



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Awarding
organisation

Qualification specification

CIH Level 3 Certificate in Providing Homelessness Services

Introduction

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the independent voice for housing and the home of professional standards. CIH is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation.

The CIH Awarding Organisation (AO) provides nationally recognised housing qualifications, regulated by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Scotland Accreditation, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment Regulation (CCEA Regulation) and Qualifications Wales (QW). We are dedicated to providing the highest quality, relevant and up-to-date qualifications for aspiring professionals in the sector.

The purpose of the qualification specification is to provide the user with information about the units which make up this qualification, the qualification structure, the assessment methods and quality assurance requirements associated with the qualification.

The qualification reference number is 610/1451/5.
The operational start date is 12 September 2022.
The CIH scheme code is 3H18.

Contact us:

For any queries relating to the qualification specification e-mail
awarding.organisation@cih.org .

Table of Contents

About the qualification	3
Qualification structure	5
Delivering the qualification	6
Assessment	9
External quality assurance	11
 Units	
Homelessness services and prevention	12
Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness	13
Professional practice skills for housing	14
Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living.....	15
 Exemptions	 16
Annex 1	17

Date	Version	Summary of Changes
March 2024	0324	Information on student membership removed.
September 2024	0924	Information on quality assurance process updated. Information on other relevant documents updated. Phone number updated in footer. Contact email updated. Assessment method information updated. Guidance on staffing updated.
November 2024	1124	Reference to CCEA updated to CCEA Regulation.
June 2025	0625	CCEA Regulation accreditation added to page 3 NOS mapping added in Annex 1
August 2026	2608	Updated references to SQA Accreditation to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation. Replaced reference to the centre handbook to the policies and guidance documents Corrected unit title in Exemptions table.

About the qualification

The qualification is a level 3 vocationally related qualification for the housing sector, regulated by Ofqual and accredited by CCEA Regulation.

The objective of this qualification is to provide practitioners with the knowledge and understanding required to support people experiencing homelessness. The qualification explores core areas of homelessness.

The qualification aims to

- Develop the skills and knowledge for providing homelessness services.
- Enable learners to develop approaches within their organisations to achieve successful outcomes for their clients.

The qualification is suitable for learners

- Working or resident in the UK.
- Who work supporting people experiencing homelessness and want to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Who already have a level 2 qualification and/or experience of working in housing or homelessness.

Entry requirements

CIH AO does not set entry requirements. CIH AO recommends that, in order to pursue achievement of the qualification, the learner will.

Have the potential and opportunity to gain the qualification.

Be working in the housing or homelessness sector.

Have completed a qualification at level 2.

Further details of the level that the learner needs to be able to achieve are provided in the section on level 3 descriptors.

Progression routes

The CIH Level 3 Certificate Providing Homelessness Services may be all that the employer and employee need to assure themselves that the learner has achieved the knowledge and skills to support their job role.

However the learner may wish to progress onto further study:

- To widen their knowledge of housing by completing the CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing.
- At level 4 – if the learner has extensive housing experience or supervisory/management experience and has previously studied at level 3 or 4, they may be able to progress to the CIH Level 4 Certificate in Housing.

Learners who successfully complete the qualification will be eligible to apply for 'certified practitioner' membership of CIH.

Level 3 descriptors

The level 3 descriptors indicate the level that a learner must be working at to achieve the qualification. They are not to be used as marking criteria but may be used as an initial assessment tool to determine the level of learners.

Knowledge descriptor (the holder...)	Skills descriptor (the holder can...)
Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.	Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.
Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.	Use appropriate investigation to inform actions.
Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work.	Review how effective methods and actions have been.
Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	

For a comparison of qualification levels across the UK see <https://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/qualifications-can-cross-boundaries-aug-23.pdf>

Qualification structure

Qualification title: CIH Level 3 Certificate in Providing Homelessness Services.

Learners must achieve 4 mandatory units.

