Professional Standards and Development Framework

Supporting competence, professionalism and continuous improvement

Document Control

Title	**Professional Standards and Development Framework**
Reference	HR10
Policy Owner	Chief Executive
Approved by	Executive Leadership Team
Approved Date	19th October 2026
Review Period	This framework will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required by changes in legislation, regulation or best practice.
Review Due	October 2029.
Policy Reviewing Officer	Corporate and HR Manager
Regulatory References	Regulator of Social Housing Competence and Conduct Standard; Competence and Conduct Standard: Policy Statement.
Policy applies to	All colleagues of Arches Housing.

Revision History

Date	Version	Reviewer	Change
12/10/202	V1.0	Karen Green, Corporate & HR Manager (creator)	New policy.

Consultation	• Tenant consultation took place in July and October 2026 as part of the development of Arches' competence and conduct

	arrangements. Feedback from both sessions directly informed the refreshed The Arches Way values and behaviours and the wider Professional Standards and Development Framework. • Tenants emphasised that competence and conduct are experienced together through reliable outcomes, clear communication, promises being kept, respectful treatment and consistent standards. Their feedback particularly strengthened expectations for contractor accountability and quality, service consistency, consideration of individual circumstances, accessible communication and effective follow-through. • The October session also informed arrangements needed for demonstrating accountability. Suggestions included ensuring adherence to observable service standards and setting clear expectations for contractors, how we use this in learning from complaints and compliments, gathering proportionate before-and-after feedback, supported follow-up for tenants facing communication barriers, and periodic assurance through the Neighbourhood Network.
Distribution	All colleagues Arches Housing website

1. Purpose

1.1. Arches Housing is committed to maintaining a competent, professional and continuously developing workforce that delivers safe, effective and high-quality services to tenants and residents through reliable outcomes, clear communication, respectful treatment and effective follow-through.

1.2. This Framework brings together the policies, processes and supporting arrangements through which Arches Housing sets expectations, develops capability, maintains professional standards and provides assurance regarding workforce competence and conduct.

1.3. This Framework, together with the documents listed in section 11, constitutes Arches Housing's written policy for ensuring that relevant staff have and maintain the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver high-quality services to tenants.

1.4. The Framework supports Arches Housing's responsibilities under the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard and reflects our commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, professionalism and tenant-focused service delivery.

2. Framework objectives:

- Define the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required across the organisation.
- Support the recruitment, induction and ongoing development of capable colleagues.
- Promote continuous learning, reflective practice and professional development.
- Establish clear standards of conduct, professionalism and accountability.

- Support regular assessment of competence and performance.
- Identify and address competence or development gaps.
- Maintain oversight of qualification requirements and mandatory learning.
- Provide assurance to the Executive Leadership Team and Board regarding workforce capability and professional standards.
- Support reliable and consistent outcomes for tenants and residents through clear communication, respectful treatment and effective follow-through.

3. Scope

3.1. This Framework applies to all Arches Housing colleagues. Although particular requirements may apply to relevant staff delivering landlord services within the scope of the Competence and Conduct Standard, the principles of professionalism, competence and continuous development apply across the organisation.

3.2. Support reliable and consistent outcomes for tenants and residents through clear communication, respectful treatment and effective follow-through.

3.3. Arches Housing will maintain an approved record identifying relevant staff, Senior Housing Managers and Senior Housing Executives. Classification will be based on each role's substantive responsibilities rather than job title, with the rationale, qualification requirements, compliance position and applicable timescales recorded.

4. Framework structure

4.1. The Framework operates as one connected system. Each component has a distinct purpose, but together they define expected standards, support development, assess performance and provide assurance.

Component	Primary purpose	What it provides
The Arches Way	Defines expected values, attitudes and behaviours.	The behavioural foundation for how colleagues work with tenants, colleagues, partners and stakeholders, including clear communication, respectful treatment, accountability and effective follow-through.
Competency Model	Defines what competence looks like across roles and levels.	Core and leadership competencies, professional accountability, knowledge domains, experience expectations and proficiency levels.
Learning and Development Policy	Explains how competence is developed and maintained.	Mandatory learning, role-specific development, qualifications, continuing professional development, reflective practice, records and evaluation.

