalf of Housing Solutions Employees and committee members of organisations funded by Housing Solutions or partner organisations	Approved by:	Executive Team
Legislation:	Employment Rights Act 1996 Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 Equality Act 2010 Regulator of Social Housing Competence & Conduct Standard	Date of approval:	30 September 2026
		Date of next review:	30 September 2029
Related Policies:	Leave & Absence Policy Absence Management Policy Health & Safety Policy Vehicle and Travel Policy Company Vehicle Policy IT Acceptable Use Policy Anti-fraud, Theft & Bribery Policy Probity Policy Data Protection Policy Disciplinary Policy Whistleblowing Policy Dignity at Work Policy Employment Safeguarding Policy Professional Boundaries Policy Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Workstyle Policy		

1. Policy Statement

1.1. The Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour, professionalism and conduct expected of all employees. It supports Housing Solutions' values, promotes a positive and inclusive working environment, and helps ensure that colleagues deliver high-quality services for residents.

1.2. The aim of the Code of Conduct is to provide clear expectations of how employees are expected to conduct themselves at work and when representing Housing Solutions. It supports employees in carrying out their roles responsibly, ethically and professionally.

1.3. Through the Code of Conduct, Housing Solutions will:

- Ensure that the expected standards of acceptable conduct, behaviour and professionalism are clearly communicated to all employees
- Support employees and their managers to understand and apply these expectations consistently.
- Promote a culture of accountability, integrity, respect, inclusion and continuous learning;
- Provide a framework to consider the seriousness of any misconduct, allowing fair and consistent application of the Disciplinary Policy.

1.4. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves periodically with the Code of Conduct and complying with it at all times.

1.5. Housing Solutions will provide employees with appropriate induction, training, learning and development opportunities, support and information to enable them to meet the expectations set out within the Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

2.1. The Code of Conduct applies to all Housing Solutions' employees, agency staff, contractors, suppliers, and all others acting on Housing Solutions' behalf together with employees and committee members of organisations funded by Housing Solutions and employees and principals of partner organisations.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Board	• The Board is accountable for ensuring that Housing Solutions complies with all relevant regulatory and legal standards. It provides strategic oversight in accordance with Board-approved frameworks and objectives, safeguarding the organisation's integrity and reputation. • The Board sets the strategic direction and ensures that policies reflect the organisation's values, statutory obligations, and risk management principles
Executive Team	• The Executive Team is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring its effective implementation

	across the organisation. This includes providing leadership and direction, ensuring sufficient resources to support compliance, reviewing performance regularly and reporting outcomes to the Board.
Assistant Director of People Services	• Responsible for implementing the policy within their area of responsibility, monitoring compliance with the policy's requirements and reporting performance and escalating significant issues to the Executive Team. • Review and update of the Code of Conduct as required. • Ensures compliance with the policy and legal framework.
Managers	• Ensure this policy is applied fairly and consistently. • Set a positive personal example of behaviour and professionalism. • Ensure standards in the Code of Conduct are communicated to and understood by colleagues. • Provide guidance and clarification where required • Adress concerns regarding conduct promptly and appropriately. • Take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity where there is non-compliance with the standards set out in this policy
Employees	• Familiarise themselves with and comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and all relevant Housing Solutions policies and procedures. • Take personal responsibility for their conduct and behaviour when undertaking work on behalf of Housing Solutions. • Seek guidance from their manager or People Services where they are unsure of the standards, requirements or expectations that apply to them. • Promptly report any actual or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct, policies, legal requirements or regulatory obligations.
People Services	• Ensure new members of staff are made aware of this policy • Provide support to managers in the application of this policy

4. Definitions

Misconduct - Behaviour which falls below the standards expected by the Code of Conduct, Housing Solutions' policies or the requirements of an employee's role.

Gross Misconduct - Misconduct which is so serious in itself, or has such serious consequences that may justify dismissal without notice. Examples are provided within this policy.

5. Legislation

5.1. Housing Solutions will ensure legal compliance with employment legislation and will ensure future compliance following any change to legislation.

5.2. Housing Solutions has a duty of care to its staff when they are at work under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

6. Our Values and Professional Standards

6.1. At Housing Solutions, our values of Ownership, Innovation, Teamwork and Inclusion define how we work together, serve residents and make decisions.