The recommended guided learning hours for the qualification are 105. CIH AO expects that centres may deliver the qualification in more or less time according to the plan they have approved by CIH AO prior to the start of the course. The units may be delivered in any order. The total qualification time will be 140 hours.

The qualification is not graded, learners may achieve pass / fail.

The qualification contains the following mandatory units.

Unit title	Unit number	Level	Page
Homelessness services and prevention	M/650/4143	3	12
Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness	R/650/4144	3	13
Professional practice skills for housing	J/615/0849	3	14
Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living	T/650/4145	3	15

Delivering the qualification

Approval to deliver the qualification

CIH AO centres must be approved by CIH AO to deliver the qualification. Delivery must not commence, and learner registrations will not be accepted until this process is complete.

Registering learners and fees

Prior to the delivery of the qualification, you must register each learner with CIH AO. A fee is payable for each learner. The list of fees is available on our website at the following link: www.cih.org/education/qualifications/deliver-our-qualifications. For more information on terms of payment please refer to our invoicing policy.

Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity considerations were made during the development of this qualification to promote access and minimise bias. It is the centres' responsibility to ensure that equality and diversity considerations are made as part of the delivery and assessment of this qualification.

CIH AO would expect equality and diversity to be integrated into the delivery process for every unit even where there are no specific assessment criteria for equality and diversity.

Contextualisation of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

CIH AO expects centres to contextualise the delivery and assessment of units according to the local and sectoral circumstances of the group of learners they are delivering to. For example, a question relating to law would be applied to the law of the country in which the group of learners operate.

Staff occupational competency requirements

Assessments for CIH qualifications are designed (subject to review) and implemented by approved centre staff. It is the responsibility of the approved centre to establish and maintain a suitably experienced and qualified staffing base.

While there is an expectation that, in most cases, staff are equipped with the experience and qualifications indicative of their role, a degree of flexibility can be permitted where the centre can demonstrate the requirements across the staffing base more broadly, indicating that sufficient support and oversight can be applied as needed. This approach may be implemented where staff are studying towards additional qualifications.

Sector Experience Requirements (all staff roles)

All centre staff roles (Tutor, Assessor, IQA) must satisfy at least one of the following requirements:

A recognised Housing, or Housing-related qualification at level 3 or above, or;
 Enrolment and completion of a recognised Housing or Housing-related qualification level 3 or above within an agreed time period, or;
 Minimum 2-years' experience of working in a Housing or Housing-related organisation at Officer-level or above, or;
 Professional-level membership of a recognised Housing professional body.

Indicative Role-Specific Requirements

Role*	Indicative Responsibilities	Indicative Requirements
Tutor	Delivery of programme content Interpretation of unit assessment criteria Facilitating learning Lesson planning Learner support and feedback	A recognised L3 Teaching qualification, e.g., L3 Award in Education and Training (or equivalent PTLLS) or 12 months' teaching experience
Assessor	Design and development of assessment materials Evaluating learner achievement against learning outcomes and assessment criteria Learner support and feedback	A recognised L3 Assessor qualification (part of the Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance qualifications framework), e.g. L3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement (or equivalent A1 Award / D32/D33 Units)
IQA	Management and oversight of IQA strategy Sampling assessor judgements to ensure accuracy and consistency Observation of teaching Monitoring assessment practices Assessor support and feedback Coordinating / overseeing standardisation activity Sharing best practice	A recognised L4 IQA qualification, e.g., L4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (or equivalent V1 Internal Verifier Award / D34)

*It is understood that, in many cases, centre staff will undertake more than one role, e.g., Tutor and Assessor. Note that an IQA must not be involved in the delivery or assessment of any qualification / unit they review.

Further details on current teaching and assessing qualifications can be found on the websites of the appropriate UK qualifications regulators for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Trainee staff

Trainee Tutors, Assessors and IQAs must complete a relevant qualification within one year of commencing in the role. Any trainee staff should be subject to increased internal sampling and supervision until the role requirements are fully satisfied.

