

COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT POLICY



Effective Date				Version Number	0.1
Classification	Public	Equality Impact Assessment	n/a	Data Protection Impact Assessment	n/a
Author	Laura Giles, Group Director of Culture and Strategy				
Owner	Chief Executive Officer				
Approved By					

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy sets out The Barnet Group's approach to ensuring residents receive services from competent, professional, skilled, and accountable staff. It replaces any previous versions endorsed by The Barnet Group and its subsidiaries.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes, referred to collectively as 'The Barnet Group' within this policy. It applies to all staff providing services to residents, including employees, agency workers, and contractors.
- 2.2 In implementing this policy The Barnet Group will:
- Comply with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
 - Ensure arrangements that support workforce competence and professionalism.
 - Ensure residents receive services from competent, professional, skilled, and accountable staff.
 - Recruit, develop, support, and manage staff and contractors to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, qualifications, behaviours, and experience needed to provide high-quality services.
- 2.3 This policy is supported by The Barnet Group's Code of Conduct for staff.

3. POLICY

3.1 Our commitment

- 3.1.1 The Barnet Group is committed to ensuring that residents receive services from competent, skilled, professional, and accountable employees and contractors. Maintaining workforce competence is essential to protecting resident safety, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and delivering high-quality services.
- 3.1.2 We will recruit, develop, support, and retain people who have the knowledge, skills, experience, qualifications, and behaviours required to deliver safe, high-quality, and resident-focused services. We are committed to maintaining a culture of continuous learning, professionalism, integrity, and accountability across all parts of our organisation.
- 3.1.3 We recognise that competent and professional staff are essential to delivering services that meet residents' needs, maintaining resident trust, and complying with regulatory requirements. Our approach to competence and conduct forms part of our wider commitment to providing safe homes, high-quality services, and positive outcomes for residents.

3.2 What residents can expect from our staff

- 3.2.1 Residents have the right to expect that staff and contractors acting on our behalf will:
- have the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience, and qualifications for their role;
 - behave professionally, ethically, and with integrity and accountability;
 - treat residents with dignity, fairness, and respect;
 - communicate clearly and courteously, keeping residents informed and updated;
 - listen actively to residents and take their concerns seriously;
 - understand their responsibilities relating to health and safety, safeguarding, and compliance;
 - recognise and respond appropriately to residents' individual circumstances and needs, where appropriate and possible;
 - promote equality, diversity, and inclusion;
 - take ownership of issues and follow through on commitments;
 - handle complaints professionally and fairly;
 - place residents, service users, and customers at the centre of service delivery; and
 - continuously develop their skills and knowledge to maintain competence.

3.3 Recruiting competent people

- 3.3.1 We seek to recruit people who demonstrate the skills, knowledge, qualifications, experience, and behaviours needed to perform their roles effectively.
- 3.3.2 Recruitment and selection processes are designed to be fair, transparent, and based on merit. Candidates are assessed against the requirements of the role, including technical competence, professional behaviours, customer focus, safeguarding awareness, and commitment to delivering high-quality services.
- 3.3.3 Before appointment, we carry out appropriate checks which may include:
- identity and right-to-work checks;
 - employment references;
 - qualification and professional registration verification;
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required;
 - other role-specific checks necessary to safeguard residents and service users.
- 3.3.4 Competence requirements are considered for all roles across the organisation. Particular focus is given to roles that have significant responsibility for, or directly influence, resident outcomes, including housing management, building safety, property services, customer services, safeguarding, complaint handling, and care services.

3.4 Training and professional development

- 3.4.1 We believe that maintaining competence is an ongoing responsibility shared between employees, managers, and The Barnet Group.
- 3.4.2 All employees are provided with learning and development opportunities designed to ensure they remain competent and capable of carrying out their responsibilities safely and effectively. Learning and development activities are aligned to service priorities, resident outcomes, regulatory requirements, and workforce needs.
- 3.4.3 Learning and development opportunities may include:
- induction programmes;
 - mandatory training;

- role-specific technical training;
- professional qualifications;
- leadership and management development;
- coaching and mentoring;
- continuing professional development (CPD);
- workshops, briefings, and knowledge-sharing activities; and
- digital learning opportunities.

3.4.4 Staff are required to complete mandatory, statutory, regulatory, and role-specific training within required timescales.

3.4.5 We regularly review learning requirements to ensure our workforce remains capable of responding to changing legislation, regulatory expectations, customer needs, and service delivery requirements.

3.5 Assessing and maintaining competence

3.5.1 We maintain arrangements to assess, monitor, and assure workforce competence throughout employment.

3.5.2 Competence is not assessed solely through completion of training. We use a range of measures to ensure employees can apply their knowledge and skills effectively in practice.

3.5.3 Competence may be assessed through:

- recruitment and selection processes;
- induction and probation;
- completion of mandatory and role-specific training;
- supervision and one-to-one meetings;
- performance and development reviews;
- professional qualifications and registrations;
- quality assurance activities and audits;
- observation of practice;
- customer feedback;
- complaints and compliments;
- service outcomes; and
- other relevant assurance mechanisms.

3.5.4 Where additional assurance is required to protect residents, maintain safety or support regulatory compliance, we may implement enhanced supervision, mentoring, reassessment, or other appropriate support measures.

3.5.5 Where legislation, regulation, professional standards, contractual requirements, or organisational policy require employees to hold specific qualifications, registrations, licences, or certifications, we will monitor and support ongoing compliance with those requirements.

3.5.6 We will maintain evidence and records demonstrating workforce competence and compliance with training, qualification, and professional standards requirements.

3.5.7 We recognise that competence includes not only technical knowledge and professional qualifications, but also the ability to communicate effectively, understand residents' individual circumstances, exercise professional judgement, demonstrate empathy, and provide a responsive and resident-focused service.