6.2. These values are the foundation of our professional standards and reflect the principles of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Professional Standards and the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard.

6.3. Our values incorporate the core principles of professionalism expected within the housing sector:

Housing Solutions Value	Professional Standards We Demonstrate
Ownership	Acting with integrity, accountability and professionalism, taking responsibility for our actions and delivering on our commitments.
Innovation	Maintaining and developing our skills and knowledge, embracing learning, continuous improvement and new ways of working.
Teamwork	Working collaboratively, sharing knowledge and building positive relationships with residents, colleagues and partners.
Inclusion	Treating everyone with dignity and respect, valuing diversity and creating an environment where everyone can participate and thrive.

6.4. Through these values, we demonstrate the behaviours, skills, knowledge and professional judgement required to deliver high quality services, maintain public trust and confidence, and meet the standards expected of housing professionals. The requirements set out in the Employee Code of Conduct support and reinforce those expectations.

7. Professional Behaviour Expectations

7.1. Housing Solutions expects employees to demonstrate professional behaviours consistent with our Values & Behavioural Framework, the CIH Professional Standards and the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence & Conduct Standard.

7.2. The Values & Behavioural Framework supports employees in understanding the behaviours expected under each of Housing Solutions' values by providing examples of positive and negative behaviours at three levels of seniority: colleagues, managers and senior leaders. The framework acts as a guide and is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

7.3. Employees are expected to:

- Act with honesty, integrity and professionalism.
- Treat residents, colleagues, contractors and partners with dignity and respect.

- Take responsibility for their actions and decisions.
- Make fair, objective and ethical decisions and challenge poor practice where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively and contribute positively to team success.
- Maintain the skills, knowledge and competence required for their role.
- Be open to learning, feedback and continuous improvement.
- Speak up about concerns, poor practice or risks to residents.
- Consider the impact of their decisions on residents and communities and act in residents' best interests while maintaining professional boundaries.
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- Behave in a way that maintains public confidence in Housing Solutions and the housing profession.

7.4. In addition to the expectations placed on all employees, managers and senior leaders are expected to create and maintain a positive culture that reflects Housing Solutions' values and professional standards. They should:

- Lead by example and demonstrate the behaviours expected of others.
- Promote professionalism, integrity and accountability.
- Support colleagues' learning, development and ongoing competence.
- Foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and able to contribute.
- Encourage constructive challenge and speaking up.
- Take responsibility for addressing conduct, performance and wellbeing concerns at the earliest opportunity.

7.5. Senior leaders are also expected to demonstrate the competencies set out within the Leadership Team Competency Framework, recognising their responsibility to set the tone, culture and standards across the organisation.

8. Conduct Expectations

8.1. The following sections describe the conduct expected of all employees whilst undertaking work on behalf of Housing Solutions. They establish the minimum standards that employees must meet and support Housing Solutions' values, professional standards and regulatory obligations. These requirements help us maintain a safe, professional and inclusive working environment, deliver high quality services to residents and communities, and protect the reputation of Housing Solutions.

8.2. As an overarching expectation, employees must comply with the terms and conditions of their employment and with all Housing Solutions policies and procedures.

9. Performance

9.1. Employees are expected to perform the duties and requirements as detailed in the job description and person specification for their role and by reasonable instruction from their line manager.

9.2. Employees are expected to perform their work to the best of their ability and in accordance with Housing Solutions' performance management and learning

frameworks, including:

- Where performance falls short of the required standard, employees are expected to work with their manager, complying with any performance improvement plans, to improve performance to the required standard.
- Employees must play an active part in Housing Solutions performance management and appraisal processes
- Employees must attend mandatory learning and development activities and any role-specific training , unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Managers and employees should regularly review learning and development needs to ensure employees have the skills, knowledge and competence required to perform their role effectively.
- Employees are expected to actively engage with learning and development opportunities and continually develop and maintain their professional knowledge and skills.

9.3. Employees must be able and fit to carry out their duties and must not work under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or substances that may impact their ability to perform their duties.