Continued Professional Development

All centre staff must keep an ongoing accurate record of any CPD activities in the Housing or Housing-related sector, as well as any activity relating to assessment and IQA. Records of CPD activities may be requested at any time.

Assessment

Centres must refer to the CIH AO assessment policies and guidance documents prior to developing their courses and associated assessments.

The purpose of assessment is to provide a consistent and valid judgement that learners have met the standard required to achieve the qualification. The assessment criteria contained in each unit indicate the evidence learners will need to produce to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes.

All assessment for the qualification is devised by the centre, marked by the centre and then must be internally quality assured (by the centre) and externally quality assured (by the CIH AO).

Assessment principles

In devising and delivering assessments the following principles must be followed:

- **Validity** – An assessment is valid if it is clear and unambiguous ‘does what it says on the tin’; if it is fit for purpose and that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses.
- **Reliability** – An assessment is reliable if its results are not influenced by chance, the assessment process generates outcomes which would be replicated were the assessment repeated.
- **Comparability** – Assessment outcomes that are comparable in standards between assessments within a qualification, between similar qualifications, with other awarding organisations, and over time.
- **Manageability** – The assessment is easily managed, and the management process is one which places reasonable demands on centres and learners. Reasonableness will be based on the scale of the assessment process balanced by the usefulness of the outcomes.
- **Minimise bias** - is about ensuring that an assessment does not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for learners who share a common attribute (and) is related to fairness to all learners and statutory equality duties.

Centre devised assessments

The CIH AO’s approach to the assessment of qualifications is to enable centres to devise the assessments. This is to allow for appropriate assessment that reflects the unique learning experience and local circumstances of specific groups of learners.

Centres are expected to create assessment strategies that directly meet the needs of their learner groups and take account of the requirements of local employers.

Assessment methods

CIH AO encourage the use of a range of assessment methods to be included in your assessment strategy and associated assessment briefs, providing that they meet the assessment principles outlined above, and are appropriate to the assessment criteria. Suitable assessment methods could include:

- Coursework
- Portfolio of evidence
- Task based assessments
- E-assessment
- Demonstration/ assignment
- Presentation
- Professional discussion/ interview.

Guidance on the use of assessment methods can be found in the CIH AO assessment policies and guidance documents. If you have additional or innovative assessment methods that you would like to employ, please contact us for further advice.

Special considerations and reasonable adjustments

CIH AO requires centres to be compliant with the CIH AO special considerations and reasonable adjustments policy.

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes. The centre is required to implement the adjustments to assessment and to notify CIH AO of this.

A special consideration may be given to a learner following a scheduled assessment, for example.

The learner is present for the assessment but may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which arose at or near the time of assessment.

The learner misses part of the assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

If the centre approves/rejects a special consideration (such as a small post assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner or an adjustment to the assessment submission date) it must retain evidence of its decision for scrutiny by the CIH AO.

External quality assurance

As an Awarding Organisation, CIH must ensure that all programme delivery, assessment, and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) practices undertaken by approved Centres is subject to external scrutiny to verify that reliable, consistent and compliant practices are in place.

All approved CIH centres are subject to a range of External Quality Assurance (EQA) processes and procedures, including an annual quality assurance audit, ongoing assessment sampling, and regular review of the conditions of Centre Approval.

CIH's EQA strategy is designed to be responsive to centre-risk characteristics, and to variations in centre delivery models and qualification size and level.

Specific details about how EQA processes are applied to each centre will be communicated by the CIH Quality Assurance Team.

For further information, please consult the CIH AO quality assurance policies and guidance documents or contact the QA Team at the following address:

quality.assurance@cih.org

Other documents of relevance

CIH AO have a number of policies, and other guidance documents that your centre must be familiar with alongside this qualification specification to support the design, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of CIH AO qualifications.

These documents can be found in our centre administration system Parnassus.

If you require a login or support to access Parnassus contact

awarding.organisation@cih.org.

Centres seeking approval by CIH AO can gain access to these documents on request where needed to support with the approval process, by contacting

awarding.organisation@cih.org.