Component	Primary purpose	What it provides
Performance and Capability Policy	Explains how performance and competence are reviewed and supported.	Regular conversations, annual review, development planning, early support, performance improvement and formal capability arrangements.
Role profiles and supporting matrices	Translate framework expectations into role requirements.	Role-specific competency levels, knowledge, qualifications, mandatory learning and professional requirements.

4.2. How the components connect

- Set expectations: The Arches Way, Staff Handbook, role profiles and Competency Model establish expected behaviours, knowledge, skills and accountability.
- Develop capability: induction, learning, qualifications, coaching, workplace experience and reflective practice support colleagues to acquire and maintain competence.
- Review and support: regular one-to-ones and the Annual Review, Reflect and Refresh cycle assess application, tenant and service outcomes, feedback, progress and development needs.
- Address concerns: early support, development actions, performance improvement and capability processes respond where required standards are not being achieved.
- Assure effectiveness: records, management information, service outcomes, tenant feedback, complaints, audit findings and qualification monitoring inform organisational assurance and improvement.

5. Supporting arrangements

5.1. Workforce and development arrangements

- Recruitment, selection, induction and probation arrangements.
- Job descriptions, person specifications and role profiles.
- Learning and Development Matrix.
- Mandatory Learning Schedule.
- Professional qualification and continuing professional development requirements.
- Workforce and succession planning arrangements.

5.2. Professional conduct arrangements

The Arches Way, together with the Staff Handbook and supporting conduct policies and procedures, constitutes Arches Housing's code of conduct for colleagues. These arrangements set the standards of behaviour, integrity, professionalism and accountability expected when colleagues work with tenants, colleagues, partners and stakeholders.

- professional conduct, integrity and accountability;
- confidentiality, information governance and appropriate use of information;
- conflicts of interest, declarations, gifts and hospitality;
- anti-fraud, speaking up and whistleblowing arrangements;
- equality, inclusion, dignity and respect;

- clear, accessible and timely communication, respect for individual circumstances, and effective ownership and follow-through;
- professional boundaries and compliance with organisational policies and procedures.

The code of conduct will be communicated through recruitment, induction, management conversations, learning and performance arrangements. Compliance will be monitored through management oversight, tenant feedback, complaints and compliments, service outcomes, employee relations information and relevant assurance activity, with learning used to reinforce good practice and address recurring concerns.

5.3. Service-provider assurance

Where managing agents, contractors or other providers deliver landlord services on behalf of Arches Housing, appropriate competence and conduct requirements will be incorporated into procurement, appointment and contract-management arrangements. The level of assurance required will reflect the nature and risk of the service.

As applicable, providers will be required to demonstrate suitable competence, qualifications, training, professional standards and conduct arrangements.

Evidence will be recorded and monitored through contract management, service performance, tenant feedback, complaints and other assurance activity. Concerns will be addressed through agreed improvement, escalation and contractual arrangements.

6. Tenant influence and accessibility

6.1. Arches Housing will provide meaningful opportunities for tenants to influence and scrutinise the development, delivery and ongoing review of the code of conduct arrangements within this Framework. This may include consultation through established tenant engagement arrangements and/or targeted feedback and scrutiny activity. This document will be published on our website, together with our The Arches Way document.

6.2. The Framework, code of conduct arrangements and accessible information explaining how Arches Housing ensures the competence and conduct of relevant staff will be made available to tenants through the Arches Housing website and in alternative formats on request.

7. Applying the Framework

- Recruitment and onboarding: competency and behavioural requirements inform recruitment, selection, induction and probation arrangements.
- Day-to-day management: managers use regular conversations to review performance, tenant outcomes, values, behaviours, development and support needs.
- Annual review: colleagues formally reflect on competence, behaviours, achievements, relevant tenant and service feedback, qualifications, development priorities and future needs.

