



WANT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A CIH MEMBER?

Working in housing puts professionals in a position of trust in relation to their customers, employers and the public who rely on them to make professional judgements.

CIH has a responsibility to maintain professional standards in the housing industry and to ensure housing professionals are equipped to make effective decisions in challenging situations.

CIH's core values, code of ethics and code of conduct provide a profession-wide shared view of the standards of ethical and professional behaviour that are expected of others working within housing and related sectors.

All CIH members are expected to adhere to these principles.

This leaflet describes how we handle complaints about members.

WHAT SORT OF COMPLAINT AGAINST A MEMBER CAN YOU INVESTIGATE?

We can investigate your complaint if it is about a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing and if it concerns that member's conduct in relation to the standards in the CIH Code of Conduct. We treat all complaints fairly and we don't charge for investigating them.

Sometimes, complaints are about issues that we don't have the powers to deal with - and then you may wish to try other solutions.

WHAT IS THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

Our code of conduct provides members with guidelines that enable them to conduct themselves in a highly professional, appropriate and respectable manner, ultimately improving the reputation of the whole industry. All CIH members have a duty to accept and abide by the code as a condition of their membership.

We wouldn't automatically take disciplinary action against a member if they fall below the standards, but we would look to see whether their actions amounted to unacceptable professional conduct.



ASPECTS OF COMPLAINTS BEYOND CIH REMIT

There are some complaints that we are unable to deal with - though we will always try to give you helpful advice. For example, we can't:

- Deal with complaints about matters that are covered by general law (for example, employment, criminal activity or copyright disputes)
- Give you legal advice about your complaint, or ask a solicitor to act for you
- Deal with complaints about organisations which the members work for, these need to be addressed to the organisation
- Deal with complaints that are currently being investigated as part of a disciplinary process
- Duplicate the provisions of business, employment, health and safety, human rights or discrimination law

OTHER SOLUTIONS

If we are unable to investigate your complaint, you may want to consider whether there are alternative methods for resolving your dispute.

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE SENDING YOU A COMPLAINT?

Before sending us a complaint, you should try to sort out your concerns directly first. This is often the quickest and best way to deal with a complaint or problem.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT MAKING MY COMPLAINT TO YOU?

Please send us details of your complaint in writing - by post. See below for the information we need.

If you find writing difficult, because of a disability for example, you can phone us and we can take a statement: we would then send it to you to check and sign.

INFORMATION WE NEED

When writing to us about a new complaint, please provide:

- your name, address and contact details;
- the name of the individual you are complaining about; and
- the organisation they work for (where available)
- your relationship with the individual (for example client, contractor or employee);
- the specific allegations you are making against the individual;
- the documents or other evidence you have to support your complaint (for example, any contract or agreement, relevant correspondence, and so on)

WHAT ACTION CAN YOU TAKE?

After full investigation, if we find that a member is guilty of unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence, we can impose a penalty. This will depend on how serious we decide the offence is.

WHAT ARE THE SANCTIONS?

Possible sanctions are:

- a formal warning (a reprimand);
- an action plan to address issues identified
- The maximum sanction for a breach of the code is to be removed from the membership

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We have a three-stage process: Initial review, Investigation and Professional Conduct Committee. At each stage, we check whether it is appropriate to go on the next stage.

CIH receives complaint

Complaint is recorded on the complaints register



1. Initial investigation by CIH officer who will:

- inform member of the complaint and seek their views
- establish facts of the situation

Recommend to the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) that the complaint is:

- dismissed
- mediated if possible
- formally referred to the PSC.



2. If a complaint is referred to the PSC, the committee will:

- write to the member advising that the investigation is now being carried out on a formal basis and setting out the nature of the allegation or breach with a request for his or her observations
- give the member a period of two weeks to provide their observations
- in certain circumstances, the member may be invited to attend the meeting at which she or he may be accompanied or represented by a person of his/her choice
- if required, invite the complainant or other persons to discuss the matter.



3. The possible outcomes from an investigation by the PSC are:

- a breach of the code has been demonstrated
- no breach of the code has occurred
- the member's conduct does not breach the code; however it falls short of the accepted standards of professional practice.

In the event of finding that there has been a breach of the Code, CIH reserves the right to give publicity to the breach and to subsequent disciplinary action taken in the interests of CIH and the public.



HOW LONG DOES THE WHOLE PROCESS TAKE?

It can take many months to investigate a complaint, especially if it is complicated or technical.

We will let you know how long each stage is likely to take, and keep you updated of any changes to those timescales.



IS THE PROCESS CONFIDENTIAL?

When we deal with a complaint, we are committed to protecting the confidentiality and reputation of both sides. We make a complaint public only if it reaches a Professional Conduct Committee hearing. We ask that both you and the member have the same respect for confidentiality.



WHAT CAN I DO IF I'M NOT HAPPY WITH YOUR SERVICE?

We are committed to providing a high-quality, professional service to everyone who contacts us. If something goes wrong, please tell us and we will do everything we can to sort out your concerns. You can use our complaints procedure if you remain unhappy with our service: please contact us if you would like a copy.

CONTACT US

Write to us:

**Head of professional standard
The Chartered Institute of Housing,
Octavia House,
Westwood Way,
Coventry,
CV4 8JP**

Visit our webpage: www.cih.org

Call us on: **024 7685 1700**