Homelessness services and prevention

Unit level:	3
Unit reference number:	M/650/4143
CIH AO reference number:	H3047
Unit status:	Mandatory
Credit value:	4
GLH:	26

Unit purpose/aim

The unit aims to provide the learner with knowledge of how people can become homeless, the services which are available to support those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and how homelessness may be prevented.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1. Understand the key factors that can contribute to people becoming homeless.	1.1 Identify the personal/individual factors that can contribute to people becoming homeless. 1.2 Describe the structural factors that contribute to levels of homelessness.
2. Understand the statutory framework for the provision of services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	2.1 Outline the legislation relating to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 2.2 Identify the role of the courts and case law in relation to homelessness. 2.3 Explain the statutory responsibilities of local authorities to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 2.4 Describe the other responsibilities of local authorities to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
3. Know about the accommodation types and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	3.1 Describe the suitability of accommodation types that are available for people experiencing homelessness. 3.2 Summarise services that are available for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
4. Understand how homelessness may be prevented.	4.1 Summarise the services, support and other measures organisations use to prevent homelessness. 4.2 Explain the role of partnership working and safeguarding in the prevention of homelessness.

Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness

Unit level:	3
Unit reference number:	R/650/4144
CIH AO reference number:	H3048
Unit status:	Mandatory
Credit value:	3
GLH:	20

Unit purpose/aim

The unit is about engagement of customers in the service/s provided. The unit aims to provide the learner with knowledge of the reasons for and tools to enable engagement, and to enable them to plan for engagement of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It will cover the spectrum of engagement from communication through to co-creation and co-production.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1. Understand the importance of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness.	1.1 Summarise any legal or regulatory requirements for engaging people with lived experience of homelessness. 1.2 Explain the benefits of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness to both the organisation and the individual.
2. Understand the opportunities for engaging people with lived experience of homelessness.	2.1 Describe the spectrum of ways engagement can be achieved. 2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of engagement.
3. Understand how to apply engagement of people with lived experience of homelessness in a specific context.	3.1 Examine the effect of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness in a specific context. 3.2 Develop a plan for engaging people with lived experience of homelessness.

Professional practice skills for housing

Unit level:	3
Unit reference number:	J/615/0849
CIH AO reference number:	H3008
Unit status:	Mandatory
Credit value:	4
GLH:	26

Unit purpose/aim

The unit aims to provide learners with the professional skills required to practice in housing.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1. Understand the key skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the housing professional.	1.1 Evaluate a range of key skills, knowledge and behaviours that a housing professional requires.
2. Understand ethics in the context of professional practice in housing.	2.1 Explain what 'professionalism' means in a housing context. 2.2 Explain the role of ethics in housing practice. 2.3 Describe how you apply ethics in own professional practice.
3. Understand equality, diversity and inclusion in the context of professional practice in housing.	3.1 Explain the role of equality, diversity and inclusion in housing practice. 3.2 Describe how you apply equality and diversity in own professional practice.
4. Be able to assess own professional performance and development.	4.1 Reflect on own professional practice skills. 4.2 Discuss the role of feedback in improving performance. 4.3 Develop a professional development plan to meet current and future challenges.

Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living

Unit level:	3
Unit reference number:	H3049
CIH AO reference number:	T/650/4145
Unit status:	Mandatory
Credit value:	3
GLH:	20

Unit purpose/aim

The unit aims to provide the learner with an understanding of the role of the practitioner and the values and principles which underpin the provision of support services for independent living.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1. Understand the values and principles that underpin support services for independent living.	1.1 Identify the key principles and values that underpin support services for independent living. 1.2 Identify different approaches to homelessness support. 1.3 Explain professional boundaries in the context of homelessness support.
2. Understand the role of the practitioner in supporting identified needs, goals and aspirations of individuals.	2.1 Explain the role of the practitioner in providing information, advice and guidance. 2.2 Explain the role of the practitioner in supporting the social and development needs of individuals. 2.3 Explain the role of the practitioner in helping people to move and settle into new environments.
3. Understand the role of the practitioner in safeguarding individuals.	3.1 Explain the role of the practitioner in identifying, assessing and acting on risk of danger, harm or abuse. 3.2 Summarise organisational procedures for safeguarding individuals.

