



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

Code of conduct



Code of conduct

As the professional body for housing, at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), we exist to support individuals from across the globe to create a future in which everyone has a place to call home.

Our organisation is the home of professional standards and professionalism is at the heart of our member-driven organisation. Individuals who are part of our incredible membership network are required to uphold the CIH code of conduct to evidence their professionalism and dedication to the sector, in addition to their commitment to CIH's mission, principles and values.

A complementary [document](#) '*Complaints against CIH members*' sets out the guidelines for concerns about breaches of this code of conduct.

1. Act with integrity and respect

Links to [CIH professional standards](#): Integrity, Ethical and Inclusive

CIH members must:

- Maintain honest, transparent, fair and lawful business activity with employees, employers, organisations, clients, tenants, other professionals and the public
- Uphold an exemplary attitude based on professional integrity, respect, empathy and trust
- Always promote professional principles and values across their organisation and the wider housing profession
- Apply informed, impartial, and professional judgement and ethical decision-making principles in reaching difficult but responsible decisions
- Apply ethical business practices, ensuring that their professional duties and conduct are not compromised or influenced by their personal, political, and financial interests, bias or the undue influence of others
- Always conduct themselves in accordance with the code, upholding the reputation of the profession and CIH, and disclosing any conflicts that arise to the appropriate authority
- Ensure that all services provided by them and their organisation are performed in line with the code and in the best interest of the individuals and wider communities they serve
- Safeguard sensitive, confidential or privileged information entrusted to them as a result of their business activity
- Role model practices that promote equality of opportunity, diversity, collaboration, inclusion and human rights across their organisation and the wider housing profession
- Demonstrate sensitivity for the customs, cultures, perspectives and beliefs of others, valuing, recognising and drawing on these in their professional activity
- Challenge others if they suspect unlawful, inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or unethical behaviours and attitudes that are inconsistent with the values and mission of CIH, the code, the housing profession and with their own professional values and integrity
- Report any breaches of the code to CIH

CIH Code of Conduct: Preventing Harassment and Promoting Respect

Our commitment

CIH is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, which includes sexual harassment, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

CIH's approach to bullying and harassment is one of zero tolerance. Any instance of bullying or harassment or other inappropriate behaviour at work that is likely to cause offence or breach the dignity and respect of CIH colleagues, members, suppliers, customers, tenants or members of the public will be regarded as serious misconduct and is strictly prohibited. Members responsible for such behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action. CIH will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint. Victimisation is a disciplinary offence.

All CIH members are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct in the workplace and all types of professional interactions. This includes a proactive duty to prevent all forms of harassment or unwanted conduct, including sexual harassment in these contexts.

See **Appendix - Preventing Harassment and Promoting Respect** for harassment and unwanted conduct examples, available training, support and reporting mechanisms.

Prevention and Responsibility

All CIH members must:

- Proactively support a safe, inclusive, and respectful working environment, free from harassment and discrimination.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, including by promoting good practice, raising awareness, and intervening where appropriate.
- Adhere to relevant workplace sexual harassment and dignity-at-work policies.
- Comply fully with the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Communications Act 2003 (s.127), the Equality Act 2010 and associated legal duties, including the duty to prevent sexual harassment (as introduced under the Worker Protection Act 2023), the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, the Online Safety Act 2024 and associated legal duties to prevent any form of online harassment.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of:

- Violating a person's dignity; or
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

Unlawful harassment may include:

- Conduct related to a protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Sexual harassment: conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted.
- Unfavourable treatment of someone because they submitted to or rejected harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

Online/digital harassment

All CIH members are expected to use digital technologies, including mobile phones and social media, responsibly and professionally, ensuring that their conduct does not amount to harassment, bullying, intimidation, or misuse of personal or confidential information.

Members must refrain from any digital behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as offensive, intrusive, abusive, discriminatory, or displaying any other form of online abuse, and any conduct damaging to the dignity of others or the reputation of CIH and the housing profession, which may include (but not restricted to) monitoring, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, harassing, threatening, controlling or impersonating another person using the internet or other technology.

Accountability and Reporting

CIH members are expected to:

- Report concerns or incidents of harassment (including online harassment) they witness or are made aware of
- Support individuals who raise complaints in good faith
- Understand that inaction or failure to challenge inappropriate conduct may constitute a breach of this Code.

Scope and Consequences

This Code applies to all professional contexts and interactions: these include (but are not limited to): networking events, meeting clients, customers, third parties or service users; work-related social events; travelling for work, including overnight stays; any online meetings, digital and social media professional interactions; any written or physical formats (e.g. notes, letters, graffiti). Breaches of this Code may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of CIH membership.

2. Maintain professional competence

Links to [CIH professional standards](#): Skilled and Knowledgeable

CIH members must:

- Maintain the highest level of professional competence, ensuring they and their colleagues have the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake their duties both now and in the future
- Seek guidance, advice and support as required and share expertise with others
- Consistently self-assess their competence and development needs, commit to their reflective learning and professional growth, and comply with any CIH requirements and [guidance on continuing professional development](#) and professional practice:

As part of their commitment to uphold the CIH professional standards, all members are expected to undertake at least 20 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) each calendar year (1st January to 31st December) to improve their practice and keep their knowledge and skills up to date. Members are also expected to [log](#) their CPD hours into the CIH portal.

- Pioneer customer service, demonstrate flexibility and adaptability, solve problems creatively and embrace the opportunities presented by change, to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the services provided
- Hold the appropriate levels of insurance for the work and duties they undertake.

