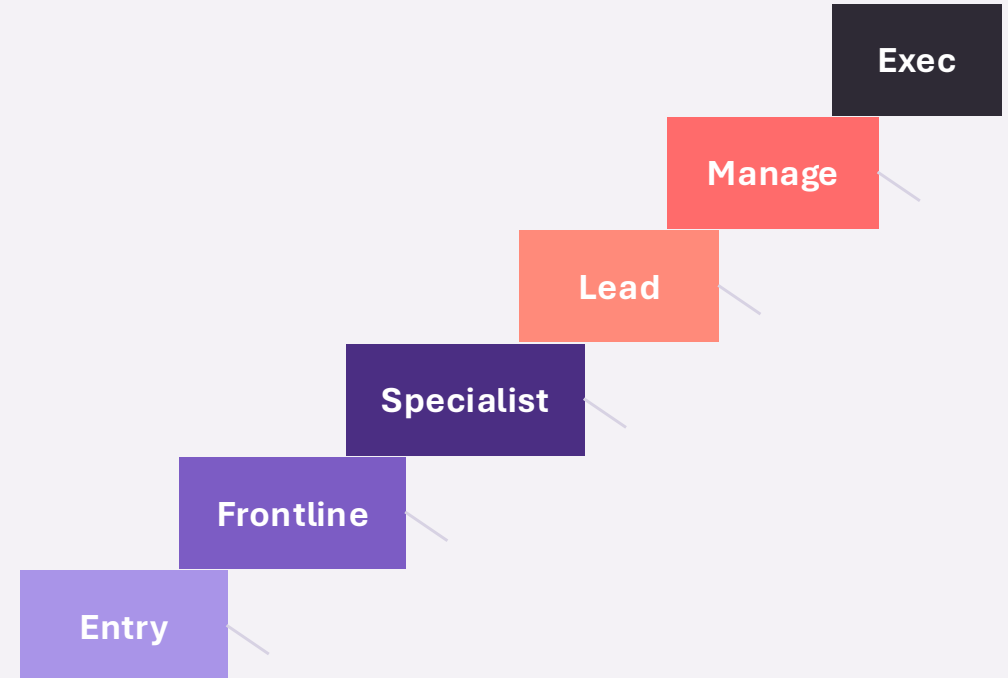


Your career in social housing







Routes in, progression options, qualifications and CPD — for anyone considering a career in the sector.

Open routes



The progression route at a glance

The same ladder supports generalist housing careers and specialist routes: build housing knowledge early, add service expertise, then progress into people, budget and strategic leadership.

01 	02 	03 	04 	05 	06 
Entry / foundation	Frontline practitioner	Specialist / senior officer	Team leader	Manager / head	Director / executive
Apprentice Admin / customer adviser Housing assistant	Housing / tenancy officer Income / lettings officer Support worker	ASB, allocations, income Leasehold, supported housing Policy / service improvement	Coach frontline staff Manage caseload quality Own local performance	Service manager Head of housing / assets Budget + risk owner	Director of housing Director of assets CEO / executive team
Functional skills CIH Level 2 L2 apprenticeship	CIH Level 3 L3 apprenticeship Safeguarding + tenancy law	CIH Level 3–4 Specialist short courses Project skills	CIH Level 4 L4 apprenticeship ILM / CMI L3–5	CIH Level 4–5 Compliance, governance CMI / project mgmt	CIH Level 5 Chartered route CMI L7 / MBA / board

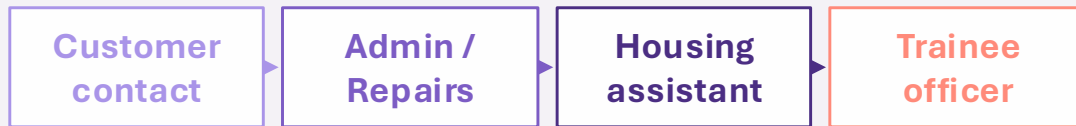
Progression principle: formal qualification + role experience + CPD evidence, with specialist learning added for each route.



Entry level: create two clean routes in

Design entry routes so people can join from school, career change, community volunteering or customer service backgrounds — without requiring housing experience on day one.

A. Direct entry roles



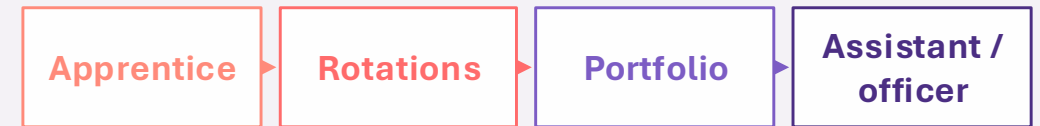
Typical roles

Customer service adviser, repairs scheduler, housing admin assistant, tenancy sustainment assistant, community engagement assistant.

Qualifications to attach

Functional Skills / GCSEs as needed; CIH Level 2 Certificate in Housing Practice; customer service or business administration qualification.

B. Earn-and-learn roles



Typical roles

Housing and property management assistant apprentice; customer services apprentice; business administration apprentice in a housing team.

