Plus Dane Housing

Professionalism Policy

September 2026
PEO-POL-14-01



1. Policy Statement 4
2. Policy aims 4
3. Links to Corporate Plan 4
4. Key policy definitions 4
5. Roles and responsibilities 5
6. Our approach 6
7. Assurance 9
8. Equality Impact Assessment 10
9. Modern slavery & human trafficking 10
10. Data Protection Impact Assessment 10
11. Legislative and regulatory considerations 10
12. Links to other Plus Dane policies 10

1. Policy Statement

Plus Dane Housing is committed to promoting and sustaining a professional working environment, in line with our values and behaviours, and enabling colleagues to deliver high-quality services to our customers.

This policy applies to all colleagues, with a particular focus on customer facing colleagues, in line with the Competence and Conduct regulatory standard 2026.

2. Policy aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Set out Plus Dane's commitment to ensuring colleagues have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to deliver high-quality services.
- Set out Plus Dane's commitment to ensuring colleagues behave in line with our Plus Dane Code of Conduct, Plus Dane values and behavioural competencies and customer expectations.
- Outline consistent approaches to recruiting and developing colleagues who have the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required within their roles.
- Confirm arrangements for appraising colleague performance and for managing any under performance.

3. Links to Corporate Plan

The policy will support delivery of Plus Dane's corporate plan 2024-27, with specific focus on the **Colleague Experience** objective, which specifies that we aim to see "engaged colleagues demonstrating our values through the effective delivery of their roles every day." It also supports the **Customer Experience** objective, with focus on the experience of customers when interacting with Plus Dane's colleagues.

4. Key policy definitions

Competence and Conduct: the expectation of colleagues to have the appropriate knowledge and skills required within their job role and to behave appropriately. Also refers to the Competence and Conduct regulatory standard for social housing providers.

Professionalism: Consistent demonstration of required knowledge and skills and appropriate behaviours and decision-making within the context of the job role and the social housing sector. Aligns with the Plus Dane Code of Conduct.

Behavioural Competency Framework: the agreed framework for all Plus Dane colleagues that is used to clarify and encourage appropriate values and behaviours and to provide feedback, development and support where behaviours are not as expected.

Recruitment and Selection: the processes and activity involved in recruiting and onboarding new colleagues

Performance Management: A continuous process of setting goals, monitoring progress, providing feedback, and developing colleagues who are underperforming in their roles, with the overall aim of improving performance.

Skills Assessment Matrix (SAM): a framework that captures key knowledge, skills and behaviours required in a job role and enables assessment by post-holders and managers

Learning Needs Analysis (LNA): a systematic process that supports the identification of gaps between current employee capabilities and current and future organisational requirements. This may result in immediate learning needs or planned learning and activity to respond to anticipated future needs, for example due to a planned change in legislation (external factor) or service delivery (internal factor).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): a variety of activities that ensure knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date and meet customer and business needs, including internal and external changes. This may be through formal activity including training, webinars and qualifications and less formal activity including shadowing others and involvement in project work.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Colleague responsibilities are:

- To understand and consistently demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of them within their role, guided by job descriptions, skills assessments, our Plus Dane Code of Conduct, our Plus Dane values and behavioural competencies.
- To discuss with their line manager where they do not meet the required standards and seek support to develop as needed, including through annual reviews and skills assessment activity.
- To seek and be open to feedback from their line manager and others where a development need has been identified.
- To fully engage with any learning and development activity aimed at improving knowledge and developing skill sets and behaviours required for their role.
- To take ownership for any mandatory training or qualifications specific to their role, including housing specific qualifications in line with requirements of the Competence and Conduct standard for managers in scope.

Line manager responsibilities are:

- To identify and understand the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of team colleagues in their roles.
- To regularly (annually as a minimum) assess the above, discuss with colleagues and identify and plan for any development activity that may be needed, documenting discussions and agreements made.
- To provide honest and constructive feedback, guidance and support to colleagues to enable achievement of expected standards and development of relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- To seek support from the People team in developing and appraising colleague performance, addressing any performance gaps and managing any under performance.

People Team responsibilities are:

- To ensure that approaches to building and maintaining professionalism in the services we deliver are co-created with and influenced by customers, specifically by ensuring that customers influence, scrutinise and review this policy, the associated procedure and our Code of Conduct.
- To create, communicate and maintain strategies for recruitment and onboarding that set clear expectations of job roles and enable assessment of candidates' knowledge, skills, behaviour and experience.
- To create, communicate and maintain frameworks that support positive performance appraisal and management practices and the development of colleagues to enable them to consistently perform as required.
- To work with line managers and colleagues to support development activity in a way that works for individuals, teams and Plus Dane.
- To support and advise colleagues and managers in managing any underperformance positively and constructively, with the aim of improving performance as needed.
- To gather evidence of compliance with the Competence and Conduct standard for self-assessment activity, in collaboration with the Governance and Assurance Team.

