

# Complaints against CIH members



Working in housing puts professionals in a position of trust in relation to their customers, employers and the public who rely on them to make professional judgements. CIH has a responsibility to maintain professional standards in the sector and to ensure housing professionals are equipped to make effective decisions in challenging situations. [CIH's professional standards](#), [code of ethics](#) and [code of conduct](#) provide a profession-wide shared view of the standards of ethical and professional behaviour that are expected of others working within housing and related sectors. All CIH members are required to adhere to these principles.

Professional conduct of members is overseen by the CIH professional standards committee.

## The professional standards committee can:

### **Undertake investigations into members where a breach of the code of conduct is made 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 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 [code of conduct](#).

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

## The professional standards committee will not investigate:

- Complaints against individuals who are not members of CIH
- Matters that are covered by general law (employment legislation, criminal activity, GDPR breaches, etc)
- Complaints against organisations which CIH members are employed by - these should be addressed through the organisation's complaints process
- 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	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/">https://www.gov.uk/</a>
Confidential, free advice for anyone who needs employment law or workplace advice	Acas	<a href="https://www.acas.org.uk">https://www.acas.org.uk</a>
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	<a href="https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/">https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/</a>
Free expert and confidential advice on how best to raise concerns and protection as a whistle-blower	Protect	<a href="https://protect-advice.org.uk/">https://protect-advice.org.uk/</a>

## 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.

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

Please note, any form of malicious complaints is subject to be investigated as a breach of the code of conduct.

To submit your complaint please complete this [form](#) and send to:

FAO Professional standards manager, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Suites 5 and 6, Rowan House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8HS

Or via email: [professionalstandards@cih.org](mailto:professionalstandards@cih.org).

## Investigation process:



### Stage 1 - Initial informal investigation by CIH professional standards manager

- 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, an outcome is recommended to professional standards committee: no case to action if the complaint is too trivial/ no evidence has been submitted by complainant, mediation or formal referral to professional standards committee
- Professional standards manager provides a written confirmation of outcome of informal investigation and next steps (if any) both to complainant and member.

### Stage 2 - Formal investigation by professional standards committee

- Chair of professional standards committee informs member in question of move to formal investigation - setting out nature of allegation, identifying specific code of conduct criteria that may have been breached and requesting their observations
- 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 (insert form 2) within 10 working days. The investigation will continue its course even if the form and comments have not been received
- Professional standards committee carries out full investigation.

Timings: 40 working days

### Stage 3 - Communicate outcomes of investigation

Within 40 working days of stage 2, outcome of investigation is communicated by the chair of professional standards committee to the complainant, member and CIH governing board.

## Potential outcomes:

Following a full investigation of a complaint, the following sanctions can be applied:

Outcome/findings	Action/sanction
No breach of the code has occurred  The member's conduct has not breached the code however it falls short of CIH's acceptable standards of professional practice	PSC provides written confirmation of the outcome to the complainant, the member and the CIH governing board, no further action is taken  PSC provides written confirmation of the outcome including guidance to address the issues identified to the complainant, the member and the CIH governing board.
A breach of the code has been demonstrated	PSC provides written confirmation of the outcome to the complainant, the member and the CIH governing board  According to the severity and impact of the findings, the member may:  a) Be issued with a formal warning to rectify their conduct  b) Be suspended for a maximum of two years, when the member needs to re-apply for membership, and demonstrate they are ready to return to membership after meeting with the review panel  c) Be removed from the CIH membership

## Appeals

Members who have been found to have breached the 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 due to you disagreeing 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 governing board, the outcome of this investigation will be communicated in 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 to 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 to 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 own organisation
- Trade Union if affiliated.

## 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.

### Contact us:

Professional standards manager, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Suites 5 and 6,  
Rowan House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8HS

Call us on: 024 7685 1700

[www.cih.org](http://www.cih.org)