10. Professional Integrity and Disclosure

10.1. Employees must disclose information, which is relevant to their capability, capacity, and suitability to carry out the duties and responsibilities for which they are employed. In order to safeguard both the employee and Housing Solutions, an employee must immediately inform their manager in writing if, during their employment with Housing Solutions, they are subject to any of the following which it would be reasonable to understand may impact upon their role, professional standing or the reputation of Housing Solutions:

a) Advised that they are under investigation for a criminal act (including road traffic offences)
b) Arrested in connection with a criminal act
c) Notified that criminal charges are being considered against them
d) In receipt of a summons to appear before a Court of Law for an alleged offence
e) Given a police caution
f) Found guilty and convicted of any offence

10.2. In all cases, a failure to disclose relevant information or the deliberate withholding of such information can amount to a breach of trust and confidence and may lead to disciplinary action.

10.3. Serious misconduct or criminal offences committed during or outside working hours, which bring the employee or Housing Solutions into disrepute, will be subject to disciplinary action, under the Disciplinary Policy and may result in dismissal.

11. Attendance and Timekeeping

11.1. Employees must be available for work during the hours stated in their terms and conditions of employment or any subsequent variation. Employees are expected

to start and finish work at the times stated in their conditions of employment unless prior approval has been given by their line manager for occasional deviations from their contractual hours.

11.2. Employees who wish to make a temporary or permanent change to their contractual working hours should do so through the Flexible Working Policy and process and must continue to work to existing contractual hours and pattern until the start date of any change that has been agreed through the process.

11.3. Employees must be on authorised absence if they are not at work. In order for absence to be considered authorised, employees must comply with the Leave & Absence Policy and the sickness reporting procedure outlined in the Absence Management Policy.

11.4. Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee does not attend work and neither obtained the required approval for the absence nor complied with the relevant notification of reporting requirements set out within Housing Solutions' policies and procedures.

11.5. Unauthorised absence, or absence without leave 'AWOL' can result in Line Management following the AWOL process as outlined in the Absence Management Policy.

12. Health & Safety

12.1. Employees are required to comply with Housing Solutions' Health & Safety Policy and all health and safety guidance and procedures as detailed on the Health & Safety page of the intranet. All employees have a duty of care and must not act willfully or intentionally in a manner liable to place residents, colleagues or themselves at risk. Employees are responsible for ensuring their own health and safety and that of others.

12.2. If an employee has any concerns about the health, safety, security or wellbeing of their self, another individual or a group of individuals connected with Housing Solutions they must report this immediately through their line manager, the H&S competent person or the Assistant Director of People Services .

12.3. In accordance with the Health Act 2006, Housing Solutions does not permit smoking in the workplace, either on Company premises (except in the designated areas), or in Company vehicles. This prohibition extends to the use of e- cigarettes or similar devices

12.4. Employees that drive on company business must comply with the mandatory health and safety checks on their driving licence and where applicable their private vehicles, including provision of documentation to allow their driving licence, car insurance, MOT and vehicle road tax status to be checked.

13. Use of Facilities and Equipment

13.1. Employees may only use Housing Solutions' equipment and premises for work related purposes unless prior permission from the relevant director has been

obtained in advance.

13.2. Employees must familiarise themselves and comply with the IT Acceptable Use Policy which outlines the acceptable use of technology within work and private use of technology outside of work hours.

13.3. Employees must act in accordance with the Vehicle and Travel Policy and Company Vehicle Policy, which outline the required standards for driving company vehicles and for employees driving their own vehicle on company business.

14. Fraud, Theft and Bribery

14.1. Fraud is committed where a person acts in a manner described below to gain for themselves or another, or to cause or expose another to a risk of loss:

- Making or intending to make a false representation
- Failing to disclose information where there is a legal duty to do so
- Dishonestly abusing their position

14.2. Theft is committed when taking something without the owner's permission and assuming the right to property belonging to the owner.

14.3. Bribery is inducement by an action which is illegal, unethical or a breach of trust. Inducements can take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards or other privileges. Bribery is defined as giving or receiving a financial or other advantage in connection with the improper performance of a position of trust. Also included within this definition of bribery is seeking financial inducement and offering financial inducement.

14.4. All employees are expected to comply with the Anti-Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy.

15. Probity and Professional Boundaries

15.1. All employees must comply with the Probity Policy and Professional Boundaries Policy to ensure that they are acting in a transparent, fair and professional manner, and that all actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest are declared/controls put in place.