Governance and Assurance Team responsibilities are:

- To work with the People Team to gather information and evidence of compliance with the Competence and Conduct standard.
- To submit evidence to Foresight Committee for assurance in relation to regulatory compliance.
- To submit self-assessments as required by the regulator to demonstrate compliance with the Competence and Conduct standard.
- To ensure the policy, procedure and Code of Conduct are available to customers.

6. Our approach

Plus Dane is committed to improving and sustaining positive colleague and customer experiences. To empower colleagues to deliver high-quality services to customers and to be supported in developing knowledge, skills and behaviours appropriate for their roles, Plus Dane will use the following approaches:

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

When recruiting into job roles, we will use relevant and up-to-date job descriptions and our behavioural competency framework to help potential applicants (internal and external) decide how closely they match the requirements of the role. We will assess the appropriateness of candidates' knowledge, skills and experience through their CV application and (optional) supporting statement. We will make use of competency-based questions and assessments to decide if candidates have the required knowledge, skills, behaviour and experience for the role. During the probationary period of a new colleague, managers will work closely with them to make sure that they have or are developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required. The probationary period will be used to provide direction and feedback to the new colleagues and to agree and action any development and support needs.

6.2 Development of colleagues

6.2.1 Mandatory learning framework - Our mandatory learning framework is job role specific and will be reviewed annually for relevance by directors or sooner should an issue arise. The level and nature of learning, assessment and development activity will be proportionate to the responsibilities of the role, recognising differing requirements for customer facing roles, specialist technical roles, managers and senior leaders. Learning will be blended and delivered through a combination of e-learning modules, classroom-based training and toolbox talks or team briefings, designed to meet different learning needs and preferences. Where concerns are raised in relation to colleague knowledge, skill or behaviour, refresher training will be arranged, and the delivery methodology will be appropriate to the extent of the concern. Compliance reporting will be produced monthly to ensure colleagues are engaging with mandatory learning and demonstrating knowledge and skills at the required level and relevant to their own job role.

6.2.2 Skills assessments – The knowledge, skills and behaviours for individual roles are agreed within our Skills Assessment Matrix (SAM), setting clear expectations for what is needed within the role and supporting with career development planning. As part of the annual appraisal, colleagues will complete a self-assessment with their line manager, recognising strengths and identifying any areas for improvement. This information will help us to conduct a Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) for all teams in Plus Dane and arrange development activity for teams and for individuals. It will also help to identify where colleagues have strengths and may then support in mentoring other colleagues and sharing knowledge and skills. If there are any concerns raised about performance, the skills assessment can be used more frequently to support development conversations and activity. SAMs will roll out over a phased period, with those for customer-facing roles in 2026-27, and remaining roles in enabling teams by the end of 2028-29.

6.2.3 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – colleagues will be supported where appropriate for their roles in their CPD in a number of ways, including the time and any budget required to access relevant webinars, conferences and training. Time will be given to support CPD through experiential learning, including involvement in project work, job shadowing, buddying up with colleagues and collaborative working across teams. Shadowing of customer-facing teams is expected by all colleagues, as a minimum as part of their induction period to their role, and is specified within the induction guidance for new colleagues and their managers. The ability for individual colleagues to capture their CPD activity is provided in our Learning Management System (LMS) and is particularly relevant where it is a condition of retaining a professional membership.

6.2.4 Professional Memberships – Plus Dane will support colleagues by reimbursing costs for a professional membership each year, which will provide members with the latest role or profession specific research, best practice and learning opportunities to support their CPD. Support is limited to one professional membership annually and must be directly relevant to their job role. Further information can be found here.

6.2.5 Qualifications and accreditations – Plus Dane will support colleagues where appropriate to undertake relevant qualifications and accreditations, where time and budget resources allow or where qualifications are mandatory for the role. Support for qualifications will be discussed as part of the annual appraisal process. Where qualifications are mandatory for the role, due to legal or regulatory requirements, Plus Dane will agree with colleagues the time and financial support to be offered to them. We will make best use of our apprenticeship levy to support qualifications while ensuring value for money.

6.2.6 Leadership programmes – Plus Dane will support the development of existing and aspiring leaders at all levels through our internal leadership development programmes, mandatory to those who are already acting as a people manager.

