

Housing Code of Practice

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Foreword

At Rotherham Council, Housing Services support people to live well, feel secure and be treated with dignity and respect. Every interaction we have with customers matters and shapes the trust people place in us.

This Code of Practice reflects what customers have told us matters most: being listened to, clear communication, consistency, fairness and knowing we will do what we say we will do. It reinforces our commitment to putting customers at the heart of what we do and working openly, fairly and respectfully in all interactions.

We will work in a way that is respectful, open and accountable, taking time to understand individual circumstances and responding in a professional way. This means using our skills, knowledge and professional judgement to make informed decisions and deliver the right outcomes for customers.

By working to these shared expectations, we will deliver services that are consistent, reliable and centred on the needs of our communities.

Ian Spicer

Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Introduction

Purpose of the Housing Code of Practice

The Housing Code of Practice sets out the professional behaviours expected of all staff delivering housing services at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. It should be read alongside the Council's Code of Conduct and Officer Standards, which remain the foundation for employee conduct and customer service expectations across the organisation. Other relevant codes of conduct applicable to contractors, subcontractors and external service providers delivering housing services on behalf of the Council also continue to apply. This document builds on these standards by setting out what the Council's expectations look like in practice when delivering housing services.

This Code of Practice supports the Council's [Housing Strategy](#) and helps ensure we provide high-quality services that meet the needs of tenants and residents in our communities. Throughout this document, the term **customer** includes tenants, residents, leaseholders, housing applicants and anyone accessing Housing Services.

This document has been developed through engagement with both customers and staff. Their feedback has shaped the expectations set out in this document,

particularly around communication, accountability, consistency and how we treat people in practice.

Applying the standards

Staff are expected to apply these standards in their everyday work, using their professional judgement to respond appropriately to different situations while maintaining a fair and reliable approach.

Managers are responsible for supporting staff to understand and apply these expectations through one-to-one meetings, appraisal discussions, team meetings and ongoing professional development discussions.

The purpose of this code is to support professional practice and provide clarity on expected standards within Housing Services. It does not create separate processes for investigating or managing concerns relating to employee conduct. Concerns relating to service delivery, competence or behaviour will continue to be managed through the Council's existing policies and procedures where appropriate.

Who The Housing Code of Practice Applies To

This Code of Practice applies to all individuals involved in delivering or managing housing services on behalf of Rotherham Council. This includes Council employees, contractors, sub-contractors and other service providers. All individuals are expected to demonstrate the behaviours, values and standards set out in this Code. Compliance with these standards will be supported and monitored through appropriate management, contract, performance and assurance arrangements.

Our Values

This Housing Code of Practice builds on Rotherham Council's core values, which underpin how we work with residents, colleagues and partners. In addition, five housing-specific values further define how we deliver safe, high-quality, and person-centred services. Together, these values guide our behaviours and decision-making in day-to-day practice.

Rotherham Council Values

Caring	'We are inclusive and know our communities' 'We take time to listen and understand what matters' 'We act as 'One Council' with a spirit of togetherness'
Honest	'We are accountable and take ownership of our actions' 'We communicate clearly and openly' 'We reflect and learn from our experiences'

Proud	'We are ambitious in everything we do for our people and place' 'We start with strengths, and what is working well' 'We celebrate Rotherham and act as ambassadors for the borough'
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Housing Services Values

Quality	'We aim to get things right first time and deliver services to a high standard'
Responsibility	'We take responsibility for our actions and follow them through'
Trust	'We build trust by being reliable, consistent and doing what we say we will do'
Fairness	'We act fairly and do the right thing, even when it is difficult'
Open	'We are transparent, approachable, and communicate clearly with customers and colleagues'

These values underpin the themes and professional standards set out in this Practice Framework, which define how housing staff are expected to act in practice.

Themes and Professional Standards

1. Respectful and Ethical Practice
2. Honest, Open and Consistent Communication
3. Responsible and Accountable in Our Actions
4. Safe and Supportive Work Environment
5. Professional Competence and Continuous Improvement

These professional standards are supported by defined behaviours and practical examples, showing how they can be applied in everyday work.

