

Complaints against CIH members



Working in housing places professionals in a position of trust with customers, employers and the public, who rely on them to make sound professional judgements. CIH is responsible for upholding professional standards and ensuring members are equipped to make effective decisions. [CIH's Professional Standards, Code of Ethics](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) set out the expected behaviours for those working in housing and related sectors, which all members must follow.

Professional conduct of members is overseen by the CIH Professional Standards Committee.

Principles

The CIH Professional Standards Committee is committed to upholding high professional standards while supporting members to learn, improve and remain within the profession wherever appropriate.

In carrying out its functions, the Committee will ensure that all decisions are:

- **Fair and proportionate** – considering the circumstances of each case and the severity of the conduct identified
- **Consistent and transparent** – applying clear, evidence-based decision-making processes
- **Focused on maintaining public confidence** in the profession and the integrity of CIH
- **Supportive of professional development and remediation** – recognising that, where appropriate, members should be supported to address concerns and improve their practice
- **Directed toward maintaining membership wherever possible** – using proportionate interventions such as guidance, training, supervision, or conditions in place of exclusion, unless the seriousness of the matter requires otherwise

The Committee will seek, where appropriate, to resolve concerns at the earliest stage through constructive and proportionate measures, including advice, mediation, and supported improvement, before progressing to formal or restrictive outcomes.

Exclusion from membership (including suspension or termination) will be used only where necessary to protect the public, maintain professional standards, and uphold confidence in CIH.

The Professional Standards Committee can:

Undertake investigations into members where a breach of the CIH Code of Conduct is in the public domain

For example, if a CIH member is:

- Convicted of a criminal offence
- Found guilty of fraudulent activity or malpractice
- Removed from their employment/role due to unlawful, inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or unethical behaviour
- The subject of media coverage following their breach of the code of conduct.

Investigate complaints against members in relation to a breach of the CIH Code of Conduct from another CIH member or member of the public

For example, if a CIH member breaches the principles and any of its sub-items listed in the [CIH code of conduct](#).

1. Act with integrity and respect
2. Maintain professional competence
3. Be responsible and accountable.

The Professional Standards Committee cannot investigate complaints about:

- Individuals who are not CIH members
- Organisations or employers which CIH members are employed by
- Housing providers, landlords, or housing associations
- Local authorities or housing services
- Tenancy disputes or service complaints (for example repairs, allocations, or evictions)
- Recruitment or job application decisions made by housing organisations
- Matters covered by general law (employment legislation, criminal activity, GDPR breaches, etc)
- Complaints which are currently being investigated as part of a disciplinary process by the member's employer. Other organisations that might assist a complainant in these circumstances where the Professional Standards Committee will not investigate:

Service provided	Organisation	Contact details
Help, advice and information about public services in England and Wales	GOV.UK	https://www.gov.uk/
Confidential, free advice for anyone who needs employment law or workplace advice	Acas	https://www.acas.org.uk
Free, independent and impartial service for complaints about housing organisations, and dispute resolution involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities)	Housing Ombudsman Service	https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/
Free expert and confidential advice on how best to raise concerns and protection as a whistle-blower	Protect	https://protect-advice.org.uk/



Process for submitting a complaint

Before submitting a complaint, we would recommend you try to resolve your concerns directly first. This can be the quickest and best way to deal with a complaint or problem.

If your complaint does meet the criteria set out above, please follow these steps before submitting a complaint with CIH:

Step 1: Check you have evidence

At CIH, membership is considered on an individual basis. You must be able to evidence a direct interaction with the member in question, where their conduct breaches the CIH Code of Conduct or falls short of its principles.

You must submit evidence of your complaint against an individual current CIH member: evidence is information that supports your complaint and demonstrates that the facts are true and can support your complaint; the evidence must be relevant to the complaint, and please ensure these are well organised (for instance, in chronological order).

Essential evidence to gather and submit with your complaint:

- Documentation: such as receipts, invoices, contracts, the outcome of a complaint process (example from the Housing Ombudsman Service)
- Correspondence: such as emails, letters, phone call records (including names, dates, and times).
- Visual/audio evidence: such as photographs, videos, screenshots.

