



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

Learning and Development Policy

October 2026

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BUILD **BETTER COMMUNITIES**

Document Information

Issue Date		01/10/2026
Version/Issue Number		1.6
Document Status		Final
Effective From Date		01/04/2014
Scope of Document	<p>This policy applies to all BCH employees, outlining the standards and responsibilities relating to learning and development, including those who are subject to training requirements as set out by the Competency and Conduct Standards.</p> <p>This policy compliments BCH's Recruitment Policy, Code of Conduct and Competence Policy, Individual Performance Appraisal Policy and Managing Poor Performance Policy to ensure BCH delivers a working environment of continuous learning and development.</p>	
Objective	<p>Blackpool Coastal Housing will aim to provide learning and development that will enhance and support all employee development, achieving improved service provision to the benefit of the organisation and our customers as a whole.</p> <p>The policy sets out how Blackpool Coastal Housing will identify, deliver and monitor development activity to ensure employees maintain the knowledge, skills and professional competence required to meet regulatory requirements, organisational standards and service priorities.</p>	
Who needs to know?	All BCH Staff	
Documentation	<p>Code of Conduct and Competency Policy IPA Policy 1-1/Supervision Policy Managing Poor Performance Policy Expenses Policy Recruitment and Selection Handbook Equality in Employment Policy Disciplinary Procedure</p>	
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Amendment Record

Date	Issue No.	Section/Page	Details of Change	Authorised By:
22/07/2014	1.1	All	Review	Stephen Dunstan

05/04/2016	1.2	All	Reviewed, updated and formatted	Debbie Miles
27/06/2018	1.3	All	Review	Debbie Miles
31/05/2023	1.4	All	Reviewed, updated and formatted	Kirsten Kennedy
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01/10/2026	1.6	All	Full Review and update to meet Competence and Conduct Standard from 1/10/2026	Kirsten Kennedy

Amendment Notes

- Documents at draft status are to use letter designations to denote issue status: a, b, c etc.
- Documents at full issue status are to use number designations to denote issue status after full revision: 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.
- For an amendment to a full issue document you are to use number designation to denote issue status: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, etc.
- On full issue the draft amendment record should be deleted from the above table.
- Notification of the amendment must be sent to the person maintaining the Central Register.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) is a learning organisation that encourages employees to expand their knowledge, skills and abilities by taking advantage of training and development opportunities. This will enable them to help meet their individual objectives and career aspirations. To demonstrate our commitment, we have a dedicated strategic training and development budget held centrally within HR. The budget will be allocated accordingly based on the priority training needs of the organisation, teams and individuals, in order to support Regulatory Standards, the Corporate Business Plan and overall achievement of key business objectives.
- 1.2 This learning and development policy has been designed to aid managers and employees through the training process. Blackpool Coastal Housing fully support training requirements and recognise that to develop and evolve as an organisation, you must develop the employees. When individual training needs have been established through the annual Individual Performance Appraisal process, Blackpool Coastal Housing will provide learning and development that will enhance and support the employee, the team and ultimately the organisation.

2.0 Policy Aim

- 2.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to ensuring that all employees delivering housing landlord services have the knowledge, skills, behaviours and professional competence required to deliver safe, high-quality and resident-focused housing services.
- 2.2 We recognise that the competence and conduct of our workforce directly impacts the safety, experience and outcomes of our tenants and leaseholders. By reinforcing workforce competence, accountability, and professional standards, we aim to deliver consistent, high-quality services and foster tenant confidence.
- 2.3 This policy aims to provide clear assurance to residents that Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to meeting, and continuously improving against the Competency and Conduct Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, as well as providing clarity to tenants on how we will achieve this.
- 2.4 This policy aligns with Blackpool Coastal Housing's Code of Conduct and Competency and reinforces the expectation that all BCH employees delivering housing services act with integrity, professionalism, accountability and respect

3.0 Legal Framework

- 3.1 This policy supports compliance with the following legislation and regulatory requirements:
 - Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 and associated Consumer Standards
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- 3.2 The policy also supports compliance with the Competency and Conduct Standards, ensuring that employees have the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required to deliver safe and effective housing services.
- 3.3 Progress against these requirements will contribute to improving BCH and ultimately the Council's Regulatory Judgements and strengthening assurance to tenants, residents and stakeholders.