1. Respectful and Ethical Practice

We act with fairness, empathy and respect in all our interactions. We take time to understand people's circumstances, treat everyone as an individual, and respond in a way that is appropriate, inclusive and professional.

As housing professionals committed to respectful and ethical practice, we will:				
Behaviours	Treat everyone with dignity and respect	Listen carefully and take concerns seriously	Understand and respond to individual needs	Act with empathy and professionalism in all situations
Practical application:	In practice, this means: ➤ We will treat people fairly, respectfully and without discrimination. This means applying the same standards consistently while recognising individual circumstances and needs where appropriate. ➤ We will take time to understand each customer's situation and adapt our approach where appropriate. This includes recognising individual needs and making reasonable adjustments where possible. ➤ We will listen carefully and ensure customers feel heard and taken seriously. We will avoid dismissive behaviour and recognise that each issue is important to the individual. ➤ We will act with empathy and recognise the impact housing issues can have on people's lives. This helps us to ensure responses are sensitive and appropriate. ➤ We will identify and act on safeguarding and other welfare concerns. We will pay attention to signs that a person or household may be at risk and take responsibility for reporting concerns through the appropriate channels rather than assuming someone else will act ➤ We will promote mutual respect and set clear boundaries where behaviour is not appropriate. This supports a safe and professional environment for both customers and staff. ➤ We will treat homes and neighbourhoods with care and respect. This includes being considerate when visiting properties or working in communities. ➤ We will be mindful of how our behaviour is perceived as well as what we say. This includes tone, body language and overall professionalism in interactions.			

2. Honest, Open and Consistent Communication

We communicate openly, honestly and consistently, ensuring information is clear, accurate and easy to understand. We take responsibility for setting expectations and supporting customers to understand decisions and next steps.

As housing professionals whose communication is open, honest and consistent, we will:				
Behaviours	Set clear expectations from the outset	Provide clear, consistent and accurate information	Always communicate professionally and respectfully	Ensure customers understand decisions and next steps
Practical application:	In practice, this means: ➤ We will clearly explain what we can and cannot do from the outset. This helps manage expectations and avoids misunderstanding. ➤ We will explain timescales, next steps and possible outcomes as early as possible. This means customers understand what happens next. ➤ We will communicate clearly using straightforward language. This ensures information is easy to understand. ➤ We will check understanding and give customers the opportunity to ask questions. This helps ensure information has been clearly understood, not just delivered. ➤ We will provide consistent information across staff, teams and contractors. This ensures customers receive the same message regardless of who they speak to. ➤ We will explain decisions and the reasons behind them in a transparent way. This helps customers understand outcomes, even when they may not agree ➤ We will introduce ourselves, explain our role and identify ourselves appropriately in all contact. This includes showing identification when visiting and ensuring communication is clearly identifiable, professional and trusted. ➤ We will communicate in a calm, respectful and professional way. This includes using appropriate, solution focused language and avoiding blame, assumptions or reactive responses, particularly in challenging situations.			

3. Responsible and Accountable in our Actions

We take responsibility for our decisions and actions and see issues through. We are open about progress, take ownership when things go wrong, and work to put them right.

As housing professionals who are responsible and accountable, we will:				
Behaviours	Take responsibility for our actions	Follow through on commitments and agreed actions.	Take ownership of cases and take time to see issues through	Act honestly, apologise when things go wrong, and take steps to put them right
Practical application:	In practice, this means: ➤ We will be clear about who is responsible for each case and what will happen next. This ensures customers know who to contact and what to expect at each stage. ➤ We will keep accurate up to date records of communication and agreed actions. This means key information, decisions and next steps are recorded and monitored and actions are followed through. ➤ We will take responsibility for progressing issues and avoid unnecessary handovers between teams. This means helping customers with their enquiry and where a handover is needed, ensuring customers understand the next steps. ➤ We will provide updates at each stage of a case. This keeps customers informed so they don't need to chase for information. ➤ We will let customers know as soon as possible if appointments are delayed, changed or cancelled. This means avoiding situations where customers are left waiting without communication. ➤ We will be open when things go wrong and take steps to put them right. This means acknowledging mistakes, apologising and explaining what will happen next. ➤ We will review decisions where circumstances or new information is provided. This means reconsidering actions where appropriate. ➤ We will explain how customers can raise concerns or complaints. This ensures customers understand their options and feel supported to escalate issues if needed.			