Please note: We are unable to assist with complaints against organisations: these should be addressed through the organisation's complaints process. We will not be able to assist if you are unable to provide evidence. Personal accounts of an issue cannot be admitted as evidence.

Step 2: Send us your complaint

Being involved in a complaint can be a frustrating process, however, we do expect you to engage with us in a way that does not hamper our ability to carry out our work effectively and efficiently. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any threats of harm or harassment towards our staff members. However, if you do need to make a complaint to CIH about a CIH member, please send us:

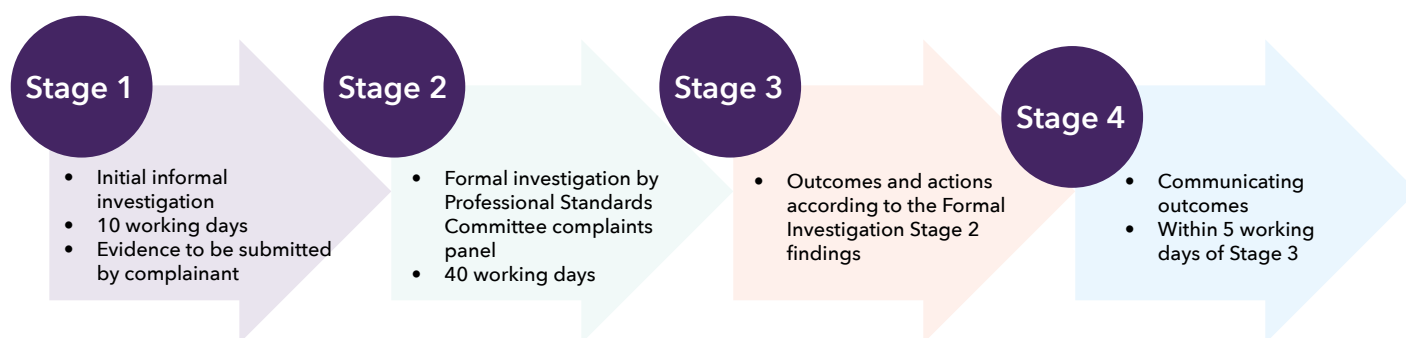
- Name and contact details of complainant
- Name of the individual the complaint refers to
- Your relationship to the individual (colleague, client, contractor, etc)
- The specific allegations you are making against the individual (including reference to the specific criteria within the code of conduct to which this refers)
- Evidence to support your complaint including details of any communication to date with the member the complaint is against.
- Any malicious complaints are subject to investigation as a breach of the code of conduct and disciplinary action.

Submit your complaint about a CIH member

The quickest and easiest way to submit your complaint is to use our [online form](#).



What happens after you submit a complaint



Stage 1 - Initial informal investigation by CIH Professional Standards Team

- We will inform the member in question that a complaint has been made against them, providing the details, to seek their views informally and establish the facts of the situation
- Within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint, a course of action is recommended to the Professional Standards Committee: no case to answer if the complaint is too trivial / no evidence has been submitted by the complainant, mediation or formal referral to the Professional Standards Committee
- Professional Standards Team provides a written update of the outcome of the informal investigation and next steps (if any) both to the complainant and the member.

Stage 2 - Formal investigation by Professional Standards Committee complaints panel

- Professional Standards Team informs the member in question of the move to formal investigation - setting out the nature of the allegation, identifying specific code of conduct criteria that may have been breached and requesting the member's observations to present to the Professional Standards Committee complaints panel
- Member provides a written response within 10 working days (or can request an oral hearing, accompanied / represented by a person of their choosing). The member must provide their views via a form (sent by CIH) or request the oral hearing to CIH within 10 working days. The investigation will continue its course even if the form and comments have not been received or an oral hearing has not been requested
- Professional standards committee complaints panel carries out full investigation.