4.0 What is Learning and Development

- 4.1 Learning and development at BCH refers to the structured and continuous process of ensuring that employees delivering housing landlord services have the appropriate knowledge, skills, behaviours and professional competence required to perform their roles effectively. It includes mandatory

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- 4.2 Learning and development may be delivered through a range of methods, including e-learning, face-to-face sessions, virtual workshops, coaching, mentoring, and accredited professional programmes.
- 4.3 Learning and development is both an organisational responsibility and an individual responsibility. BCH will identify, prioritise and provide access to development opportunities that support service delivery, regulatory compliance and workforce sustainability.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Managers responsibilities:

- Ensuring employees are given time to attend learning activities
- Monitoring the impact of development on service delivery;
- Completing post-learning evaluations linked to performance;
- Addressing underperformance in line with BCH's performance management procedures.
- Ensure staff are support to and complete mandatory training.

5.2 Employee responsibilities:

- Taking ownership of their professional development;
- Complete mandatory training within prescribed timescales.
- Raising development needs during one-to-one discussions;
- Attending scheduled training or completing required learning;
- Informing HR if they unable to attend and rescheduling;
- Applying learning in practice and maintaining professional competence.

5.3 Human Resources is responsible for:

- Aligning development provision to business needs;
- Managing and profiling the learning & development budget;
- Prioritising, scheduling and coordinating training;
- Identifying staff in scope for training requirements under the Competence & Conduct Standard
- Supporting compliance monitoring;
- Monitoring workforce competence, completion of mandatory training and qualification requirements;
- Reporting risks and gaps to senior leadership.
- Facilitating tenant consultant, so tenants have the opportunity to inform on what staff learning and development and competency and conduct means to them,

6.0 Maintaining the Competence and Conduct Code Standard

- 6.1 This policy will ensure and demonstrate BCH's compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's *Competence and Conduct Standard*, as laid out in the Direction on the Regulatory Standards (Competence and Conduct) 2025. These Regulatory Standards cover both Conduct and Competence, with the competency requirements comprising mandatory qualifications for senior staff, as detailed in the *Competence and Conduct Standard: Policy Statement*, [Competence and Conduct Standard: Policy statement](#).
- 6.2 Details of how BCH complies with the Conduct element of these Standards can be found in the separate BCH Code of Conduct and Competence Policy.

- 6.3 In terms of the mandatory qualifications required to meet the Competence and Conduct Standard, these relate to identified 'Relevant Persons' holding, or actively working towards, a recognised professional housing management qualification at the appropriate level.
- 6.4 "Relevant Persons" are identified as:
- Senior Housing Managers responsible for the direct delivery of housing management services to tenants, in areas such as tenancy management, tenant involvement, customer services and repairs and maintenance services.
 - Senior Housing Executives providing strategic direction and with accountability in relation to housing management services.
- 6.5 "Relevant Persons" must hold or be working towards a relevant qualification in housing, as follows:
- Senior Housing Managers: must hold or work towards an Ofqual-regulated qualification at Level 4 (such as a Certificate in Housing Management or relevant senior housing apprenticeship).
 - Senior Housing Executives: Must hold or work towards an Ofqual-regulated qualification higher than Level 4, specifically a Level 5 diploma, foundation degree, or higher undergraduate/postgraduate degree.
- 6.6 Beginning with our recruitment processes, BCH will ensure that all appointed staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience to carry out their role effectively, as stated in the Job Description for the role, whilst also exhibiting the positive behaviours needed to ensure the services they provide are of a good quality
- 6.7 BCH will also ensure that all employees and those identified as a "Relevant Person" under the Competence and Conduct Standard, have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and obtain the required qualifications to allow them to undertake their duties competently.
- 6.8 BCH will ensure that Senior Managers and Senior Executives identified as a "Relevant Person" hold or work towards a housing management qualification or training, which meets the Regulator's requirements, within the relevant timescales. Full details of the timescales can be found within the [Competence and Conduct standard Policy Statement](#).
- 6.9 HR will maintain central records of all Senior Housing Managers and Senior Housing Executives, including those identified as being in scope as a "Relevant Person" under the Competency Standards. These records will include a rationale for the inclusion or omission of senior staff as a "Relevant Person," with supporting training record and qualifications held information.
- 6.10 Compliance with the Competence and Conduct Code, including qualifications and conduct requirements will be managed through a regular cycle of reviews and annual appraisals and where necessary, through the Managing Poor Performance Policy or Disciplinary Procedure, should any employee performance, including "Relevant Persons" fall short of the expected level required.

7.0 Identification of Training Needs

- 7.1 Training needs will be identified in a number of different ways:
- The Individual Performance Appraisal (IPA) process will be used to identify and review individual training requirements on an annual basis.
 - Managers will identify training needs required for their departments to meet future challenges.
 - The Senior Management Team (SMT) will identify training needs required by the organisation as a whole to enable BCH to most effectively deliver the Corporate Business Plan;
 - Skills audits will be carried out, as required to identify existing skills within BCH and enable comparisons to be made between these and the skills required by the organisation for the

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- Consideration must also be given to the most effective way for the training to be delivered to maximise the learning experience, which may be face to face, virtually over Teams or Zoom, or a blended learning approach. The way the training is delivered often has cost implications which should be appraised.