Qualifications to attach

Level 2 Housing & Property Management Assistant apprenticeship; CIH Level 2; data protection, complaints handling and personal safety essentials.



Routes in: not everyone starts from zero

Widening access means clean entry routes for new starters — and conversion pathways for people who already bring qualifications, lived experience or transferable professional skills.

For people with quals / experience

- 01 Professional or technical qualifications**
Surveying, finance, HR, data, compliance or care can transfer into specialist housing roles.

- 02 Transferable frontline experience**
Customer service, community, support or enforcement maps to tenancy, income and engagement.

- 03 Lived / local insight**
Resident involvement or volunteering can become paid routes with mentoring and CPD.

bridge
learning

For providers widening access

- 01 Recognise what they already bring**
Recruit for capabilities and evidence — not just previous housing job titles.

- 02 Add housing-specific fluency**
Bridge housing law, regulation, tenant voice, safeguarding and complaints.

- 03 Offer earn-while-you-convert routes**
Apprenticeships, secondments, shadowing and CIH modules help experienced entrants convert.

Route principle Prior learning + transferable skills + bridge housing knowledge = confident entry into social housing.



Frontline practitioner: broaden before specialising

This is where most housing careers become portable. Build a common core across tenancy, lettings, income, repairs liaison, neighbourhoods and support.

Neighbourhoods

Estate standards
ASB triage
Resident engagement

Income

Rent accounts
Financial inclusion
Arrears prevention

Attach qualifications

CIH Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice · Level 3 Housing & Property Management apprenticeship · safeguarding · tenancy law · complaints handling · trauma-informed practice

Housing / Tenancy Officer

Core role: sustain tenancies, resolve issues, coordinate services and build tenant trust.

Lettings

Allocations
Void turnaround
Tenancy sign-up

Homelessness / support

Housing options
Safeguarding
Multi-agency work

Specialist routes: choose a branch, keep the ladder open



People can progress horizontally into specialist expertise before stepping up into leadership. Each branch should have a clear role target and qualification bundle.

01

Tenancy & neighbourhoods

Senior housing officer
ASB case officer
Neighbourhood coordinator

CIH L3-4
ASB / mediation
Community engagement

02

Income & financial inclusion

Income officer
Money advice liaison
Debt prevention lead

CIH L3-4
Welfare benefits
Debt advice awareness

03

Lettings & allocations

Allocations officer
Voids coordinator
Home ownership assistant

CIH L3-4
Allocations law
Data / equality impact

04

Supported housing

Support worker
Scheme coordinator
Tenancy sustainment lead

CIH L3-4
Safeguarding
Mental health first aid

05

Policy & improvement

Service improvement officer
Resident insight analyst
Complaints lead

CIH L4
Project management
Customer insight / data

Progression rule

Senior officer roles should evidence case complexity, policy application, tenant outcomes and coaching before moving to team leadership.



Assets & property: a parallel professional pathway

Not every senior housing career starts in tenancy management. Repairs, assets, compliance and building safety need their own route — with housing context built in.

Entry	Repairs administrator Scheduler / call handler	Customer service or business admin · CIH Level 2
Practitioner	Repairs officer Maintenance coordinator	CIH Level 3 Housing Practice or maintenance/asset module · H&S basics
Technical specialist	Surveyor Building safety / compliance officer Asset data analyst	HNC/HND/BSc built environment · RICS/CIOB route · IOSH/NEBOSH as relevant
Manager	Repairs manager Asset strategy manager Compliance manager	CIH Level 4–5 · project management · procurement and contract management
Director / executive	Director of Assets Director of Property Services	CIH Level 5 / Chartered route · strategic asset management · board governance

