



The Chartered Institute of Housing

HOUSING 2011 CONFERENCE



Housing 2011 Session Information

Fit for the future – developing skills and talent now

As organisations we rely entirely on the quality of our people. The current reform proposals will have a massive impact on the way housing organisations will operate in the future and planning for the skills needed in response to the shifting policy landscape needs to be a clear priority for the sector. How we develop our workforce (from front-line staff to executive and governance level) and attract new talent will determine whether we are fit for purpose in the future.

KEY FACTS

- According to *Asset Skills*, increased customer demand, economic instability and government policy will be the key drivers for the skills agenda in the sector over the coming years.
- Flexibility, change management and collaborative working skills will become increasingly important, as will be communication skills to manage customer expectations in the light of continued mismatch of affordable housing supply and demand.
- Multi and transferable skills will be key to prepare people for new roles in the wake of cost-saving led organisational restructuring processes.



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BACKGROUND

Alongside their core housing management activities social landlords fulfil a wide range of functions within communities which is reflected in the diverse roles performed by their staff. Roles have changed dramatically and the (stereotypical) view of the housing officer as rent collector is a thing of the distant past. And this process will continue in response to: changing business objectives, customer needs and the external environment, giving rise to more specialist skills and knowledge. 'Commercialisation' and increasing reliance on private funding and market exposure heightens organisations financial risks. Thus, the role of robust and effective governance structures becomes more important. Having boards with the right skills mix will be crucial, as will be strong leadership at chief executive and senior management level. Getting these ingredients right is an important step towards service improvement and excellence. At the same time, new concepts such as resident-led self-regulation require fresh approaches to engaging with customers. Aside from staff specific training and development needs, Residents will also need access to training and development if they are to take on this role effectively.

UPDATE

Although they are open to any age, offering **housing apprenticeships** is a good way of attracting more young people into the sector. However, we are dealing with an increasingly ageing workforce and housing is not necessarily seen as a career of choice for those leaving school. The housing apprenticeships framework has been developed by *Asset Skills*, with funding provided through the National Apprenticeship Service. The apprenticeship is a bundle of qualifications either at entry level (Level 2) or advance entry level (Level 3) and are available for anyone over the age of 16. Training is estimated to take between 12-18 months for Level 2 and 24 months for Level 3.

The new specification for apprenticeship standards became law in April of his year. The key changes are:

- inclusion of personal, learning and thinking skills which must be accredited
- requirement to specify the number of off-the job and on-the job guided learning hours, which must be evidenced
- formal assessment of employment rights and responsibilities
- guided learning hours (GLH) must be delivered during contracted working hours
- minimum of 280 GLH per year.

OTHER INFORMATION

A joint publication between CIH and Orbit around business transformation considers some of the skills, leadership and staffing issues which organisations need to address over the coming years.

CIH's award-winning Positive Action for Disability project creates professional traineeships for disabled people to develop a career in the housing sector <http://www.cih.org/careers/positiveaction/>

CIH provides a wide range of training and education programmes to equip the profession fit for the future <http://www.cih.org/>



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