4. Safe and Supportive Work Environment

We create a safe, supportive and professional working environment where people feel respected, valued and able to speak up. We work together to support each other, challenge poor practice and ensure services are delivered safely and effectively.

As housing professionals who promote a supportive work environment, we will:				
Behaviours	Work collaboratively and respectfully with colleagues	Speak up and challenge poor practice where appropriate	Maintain professionalism in all working relationships	Support a positive and constructive working environment
Practical application:	In practice, this means: ➤ We will share information appropriately to support effective service delivery. This includes colleagues having access to accurate and relevant information when needed, while maintaining confidentiality. ➤ We will build respectful and professional working relationships with colleagues, partners and service providers. We will work cooperatively and value different perspectives. ➤ We will raise and address concerns about behaviour appropriately. This means challenging poor practice in a fair and professional way using agreed processes. ➤ We will support a culture where colleagues feel able to ask for help and speak up. We do this by encouraging discussion, shared problem solving and not expecting others to struggle in silence. ➤ We will handle personal and sensitive information carefully and securely. This helps ensure information is managed in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements. ➤ We will learn from mistakes and use them to inform our practice. This includes being open to feedback, reflecting on our actions and taking a constructive, no-blame approach. ➤ We will promote a positive and supportive working environment. This includes supporting colleagues to maintain a healthy work-life balance and creating an environment where staff feel able to learn and improve. ➤ We will prioritise staff safety and set clear professional boundaries. This means taking steps to protect staff from harm and responding appropriately where behaviour towards staff is unacceptable. ➤ Leaders and managers will model expected behaviours and standards. This means leading by example and promoting a positive, respectful culture across teams.			

5. Professional Competence and Continuous Improvement

We will maintain the knowledge and skills needed for our roles and take responsibility for continually developing our practice. This includes, engaging with mandatory learning for professional qualifications, where required. We will apply our learning in our work and use experience, feedback and change to improve the services we deliver.

As housing professionals who aim to uphold and improve professional competence, we will:

Behaviours	Maintain the knowledge and skills required for our role	Take responsibility for our own learning and development	Use professional judgement in decision making	Learn from feedback, outcomes and experience to improve practice
Practical application:	In practice, this means: ➤ We will keep our knowledge and skills up-to-date in line with the requirements of our role. This includes engaging with training, guidance and learning so we can carry out our work effectively. ➤ We will take responsibility for our own learning and development. This means actively seeking opportunities to learn and improve. ➤ We will keep up to date with changes to policies, systems and ways of working. This means adapting how we deliver services, so our practice reflects current requirements. ➤ We will respond positively to changes in services, systems and ways of working. This means adapting our approach, learning new processes and remaining flexible as services develop. ➤ We will apply our knowledge and experience to make informed decisions. This includes considering different options and using professional judgement to respond appropriately to situations. ➤ We will regularly reflect on our performance. This includes using one-to-one meetings, appraisal discussions and feedback to identify what is working well and where improvements are needed. ➤ We will use customer feedback, complaints and outcomes to improve how we work. This means understanding what happened, why, and applying learning to prevent similar issues in future.			

	➤ We will share knowledge and work collaboratively with colleagues. This means supporting others, sharing learning and working together to provide a consistent and joined up service for customers. ➤ We will maintain a professional standard in all aspects of our work. This includes appropriate conduct, communication and presentation in all interactions.
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Monitoring and review

We will use a range of information to understand how well these standards are being applied in practice and to identify opportunities for improvement. This may include customer feedback, complaints, service performance information and other assurance activity. Customers will continue to be given meaningful opportunities to influence, review and scrutinise this Practice Framework and any significant future amendments.

The Housing Code of Practice will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner where significant legislative, regulatory or service changes occur, to ensure it remains relevant, reflects customer expectations and supports continuous improvement.