- Learning and development: identified needs are addressed through proportionate development activities and recorded through appropriate planning arrangements.
- Role change or promotion: requirements are reviewed where colleagues move roles or take on materially different responsibilities.
- Performance concerns: expected standards are clarified and appropriate support is provided, with formal capability action used where necessary and proportionate.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Colleagues	• Maintain the competence required for their role. • Demonstrate The Arches Way and comply with relevant policies and professional standards. • Participate in performance, learning and development arrangements. • Complete required learning and qualifications within applicable timescales. • Raise barriers, support needs, risks or concerns promptly.
Managers	• Set clear and reasonable expectations. • Assess and support competence and conduct through regular discussions, relevant tenant and service feedback, and review. • Identify and record learning and development needs. • Monitor mandatory learning, qualifications and agreed development actions. • Address competence, conduct or performance concerns promptly and fairly. • Maintain appropriate records and provide assurance within their area.
Corporate Services Team	• Maintain the core people policies, learning arrangements and supporting records. • Advise managers and colleagues. • Maintain the approved role and qualification mapping for relevant staff, Senior Housing Managers and Senior Housing Executives, including classification rationale, qualification status, evidence and applicable deadlines. • Monitor mandatory learning, qualification requirements and relevant workforce information. • Support evaluation, reporting and organisational improvement.
Executive Leadership Team	• Promote a culture of professionalism, learning and accountability. • Ensure proportionate resources and arrangements are in place. • Ensure meaningful tenant influence and scrutiny is built into the development and review of the Framework and code of conduct arrangements. • Oversee workforce capability, regulatory requirements and organisational risks. • Receive and act on relevant assurance information, including tenant and service feedback, and ensure resulting improvements are communicated appropriately.

Role	Responsibilities
Board	• Oversee the effectiveness of workforce competence and conduct arrangements. • Receive proportionate assurance regarding capability, professional standards and key compliance risks. • Ensure the Framework continues to support safe, effective services and positive tenant outcomes.

9. Monitoring, assurance and continuous improvement

9.1. Arches Housing will maintain proportionate records and management information to assess whether the Framework and supporting arrangements remain effective. Information may include:

- completion of one-to-ones and annual reviews;
- mandatory and role-specific learning completion;
- professional qualification requirements, progress and risks;
- identified development needs and completed development activity;
- performance improvement and capability themes;
- tenant feedback, complaints and compliments, service performance and audit findings;
- contractor and service-provider assurance;
- emerging regulatory, professional or workforce risks.

9.2. Relevant assurance information will be reported to the Executive Leadership Team and Board through the agreed corporate reporting cycle. Reporting will include, as appropriate, qualification compliance and progress, completion of mandatory learning and performance reviews, identified competency or capability risks, service-provider assurance, tenant and service outcomes, and actions required to address gaps. Findings will be used to inform workforce and succession planning, improve learning and development arrangements, strengthen service outcomes and support continuous improvement. Relevant findings and resulting improvements will be communicated to tenants through appropriate engagement and reporting arrangements.

10. Review and document control

10.1. This Framework will be reviewed every three years, or earlier where changes in legislation, regulation, professional standards, organisational structure or service delivery, or material findings from tenant feedback and service outcomes, make this necessary. Supporting policies and arrangements may operate on their own review cycles. However, the Corporate and HR Manager will maintain oversight of the collective framework and ensure that material changes, identified gaps or changes in regulatory requirements are reflected consistently across the relevant documents.

11. Core framework documents

- The Arches Way
- Competency Model
- Learning and Development Policy
- Performance and Capability Policy

- Staff Handbook and supporting conduct policies
- Role profiles and competency matrices
- Learning and Development Matrix and Mandatory Learning Schedule
- Recruitment, selection, induction and probation arrangements
- Contractor assurance, procurement and contract management arrangements