3. Be responsible and accountable

Links to [CIH professional standards](#): Leadership and Advocate

CIH members must:

- Recognise and take ownership of their actions and mistakes, learning from them and striving to rectify them
- Recognise the social and environmental impact of their work
- Conduct themselves in a way that upholds the values and reputation of the profession and CIH by driving positive outcomes and maximising the impact they make on the individuals and communities they serve, actively supporting and influencing others to follow suit
- Act as an ambassador for the wider profession by championing, role-modelling and promoting exemplary ethical conduct
- Recognise and value the impact of their behaviour on the broader sector
- Pursue opportunities to embrace innovation and vision
- Enhance the reputation, public pride and sense of community of the housing profession by modelling a clear set of values and social purpose that align with the code and CIH professional standards.



Appendix -Preventing Harassment and Promoting Respect

This Appendix provides harassment and unwanted conduct examples, available training, support and reporting mechanisms. A full guidance can be found in the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) [Sexual harassment and harassment at work: technical guidance](#).

What is harassment or unlawful 'unwanted conduct'?

This is a type of behaviour that is 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited' by a worker, that can be related to **1) a protected characteristic, 2) to sexual harassment or 3) unfavourable treatment of someone because they submitted to or rejected harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.**

These types of behaviour can take the form of (this is a non-exhaustive list):

- Spoken or written words
- Banter
- Posts, contact and any interaction on social media, or using the internet or any other technology such as mobile phones
- Imagery
- Graffiti
- Physical gestures
- Facial expressions
- Mimicry
- Jokes or pranks
- Acts affecting a person's surroundings
- Aggression
- Physical behaviour towards a person or their property


1. Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic is broad, and can include:

a) an unwanted conduct related to the worker's own protected characteristic (a.1), or which is generally offensive to others but, in relation to a particular worker, the conduct is unwanted due to that worker's protected characteristic (a.2).

b) an unwanted conduct connected to a protected characteristic, even if the worker does not have the relevant protected characteristic (b.1.) or the recipient is perceived as having a protected characteristic (b.2) by others.

Examples (EHRC)

- a. 1) If a worker with a hearing impairment is verbally abused because he wears a hearing aid, this could amount to harassment related to disability.
- a. 2) During a training session attended by both male and female workers, a male trainer directs several sexist remarks to the group as a whole. A female worker finds the comments offensive and humiliating to her as a woman. She would be able to make a claim for harassment related to sex, even though the remarks were not specifically directed at her.
- b. 1) A worker has a son who is a trans man. His work colleagues make jokes about his son's transition. The worker could have a claim for harassment related to gender reassignment.
- b. 2) A Sikh worker wears a turban to work. His manager wrongly assumes he is Muslim and subjects him to Islamophobic abuse. The worker could have a claim for harassment related to religion or belief because of his manager's perception of his religion.



2. Sexual harassment is a type of unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature; conduct 'of a sexual nature' includes a wide range of behaviour (this is a non-exhaustive list), such as:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying sexually explicit material or that some people may find offensive (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet/social media)
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless)
- Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- Sexual comments or jokes
- Suggestive looks, staring or leering, sexual gestures
- Making promises in return for sexual favours

3. Unfavourable treatment of someone because they submitted to or rejected harassment related to sex or gender reassignment is another type of unwanted conduct which can be of a sexual nature, related to sex, or related to gender reassignment

Examples (EHRC)

A female worker has a brief sexual relationship with her supervisor. The worker tells her supervisor that she thinks it was a mistake and does not want the relationship to continue. The next day, the supervisor grabs the worker's bottom, saying 'Come on, stop playing hard to get'. The worker responds to the supervisor's behaviour by saying, 'Get off me, I'm not playing hard to get!' After that, the supervisor starts to make things more difficult for the worker, giving her more work to do than others and being more critical of her work. The supervisor is treating the worker less favourably because she rejected his unwanted conduct.

Accountability and Reporting

For anyone affected by any form of sexual harassment, and/ or online harassment either if you are a victim, someone who's witnessed sexual harassment or someone accused of sexual harassment, specialist help, and support is available.

In an emergency

- Dial 999 for the police
- Contact the nearest hospital accident and emergency (A&E) department

If it is not an emergency:

- Call NHS 111 or the police on 101
- To report a crime online:
 - [Report a crime online in England and Wales](#)
 - [Report a crime online in Scotland](#)





General support and guidance

1. To understand your rights and options as employee you can contact the following:

- For employment law or workplace advice, contact the Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) [helpline](#)
- Citizens Advice is an independent organisation specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with legal and other problems.

For England and Wales: [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#)

For Scotland: [Citizen's Advice Scotland](#)

For Northern Ireland: [Advice Northern Ireland](#)

- Contact your employee assistance programme provided by own organisation
- Contact your Trade Union if affiliated

2. For advice and assistance on equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service [helpline](#)

3. For free expert and confidential advice on how best to raise concerns and protection as a whistle-blower contact [Protect](#).

4. For protection from online stalking and harassment visit the [Police UK website](#). Contact [The Cyber Helpline](#) for help for victims of cybercrime and online harm, or contact the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) for advice on improving your security online.

Reporting a breach of the CIH Code of Conduct

[CIH's professional standards](#), [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 required to adhere to these principles and are expected to report any concerns or incidents of harassment they witness or are made aware of. Professional conduct of members is overseen by the CIH professional standards committee.

Click [here](#) for full information and contact details.

Training

Specialised training is widely available for all forms of harassment awareness and prevention.

As an example, Acas offers a series of unacceptable workplace behaviours events, that cover essential HR and employment law topics, as well as business and management skill development, both online and in-person.





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