8.0 Employee Development

8.1 The Line Manager is responsible for identifying and prioritising individual training needs through the Individual Performance Appraisal. If training needs have been identified through this process, the Line Manager must ascertain the following:

- Training Goal – Overall desired results you hope to achieve by implementing the training.
- Learning Objectives – What will the individual be able to do as a result of attending the course/learning activities.
- Learning Methods – What will you do in order to achieve this identified learning objective?

Are there any timelines or priorities that should be considered? The Line Manager must determine whether the employee must attend training by a certain time and prioritise accordingly.

8.2 The Line Manager, in consultation with the employee will determine what specific training session or course the employee requires. Details of specific courses can be sourced through the Learning and Development Directory, colleges or other external training providers. HR will assist with this, as necessary to ensure Value for Money and cost-effectiveness is achieved with all training.

8.3 Line Managers should also consider alternative methods of learning and development, such as job shadowing, secondment, job swapping, attending meetings or research projects. This is to enhance performance through maximising opportunities to broaden experience, both internally and externally of BCH, if applicable.

8.4 Line Managers should submit IPA documentation to the HR department for collation, by no later than 30th June each year. It is vital that employees are aware that submitting a training request as part of an IPA does not guarantee that funding will be allocated. All training requests following the annual IPA process will be collated by HR and sent to SMT for final budgetary consideration on an annual basis.

Line Managers should ensure that all requests submitted are fully justified, prior to submission to SMT for approval. Where employees commence employment throughout the year, training requirements will be discussed during probation reviews and where necessary training requests submitted to SMT for budgetary approval, as required.

8.5 If training requests are not authorised by SMT, the Line Manager must explain the reasons to the employee and where appropriate they may resubmit the request at a later date, for further consideration.

8.6 Line Managers may submit service specific annual training requirements to HR for their individual departments, preferably during March. These requests will be considered by SMT for inclusion in the forthcoming training budget, commencing 1st April.

All training requested should be fully justified in terms of the impact of the training on the individual, team and organisational performance.

9.0 Budget

9.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing has an annual training and development budget which will be reviewed each year. All formal qualification requests submitted will be considered by SMT and either authorised or rejected.

- 9.2 The budget will take effect from 1st April each year, running through to 31st March of the following year.

10.0 Applying for Training

- 10.1 Once training has been considered by the line manager, they must provide HR with the relevant course information, such as venue, dates and cost.
- 10.2 Once the request is received by the Human Resources department, a member of the HR Team will review all the details and ensure the training requested is viable and cost effective. Once this has been done, the request will be either accepted or declined.
- 10.3 If the training request has been accepted, a member of the HR team will book the training requirements. A record of successful completion or attendance will be held on the employees personnel file and full training details will be entered onto the departmental training matrix and training plan.
- 10.4 If the training request has been declined, an explanation as to why the course has been declined will be sent to the manager. Possible factors will include cost and location of requested training. Where appropriate HR will endeavour to source alternative training that is more cost effective.

11.0 Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 BCH is committed to ensuring that all employees have equal and fair access to learning and development opportunities. We will take into account the individual needs of employees, including any personal circumstances or protected characteristics, and make reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure equitable access to training, professional qualifications and career development.
- 11.2 BCH will treat all employees fairly, with dignity and respect, in relation to learning, progression and professional development opportunities.
- 11.3 All managers and employees are expected to understand and uphold Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles in the delivery and participation of learning and development. Mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is monitored by the HR Team to ensure compliance.
- 11.4 Our approach ensures that learning provision and workforce development arrangements meet our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and reflect the Council's wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.
- 11.5 Reasonable Adjustments: BCH is committed to ensuring that disabled employees and those with additional needs are not disadvantaged in accessing learning and development opportunities. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken where appropriate to ensure that policies and practices do not create unintended barriers.

12.0 Monitoring and Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed triennially to ensure it remains compliant with legislation, regulatory standards and best practice. The review date will be brought forward should there be any significant legislative or regulatory changes. Changes to this policy will be made in consultation with employees and trade union representatives.
- 12.2 Performance against the Competence and Conduct Standard will be monitored annual, with Board and Council receiving annual assurance that compliance with this standard is being met.
- 12.3 BCH Senior Management team receive bi-annual updates to monitor the completion of mandatory training.