15.2. Employees must declare any perceived, potential or actual conflict between personal interests and Housing Solutions' interests in the following circumstances:

- Where an employee is a tenant/leaseholder, or they have a personal connection with a tenant/leaseholder or someone applying to be such. In such circumstances employees will not be permitted to work on any aspect of the tenancy.
- Where an employee has a personal connection with a Board member or employee, or someone applying to be such.
- Where an employee has a personal connection with someone who works for a Housing Solutions contractor, consultant, or supplier, or anyone tendering to be as such.

- Where an employee has additional employment including any voluntary work, unpaid work or being self employed, including appointments to the Board of another business.
    - Employees must ensure that hours worked are within those recommended by the European Working Time Directive.
    - Employees are not permitted to undertake secondary employment during working hours, or use Housing Solutions property, equipment or associated documents or communications for any secondary employment, unless approved by the Chief Executive of Housing Solutions.
    - Declarations of secondary employment do not remove the right of Housing Solutions to take action if secondary employment is deemed to be detrimental to the interests or reputation of Housing Solutions, or where it affects work performance.

- Where any other perceived, potential or actual breaches of professional boundaries or conflicts of interest have arisen. For example this may include;
    - Any potential financial interest, whether direct or indirect, in any existing or proposed contract.

15.3. All employees are required to complete and submit an annual declaration of interest.

15.4. Employees are required to immediately update their declaration in between the annual declaration should the information change.

15.5. Employees must not use, or attempt to use, their position to promote personal interests or those of any connected person, business or other organisation for personal gain.

15.6. All gifts and hospitality should be declared as set out in the Probity Policy.

15.7. Employees must not allow any personal relationship with a resident or other customer to influence how they discharge their role and responsibilities and must comply with the standards outlined within the Professional Boundaries policy.

16. Employee Concerns and Whistleblowing

16.1. Housing Solutions does not tolerate any form of malpractice, negligence, criminal activity, danger in health and safety or any attempts to cover these up in the workplace. Employees have an important part to play in reporting any concerns and are expected to cooperate with investigations. Although it is often difficult for employees to report legitimate concerns through fear of victimisation or reprisal, they should be assured that in raising concerns they will be supported. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for more information.

16.2. Employees are expected to take ownership to report concerns about or attempts to conceal serious mismanagement of services, potential fraud, bribery or financial malpractice as defined within the Whistleblowing Policy. Turning a blind eye is not acceptable and will be considered misconduct in its own right.

16.3. Employees must not victimise or disadvantage any person who uses or intends to

use Housing Solutions confidential reporting (Whistleblowing policy) procedures to report actual or alleged wrongdoing.

17. Confidentiality and Data Protection

17.1. Housing solutions and all employees responsible for handling personal data must follow strict protection principles set out in The Data Protection Act 2008 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2021 (UKGDPR) to ensure information is used fairly, lawfully and transparently. Further information on how data is held and accessed can be found in the Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy and Employment Safeguarding Policy.

17.2. Employees must not disclose, without written authority from a Director, any confidential or sensitive business information. This duty continues to apply after employees have left Housing Solutions or changed position. The designated Data Protection Officer should also be advised whenever a request is made to disclose sensitive business information.

18. Respect and Inclusion

18.1. All employees must comply with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy.

18.2. All employees must treat colleagues, residents and any other stakeholders with dignity, courtesy and respect. Bullying, harassment, victimisation, intimidation, discrimination, threatening behaviour and physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

18.3. These expectations apply equally to interactions with colleagues, residents, partner organisations, contractors, suppliers and any other individuals connected with Housing Solutions.Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Displaying materials or using language that others may reasonably find offensive.
- Harassing bullying, intimidating or discriminating against another person.
- Using threatening, aggressive or abusive behaviour.
- Behaving in a way that makes others feel excluded, unwelcome or disrespected.
- Failing to respect an individual's chosen identity.

19. Service Standards

19.1. All employees must be professional, courteous, efficient, and helpful when dealing with residents, employees or other stakeholders and must act impartially and without prejudice at all times.