Exemptions

The following units are deemed to be allowed as exemption from the achievement of certain units of this qualification because they cover at least 80% of the assessment criteria. This is to support transition and to avoid the unnecessary burden of duplication of learning while upholding the validity of the qualification.

Unit title	Equivalence/exemption
Homelessness services and prevention M/650/4143	Homelessness services and prevention H/615/0809
Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness R/650/4144	Involving housing service users H/615/0812
Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living T/650/4145	Role of the support worker for independent living F/615/0851

Annex 1

Link to National Occupational Standards. The below table is designed to give an indication of how the qualification links to the NOS for housing.

The linkages shown are neither exhaustive, nor conclusive, as in some cases it will depend on what is taught as part of the course, and to what depth.

For more information on NOS see: <https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/en>.

NOS Title	NOS URN	Unit	Assessment Criteria
Match the requirements of customers with available accommodation	INSHOU06	Homelessness services and prevention	3.1 Describe the suitability of accommodation types that are available for people experiencing homelessness.
Support tenants and residents in contributing to decision making at housing governance groups	INSHOU13	Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness	2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of engagement. 3.1 Examine the effect of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness in a specific context.
Support the involvement of tenants and residents in the local community	INSHOU14	Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness	1.2 Explain the benefits of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness to both the organisation and the individual. 2.1 Describe the spectrum of ways engagement can be achieved. 3.2 Develop a plan for engaging people with lived experience of homelessness.
Provide housing advice and guidance to customers	INSHOU22	Professional practice skills for housing	3.1 Explain the role of equality, diversity and inclusion in housing practice. 3.2 Describe how you apply equality and diversity in own professional practice.
		Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living	1.4 Explain the role of the practitioner in providing information, advice and guidance.
Assist customers to identify and access personal development opportunities	INSHOU26	Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living	1.5 Explain the role of the practitioner in supporting the social and development needs of individuals.

NOS Title	NOS URN	Unit	Assessment Criteria
Assess and act on the risk of danger, harm or abuse	INSHOU33	Homelessness services and prevention	4.2 Explain the role of partnership working and safeguarding in the prevention of homelessness.
		Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living	3.1 Explain the role of the practitioner in identifying, assessing and acting on risk of danger, harm or abuse. 3.2 Summarise organisational procedures for safeguarding individuals.
Provide support to customers to reduce the risk of homelessness	INSHOU36	Homelessness services and prevention	1.1 Identify the personal/individual factors that can contribute to people becoming homeless. 1.2 Describe the structural factors that contribute to levels of homelessness. 2.1 Outline the legislation relating to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 2.2 Identify the role of the courts and case law in relation to homelessness. 2.3 Explain the statutory responsibilities of local authorities to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 2.4 Describe the other responsibilities of local authorities to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 3.2 Summarise services that are available for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 4.1 Summarise the services, support and other measures organisations use to prevent homelessness.
		Engaging people with lived experience of homelessness	1.1 Summarise any legal or regulatory requirements for engaging people with lived experience of homelessness.
		Role of the practitioner in supporting independent living	1.1 Identify the key principles and values that underpin support services for independent living. 1.2 Identify different approaches to homelessness support. 1.3 Explain professional boundaries in the context of homelessness support. 1.6 Explain the role of the practitioner in helping people to move and settle into new environments.
Identify and implement change to improve housing services	INSHOU54	Professional practice skills for housing	4.2 Discuss the role of feedback in improving performance.

Copyright notice

This document and its content is copyright of © CIH 2020. All rights reserved.

Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than the following:

You may print or download to a local hard disk extracts for your personal, educational and non-commercial use only

You may not, except with our express written permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it in any other site or other form of electronic retrieval system.