Timings: 40 working days

Stage 3 - Outcomes, actions and timings according to Stage 2 - Formal investigation stage findings

If no breach of the CIH Code of Conduct has occurred

The member's conduct has not breached the CIH Code of Conduct; however, it falls short of CIH's acceptable standards of professional practice



PSC provides written confirmation of the outcome including guidance to address the issues identified to the complainant, the member and the CIH Governing Board, **no further action is taken**



Move to Stage 4

If breach of the CIH Code of Conduct has been demonstrated, and according to the severity and impact of the findings the following actions and timings apply:

Outcome A

A member is issued with a formal warning to rectify their conduct.



PSC provides written confirmation of the outcome including a **formal warning** issued to the member, to address the issues identified.

Timings: 5 working days



Move to Stage 4

Outcome B

The Stage 2 Formal Investigation PSC Panel proposes the member's **suspension** from CIH membership

Outcome C

The Stage 2 Formal Investigation PSC Panel proposes the member's **resignation** from CIH membership

- **21 days' notice** is given to the member and the PSC members to attend a meeting to discuss the proposal of suspension / termination of CIH membership
- The **grounds** for the suspension / termination of membership are provided prior to the meeting both to the member and PSC members
 - The member is given the **opportunity to present their defence** either in writing or orally themselves or by Counsel or Solicitor or agent in this meeting, and will be able to cross-examine any witnesses brought against them in this meeting if applicable.

The resolution to suspend or terminate membership will be considered **ratified** when three-fourths of the PSC members present and voting at this meeting agree with the outcome.

Move to Stage 4

If a member is **suspended from CIH membership** as a result:

- The suspension is for a maximum of two years
- At the end of the suspension period the member needs to re-apply for CIH membership. A separate process for member readmission exists and will be shared with the member when the suspension applies
- During the suspension period, none of the rights of membership can be exercised by the suspended member, such as use of CIH designation letters
- CIH reserves the right to request resignation of membership during this suspension period.

If a member is required to resign their CIH membership as a result:

- The resignation must take place within **seven days** from the date of the communication
- If the resignation fails to take place, CIH shall remove the member's name from the register of members and membership will be considered terminated.



Stage 4 - Communication of outcomes

- Within 5 working days of Stage 3, the chair of the Professional Standards Committee reports the ratified decision to the CIH Governing Board
- The Professional Standards Committee Chair also communicates the outcome of the investigation to the complainant and the member concerned.

Appeals

Members who have been found to have breached the CIH Code of Conduct have the right to lodge an appeal based on the following specific circumstances:

- You have new facts or evidence that were not available to you during the investigation stage, and which may be relevant for the original decision; or
- You are challenging the facts or evidence on which the Professional Standards Committee relied when making their decision, as inaccurate

Please note, we will not be able to review the professional standards committee's decision simply because you disagree with the decision made on the original evidence presented.

The appeal must be lodged in writing within two weeks of receiving notification of the outcome of the complaint, attaching the new facts or evidence, explaining how these should change the original decision. Appeals will be considered by nominated members of the CIH Governing Board, the outcome of this investigation will be communicated within 60 working days. Should it take longer due to the complexity of the case, this will be communicated to the member.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, when we deal with a complaint, we are committed to protecting the confidentiality and reputation of both sides as far as possible. We disclose a complaint only if it reaches a professional standards committee hearing, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. We ask that both you and the member have the same respect for confidentiality.

Public interest

In the event of finding that there has been a breach of the code of conduct, CIH reserves the right to give publicity to the breach, and any subsequent disciplinary actions, in the interests of CIH and the public, always in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Support for members

Being involved in a complaint can be very difficult; for further support you can reach out to:

- Citizens Advice is an independent organisation specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with legal, debt, consumer, housing and other problems
 - For England and Wales: Citizen's Advice Bureau
 - For Scotland: Citizen's Advice Scotland
 - For Northern Ireland: Citizen's Advice Northern Ireland
 - Employee assistance programme provided by your own organisation
 - Trade Union if affiliated.
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Complaints about CIH 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.