3.6 Supporting new employees

- 3.6.1 All new employees participate in an induction and probationary process designed to help them understand their role, develop required knowledge and skills, and demonstrate expected standards of behaviour and professionalism.
- 3.6.2 During probation, we assess both competence and conduct, including:
- technical competence;
 - customer focus;
 - professionalism;
 - integrity;
 - accountability;
 - adherence to organisational values; and
 - compliance with policies and procedures.
- 3.6.3 Employees are provided with support, supervision, feedback, and development opportunities throughout this period. Confirmation in post is dependent upon demonstration of the required standards.

3.7 Supporting professional conduct

- 3.7.1 We expect all employees to maintain high standards of conduct, professionalism, and integrity.
- 3.7.2 Employees are required to comply with organisational policies, act in the best interests of residents and the organisation, and demonstrate behaviour consistent with our values and professional standards.
- 3.7.3 Professional conduct includes:
- acting honestly and ethically;
 - treating others with respect;
 - maintaining confidentiality where required;
 - complying with health and safety requirements;
 - responding to residents in a timely manner;
 - taking ownership of actions and decision;
 - keeping commitments and providing explanations where commitments cannot be met;
 - following safeguarding responsibilities;
 - promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion; and
 - exercising sound professional judgement.
- 3.7.4 The Group's Employee Code of Conduct sets out the detailed standards of behaviour expected of employees and is published separately.

3.8 Addressing concerns about competence or conduct

- 3.8.1 Where concerns arise regarding competence, skills, knowledge, behaviour, professionalism, or compliance with organisational standards, we will take appropriate and proportionate action.
- 3.8.2 Our priority is to understand the issue and provide appropriate support where this is reasonable and appropriate. This may include:
- additional training;
 - coaching;
 - mentoring;
 - increased supervision;
 - performance improvement support;

- reassessment of competence; or
- other developmental interventions.

3.8.3 Where concerns involve misconduct, safeguarding issues, dishonesty, serious breaches of policy, resident safety, or other significant matters, we may take formal action in accordance with our employment policies and procedures.

3.8.4 Residents can be assured that concerns regarding competence, conduct or professional standards are taken seriously and managed in a fair, consistent, and proportionate manner.

3.9 Contractors and third-party providers

3.9.1 The Barnet Group recognises that some services may be delivered on our behalf by contractors, consultants, agency workers, or other third-party providers.

3.9.2 We seek assurance that these third parties maintain appropriate arrangements to ensure their workforce has the skills, knowledge, qualifications, experience, and behaviours necessary to deliver services safely, effectively and in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements. This includes expectations relating to customer service, communication, professionalism, responsiveness, equality, and respect for residents.

3.9.3 We may require evidence relating to workforce competence, training, professional registrations, qualifications, accreditation, or other assurance information relevant to the services they provide.

3.9.4 Where competence or conduct concerns are identified, we will require appropriate corrective action and may take further contractual action where necessary.

3.10 Resident feedback and concerns

3.10.1 Resident feedback plays an important role in helping us understand the quality of our services and the effectiveness of our workforce.

3.10.2 We use information from complaints, compliments, surveys, resident engagement activities, and other feedback mechanisms to help identify learning needs, improve services, and strengthen workforce competence.

3.10.3 Residents who have concerns about the professionalism, conduct, behaviour, or competence of any member of staff or contractor acting on our behalf may raise these concerns through our complaints process or other established feedback routes.

3.10.4 We will investigate concerns appropriately and use the information gathered to support service improvement, organisational learning, and regulatory compliance.

4. EQUALITIES

4.1 The Barnet Group is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, fairness, and accessibility. We recognise that all customers should be treated equally and fairly regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, and we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group in implementing this policy and its associated procedure.

4.2 The Barnet Group is committed to ensuring that opportunities to learn, develop, and demonstrate competence are fair, accessible, and inclusive. We will promote equality of opportunity and consider reasonable adjustments where required to support employees and prospective

employees. This may include adjusting how learning, assessment, or support is delivered whilst maintaining the standards required for safe and effective service delivery.

- 4.3 We will not unlawfully discriminate against any individual and will seek to ensure that our competence and conduct arrangements support an inclusive and diverse workforce.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 **The Boards** are accountable for ensuring Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes meets their statutory and regulatory requirements.
- 5.2 **The Executive Management Team** has overall accountability for this policy and for creating an organisational culture of continuous learning, professionalism, integrity, and accountability.
- 5.3 **Heads of Service** have operational accountability for this policy and ensuring it is embedded within every service.
- 5.4 **All managers** are responsible for ensuring employees receive appropriate supervision, support, training, and development and for identifying and addressing competence concerns.
- 5.5 **All staff** are responsible for ensuring they comply with the internal policies and procedures associated with this Competence and Conduct Policy.

6. FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Anyone who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the services provided by The Barnet Group will have the opportunity to seek redress through our Complaints and Compliments policy. We welcome all feedback, good or bad, in all formats, and will provide reasonable support as required to enable people to make complaints.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this policy and will recommend changes to improve service delivery where appropriate.
- 7.2 Regular assurance will be provided to the Board regarding training compliance, competence levels in key roles, professional qualifications, succession planning, and significant competence-related risks. Assurance reporting may also include resident feedback relating to staff professionalism, communication, complaints handling, customer satisfaction measures, and themes arising from complaints and compliments.

8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards including the Competence and Conduct Standard
- Equality Act 2010
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

- Induction and Probationary Policy
- Learning and Development Policy
- Performance and Appraisal Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Procurement Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Type of Change	Date	Revisions from Previous Issues
0.1	Document creation	Sept 2026	

DRAFT