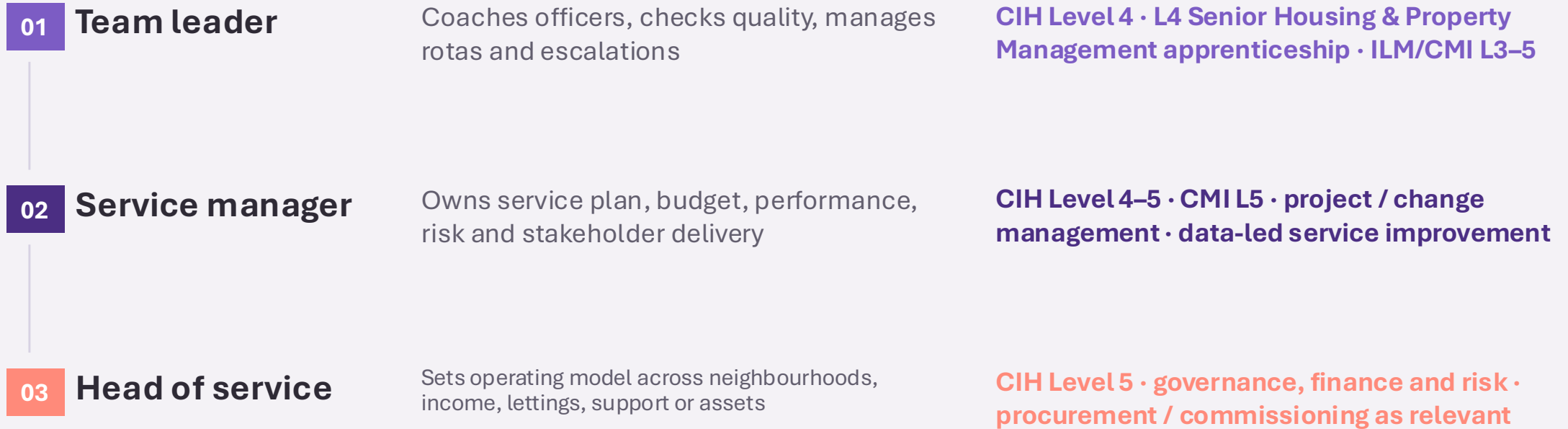
Bridge requirement

Technical leaders still need tenant, regulation and housing management knowledge — not only construction expertise.



Leadership spine: from team lead to head of service

The progression test changes: from “can I handle cases?” to “can I build a service that consistently delivers safe, respectful outcomes?”.



England compliance note Senior housing managers and executives delivering housing management services should hold, or be working towards, the relevant approved housing management qualification; commonly Level 4 for senior managers and Level 5 for executives.



Executive level: six routes into strategic leadership

Executive readiness means combining service depth with corporate judgement: regulation, finance, governance, tenant voice, risk and partnership leadership.

Housing operations

Director of Housing Chief Operating Officer

CIH L5 / Chartered
Regulation + complaints
Tenant engagement

Customer & communities

Director of Customer Director of Communities

CIH L5
EDI + inclusion
Service design

Assets & safety

Director of Assets Property Services Director

CIH L5 + technical route
Building safety
Strategic asset mgmt

Development & growth

Director of Development Growth / partnerships lead

Planning / development
RICS / project finance
Risk + viability

Corporate services

Finance / People / Digital Governance director

Accountancy / HR / IT
CMI L7 / governance
Housing context

Chief executive

CEO / group executive Board accountability

Chartered route
MBA / CMI L7
Board + sector leadership

Executive qualification anchor: CIH Level 5 / Chartered pathway for housing leaders, with function-specific professional qualifications where relevant.

Qualification + CPD matrix

Use this as a guide: qualifications set the formal standard; CPD, reflection and experience help you keep growing.

Qualification route	Best-fit stage	Use it for
CIH Level 2 Certificate	Entry / assistant	Sector induction, housing terminology, tenancy basics and readiness for frontline work.
Level 2 apprenticeship	Entry earn-and-learn	Structured assistant route in housing/property management with workplace evidence.
CIH Level 3 Certificate	Frontline practitioner	Housing officer, income, lettings, support and neighbourhood practice.
Level 3 apprenticeship	Frontline practitioner	Work-based route for creating and sustaining tenancies in social/private rented sectors.
CIH Level 4 / L4 apprenticeship	Team leader / senior manager	Supervision, service quality, complex cases, business area responsibility and compliance.
CIH Level 5 Diploma	Head / director / executive	Strategic leadership, governance, service transformation and route to Chartered membership.
Function-specific professional quals	Specialist / executive	RICS/CIOB, accountancy, HR, digital, procurement, project, health & safety or board governance.

CPD cue Keep evidence of learning, reflection and tenant or service impact — not just course attendance.

CPD underpins every route

Qualifications open doors; CPD keeps practice current, reflective and responsive to tenants, regulation and changing services.

01

Reflect & plan

Supervision, appraisal, tenant feedback and role goals define the learning need.

02

Learn & practise

Training, CIH events, reading, peer learning and shadowing build capability.

03

Apply on the job

Use learning in casework, resident engagement, projects and service change.

04

Evidence impact

Keep a CPD log with reflection, outcomes, feedback and next actions.

CPD by level

Entry

Induction, shadowing, tenant voice, basic housing law and learning portfolio.

Frontline

Case reviews, complaints learning, safeguarding refreshers and coaching.

Specialist / leader

Communities of practice, complex case supervision, data and improvement projects.

Manager / executive

Regulatory briefings, governance, networks, mentoring and reflective leadership.

There is a route into social housing for you

You do not need to know the sector on day one. If you care about people, homes and communities, you can bring your existing strengths and learn the housing knowledge as you go.

01

People & communities

Customer service, support, resident engagement, neighbourhoods, income or lettings.

02

Homes & places

Repairs, estates, assets, building safety, compliance or property services.

03

Data & improvement

Digital, complaints, policy, projects, insight or service improvement.

04

Professional skills

Finance, HR, surveying, governance or development can all lead into housing.

Try one of these first steps

- 1 Search assistant, apprentice or trainee roles
- 2 Use volunteering or community experience
- 3 Explore CIH Level 2/3, apprenticeships and CPD

Housing adds purpose

Every role supports safe homes, fairness and stronger communities. You can build progression through experience, CPD and qualifications.