19.2. Employees must maintain open and regular communication with residents, ensuring they receive timely, accurate and meaningful information, are consulted where appropriate, understand what to expect and when, and are

kept informed of progress, decisions and outcomes.

19.3. Employees are expected to deliver on commitments made to residents.

19.4. Employees are expected to help residents understand who to contact in relation to their enquiry or service and how to access the support they need.

19.5. Employees must be considerate of residents when working in their homes and provide sufficient notice and agreement to visit wherever practicable.

19.6. Employees are expected to keep to agreed appointments, arriving on time or notifying residents as soon as possible if they are delayed or need to rearrange, and be flexible in accommodating residents' needs where reasonably practicable.

19.7. Employees should wear their Housing Solutions ID card at all times when on Housing Solutions business.

19.8. Employees should maintain a professional appearance appropriate to their role, responsibilities and working environment. Where a manager considers an employee's attire or presentation to be unsuitable, they may require the employee to make appropriate adjustments, including changing attire where necessary.

20. Reputation, Media, Publications and Social Media

20.1. Employees must act responsibly and professionally and must not knowingly engage in behaviour likely to bring Housing Solutions, its residents, colleagues or the wider housing profession into disrepute.

20.2. Employees must not make statements on behalf of Housing Solutions, engage with the media, or publish material relating to Housing Solutions without appropriate authority.

20.3. Employees using social media or other public platforms in a personal capacity must not present personal views as those of Housing Solutions, disclose confidential information, or otherwise act in a manner that could damage the reputation of Housing Solutions.

21. Criminal Proceedings

21.1. Housing Solutions will consider the impact of any breach of the Code of Conduct and where this constitutes a criminal offence, a criminal investigation may ensue.

22. Failure to follow the Code of Conduct

22.1. Employees are expected to comply with the standards set out in the Employee Code of Conduct at all times. Where concerns arise regarding an employee's conduct, Housing Solutions will take appropriate action depending on the nature and seriousness of the matter. This may include informal management action, support, coaching or formal action under the Disciplinary Policy.

22.2. Serious breaches of the Employee Code of Conduct, repeated breaches, or a failure to improve following management intervention may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

23. Gross Misconduct

23.1. In general, the following examples of misconduct may be considered gross misconduct depending upon the severity. The list is not exhaustive and other acts of misconduct may be considered serious enough to be gross misconduct.

- Theft/fraud
- Other offences of dishonesty
- Abuse of position to give preferential treatment to people known to the employee
- Assault
- Serious damage/misuse of Housing Solutions' property
- Discrimination/harassment
- Working under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Possession of illegal drugs on Housing Solutions' property
- Gross negligence
- Serious breach of health and safety
- Conviction of a criminal offence that is relevant to the employee's employment
- Conduct that brings Housing Solutions' name into disrepute
- Unauthorised retention of fees/gifts/hospitality
- Failure to comply with an instruction
- Unauthorised employment/private use of employees/organisations used by Housing Solutions
- Breach of confidentiality or serious data breach
- Falsification of documents
- Unauthorised absence from work
- Offering or acceptance of bribes

24. Consumer Standards

24.1. This policy forms part of Housing Solutions' approach to meeting the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the Competence and Conduct Standard. The policy sets out the behaviours, values and professional standards expected of employees so that services are delivered with integrity, professionalism, respect and a focus on resident outcomes.

24.2. Residents have been consulted in the development of this policy and will be engaged in future reviews to help ensure that the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of colleagues support the delivery of high-quality, resident-focused services.

25. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

25.1. Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, and Equality Act 2010.

25.2. All of Housing Solutions' employees are treated equitably, regardless of their age, race, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment, marriageor civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief.

25.3. Housing Solutions is committed to ensuring that all employment related decisions and procedures, including those relating to conduct, capability and performance, are applied fairly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination, bias or prejudice.

25.4. Housing Solutions is committed to ensuring that all employees have a fair opportunity to understand and meet the expectations set out in this Code of Conduct. Where appropriate, supportive measures and reasonable adjustments will be considered to remove barriers and enable employees to perform their role effectively.

26. Confidentiality

26.1. Under the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection 2021 Regulation (UK GDPR), all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
- sensitive organisational information.

26.2. Housing Solutions employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

27. Review

27.1. This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.