6.3 Supporting and managing colleague performance

7. Annual appraisal - Each colleague will have an annual appraisal with their line manager. The annual appraisal is designed to provide colleagues and managers with the opportunity to recognise achievements and reflect on any challenges in the past year, plan ahead for the coming year, agree objectives and identify any learning and development needs or other support needed to meet objectives and support any agreed career aspirations. Learning needs identified from annual appraisals will be reviewed by senior managers and the People team, which will form the basis of an organisation wide Learning Needs Analysis (LNA)

7.2.1 One to one – Each colleague will have a one-to-one conversation with their line manager at least quarterly, providing the opportunity to reflect on performance, track progress against objectives and to discuss any support and learning and development activity needed. Managers will have open dialogue with their team members, providing feedback and support to enable them to perform as expected within their roles and deliver organisational objectives and achieve any personal development goals. Managers and colleagues will document discussions and actions agreed from one-to-one conversations and will save ensure notes are stored in a confidential space.

7.2.2 Regular check-ins – Managers will check in on an informal basis with each team member weekly, to understand how work is going that week for them, check on their wellbeing and discuss any resources and support agreed. The Professionalism Procedure outlines further detail about the format and documenting of these weekly check-ins.

6.3.4 Managing under performance - Performance will be managed in line with Plus Dane's policies and procedures, which comply with the ACAS Code of Practice.

Our Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure provides a framework for managing performance where concerns are raised; performance will initially be managed informally, with discussions between colleague and line manager to ensure

clear expectations are set and ensure any learning and development activity is identified and agreed, with an agreed timeline for improvements to be made.

Our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will be applied where there is alleged misconduct or gross misconduct. Please refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for examples of misconduct.

7.2.5 Engagement with training and qualifications - Where a colleague is unable or unwilling to undertake training or a qualification that is mandatory for their role, and this cannot be resolved through informal discussion and support, the appropriate policy and procedure will be applied. The approach taken will depend on the circumstances of the case, including whether additional support, development or capability measures are required, or whether the matter is considered to be misconduct. This includes housing-specific qualifications required for management roles within scope of the Competence and Conduct Standard, as well as qualifications required by law, such as gas and electrical qualifications.

6.3.6 Internal frameworks and tools - Our Plus Dane Behavioural Competency Framework and Skills Assessments can be used to address under performance and to frame discussions between colleague and manager in a fair, objective and constructive manner. Initial approaches will always aim to discuss and improve performance in a positive and supportive manner, recognising any needs that the colleague may have.

7.3 Working with contractors and service providers

Contracts with relevant contractors and service providers will set out requirements for relevant managers to be suitably qualified, in line with requirements within the regulators Competence and Conduct standard, and for all relevant employees to have required levels of knowledge and skill and to behave in line with Plus Dane's own values and behaviours frameworks. This will be managed using our contract management processes including the use of contractor scorecards.

8. Assurance

The Leadership Team and Senior Management team will support application of the policy through setting expectations with their management teams and team members.

The People team will support application of this policy through regular compliance reporting and updates to Leadership Team. Reporting on our approach to demonstrating compliance with the Competence and Conduct standard will be taken to Foresight Committee at the appropriate times, with specific reporting on:

- Progress against qualifications required under the Competence and Conduct standard
- Mandatory learning compliance
- Annual appraisal completion rates
- Progress with using Skills Assessment Matrices
  Involvement of customers in shaping and reviewing approaches.

This policy will be regularly reviewed in line with our Strategy Policy Framework, or immediately in the event of relevant changes to legislation or regulatory standards.

First line	Second line	Third line
Line managers	People Team	Foresight Committee
	Leadership Team	Internal auditors

9. Equality Impact Assessment

The attached Equality Impact Assessment highlights potential disadvantage for some specified groups, together with mitigating actions to eliminate or minimise the impacts and ensure fairness and equity. Our colleague network, **+together** has been consulted and is supportive of the EIA and proposed activity.

10. Modern slavery & human trafficking

The policy provisions present no risk to occurrences of modern slavery or human trafficking.

10. Data Protection Impact Assessment

A DPIA screening has been completed and concluded that a full DPIA is not required.

11. Legislative and regulatory considerations

This policy has been written to comply with:

- The Competence and Conduct regulatory standard 2026
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Employment Rights Act 2025
- The ACAS Code of Practice

12. Links to other Plus Dane policies

- Plus Dane Code of Conduct
- Plus Dane Behavioural Competency Framework
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Performance Improvement Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Plus Dane Coaching Framework