Housing Code of Conduct

1. Purpose & Scope

This Code of Conduct sets out the professional standards, behaviours, and expectations required of all individuals delivering social housing services for London Borough Havering. It supplements the corporate Employee Code of Conduct and must be read alongside it.

This Code applies to:

- All permanent, fixed-term, and temporary employees working within Housing Services.
- Agency workers, consultants, and independent contractors.
- Third-party contractors, repair teams, and service partners acting on behalf of LB Havering.

Its purpose is to ensure:

- Customers are listened to, treated with empathy, dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Services are delivered professionally and in line with regulatory expectations.
- Relevant staff possess and maintain the required skills, knowledge, experience, and professional qualifications required for good quality service delivery.
- Tenants have meaningful opportunities to scrutinise and influence this Code.

2. Core Principles and Behaviours expected from staff

All relevant individuals must adhere to and demonstrate the below standards:

- **1. Professionalism**: Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency at all times while maintaining high standards of professional conduct and upholding organisational values in all interactions. Actively maintain professional knowledge, skills and training to meet evolving sector standards.

- **2. Accountability**: Take ownership of decisions, actions, and outcomes. Escalate risks or safety concerns promptly, learn from mistakes, and drive continuous improvement.

- **3. Respect & Fairness**: Behave politely and reasonably with colleagues, residents and members of the public, treating every individual equitably and without discrimination. Proactively identify resident vulnerability and deliver appropriate, supported services while maintaining clear professional boundaries.

- **4. Customer Focus**: Communicate with residents clearly, transparently, and with empathy. Always strive to respond promptly to enquiries, manage expectations and adapt service delivery methods to remove barriers and provide supported pathways for vulnerable residents.

- **5. Safety & Compliance**: Prioritise resident safety and wellbeing by proactively identifying and reporting hazards, risks and safeguarding concerns. Ensure full compliance with duties under Awaab's Law, HHSRS (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) principles and safeguarding frameworks.

- **6. Collaboration**: Work constructively across multi-agency teams, internal departments, and contractor networks to manage risk and deliver seamless outcomes.

- **7. Professional Judgement**: Make evidence-based, balanced decisions using legal, regulatory, and operational knowledge with objectivity and fairness.

- **8. Professional Boundaries & Ethics**: Employees should not allow any personal relationships to influence professional decision making and should declare any such personal relationship or potential conflicts of interests (relationship, financial or other interests) immediately in line with the Council's policies. It is also essential for employees to Comply fully with the Council policies on gifts and hospitality, and declare any gifts or offers promptly in accordance with corporate policy guidance.

- **9. Accessible Communication**: Maintain clear, respectful and professional language in all written and verbal communications while safeguarding personal data and maintaining confidentiality.

- **10. Effective Complaint Handling**: Comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code* and London Borough of Havering's complaints policy and procedures. Recognise complaints early and focus on swift resolution.

- **11. Fair Tenancy Management**: Utilise enforcement tools and anti-social behaviour (ASB) powers proportionately, keeping clear, objective audit trails for all decisions.

3. **Leadership & Manager Expectations**

   Housing Managers, Seniors, Team Leaders and Senior Leaders must:

   - **12. Qualification Requirements**: Hold, or actively work towards, the designated housing management qualifications as required by the Housing Competence & Conduct Standard.

   - **13. Continuous Professional Development**: Actively maintain professional knowledge, skills and qualifications to meet evolving sector standards.

   - **14. Performance & Competence Management**: Monitor staff competence through regular supervision, annual appraisals, and targeted reflective practice.

   - **15. Regulatory Oversight**: Maintain continuous assurance processes to ensure service delivery complies with the Regulator of Social Housing standards.

* Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code: Staff must operate a strict two-stage complaint procedure and eliminate informal or local resolution stages. Follow strict timelines: Staff must acknowledge complaints within 5 working days and provide a full Stage 1 response within 10 working days, followed by a Stage 2 acknowledgment in 5 working days and a response within 20 working days. Ombudsman complaints: staff must adhere to strict, mandated response timescales.