

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING

SPECIFICATION FOR WEST AFRICA

February 2014

Principles:

1. Chartered membership must be, at a minimum, equivalent to the UK level of academic achievement which is level 5 (England, Wales and N.Ireland) on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
2. The test for membership must include an understanding of professional ethics, a commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and a commitment to work to a code of conduct.
3. There could be two levels of membership in Africa, a certificate level and a full professional level.

Vision:

To develop and deliver housing education programmes which raise the level of understanding of effective housing management in West Africa.

To develop a living concept of social housing in West Africa.

To create a housing profession in West Africa.

This document is a draft of the possible expectations of housing professionals working in the provision of affordable housing in West Africa. It identifies two levels of qualification to reflect the nature of housing work in West Africa. The “Certified Housing Practitioner” level is intended to provide a standard for housing staff involved in the day-to-day delivery of housing services to their residents. It sets out the skills and knowledge that are needed to deliver an effective service to residents and the local community. The “Chartered Member” level sets out the expectations of a fully qualified housing professional working in West Africa and which may well transfer to

the whole of Africa. It is intended to give African housing professionals a deeper understanding of the wider context of housing, together with the means to develop their own strategies to deliver improved, affordable housing in their localities.

Certified Housing Practitioner

Certified Housing Practitioner is the first step towards becoming a qualified housing professional. People who have achieved this level of recognition will be competent at delivering a housing service to their residents and they will be able to manage a small housing provider and/or to be able to work effectively within a larger housing provider.

The main expectations of what a Certified Housing Practitioner should know and be able to do are set out below.

1 Social Housing Framework

Housing professionals in West Africa operate within a particular social, political and economic environment which has shaped the way that affordable housing is or could be delivered. A Certified Housing Practitioner needs to be aware of the main elements of this framework and how it shapes the delivery of affordable housing in West Africa. In particular, a Certified Housing Practitioner will:

- 1.1. Have a broad knowledge of the history of housing development in West Africa and the aims and aspirations of the Governments of Nigeria and/or Ghana to create more and better homes.
- 1.2. Be aware of the main types of housing providers that currently operate in Nigeria and/or Ghana and the different legal structures and sources of capital financing.
- 1.3. Understand the variety of governance arrangements and policy instruments that apply to the different forms of housing providers.
- 1.4. Understand option appraisal systems and how they can be applied in West Africa.

- 1.5. Understand the role of each level of government and the roles of government agencies in enabling affordable housing through working with private developers.
- 1.6. Understand the main sources of finance for affordable housing in West Africa, including grants, mortgages, rent and debentures.
- 1.7. Be aware of the role of local politicians, community groups and other advocacy groups in the provision of affordable housing.
- 1.8. Understand the increasing significance of new forms of communication via the internet with particular reference to social media and how this can contribute to effective forms of consultation and communication.
- 1.9. Be able to evaluate the wider role of affordable housing provided in supporting anti poverty initiatives and encouraging employment opportunities.

2 **Managing Buildings**

Housing professionals are responsible for the management and maintenance of a substantial capital asset. They need to ensure that it is well maintained under strict quality assurance systems to both protect the capital investment and improve the quality of life for their residents, especially in the climate of buildings collapsing in several towns/cities in the region. To do this, they need to know the main principles of housing construction and design standards with specific reference to modern methods of construction and to be able to identify common problems in the properties they manage. In particular, a Certified Housing Practitioner will:

- 2.1 Understand the main principles of constructing residential buildings, including: foundations, roofs, walls, insulation, floor coverings
- 2.2 Understand the main principles of multi-residential building construction including building systems and utility services
- 2.3 Be able to identify the types of damage that can occur to residential dwellings, understand their impact and know what action is required to rectify the problem
- 2.4 Understand and be able to identify adverse building conditions (including damp, condensation, mould, insect infestation) and be able to source a solution
- 2.5 Be able to respond to routine maintenance requests
- 2.6 Understand the value of planned maintenance and be able to prepare and carry-out a long-term maintenance plan

- 2.7 Be able to complete a competitive purchasing process for contracted building and maintenance work.
- 2.8 Understand the process of contract management, including: specifying work required, tendering procedures, roles and responsibilities of others during the contract, relevant legislation, statutory responsibilities
- 2.9 Understand the importance of energy conservation and how housing providers can contribute and incorporate it into decision-making
- 2.10 Be aware of modern building materials and their properties in producing affordable housing
- 2.11 Be aware of relevant legislation, codes, by-laws, etc., such as a building code, fire code and implications for building management
- 2.12 Be able to deal with emergencies in accordance with established protocol
- 2.13 Understand risk management principles
- 2.14 Understand the roles and responsibilities of building staff and contractors with special reference to health and safety responsibilities.
- 2.15 Understand Housing of Multiple Occupation and requirements for ensuring safety.
- 2.16 Understand how essential utilities are provided and maintained.

3 Housing Management

Housing professionals are directly involved in delivering housing management services to their residents. It is important that they understand the range of housing management services expected from a competent housing professional and that they are aware of current good practice in the delivery of housing management services within West Africa and by using good practice examples from overseas. In particular, a Certified Housing Practitioner will:

- 3.1. Understand how demand for social housing is managed and how priorities are set through the collection of relevant data to assess need.
- 3.2. Be able to match waiting list applicants to suitable vacancies
- 3.3. Be able to identify the need for an assessment of a potential or existing tenant's ability to live independently
- 3.4. Understand the principles of eviction prevention, be aware of and understand current good practice and be able to apply it to their own organisation
- 3.5. Understand leases and occupancy agreements

- 3.6. Understand good practice on rent collection
- 3.7. Understand the principles behind community participation and how this can enhance the quality of life for the residents
- 3.8. Understand the sources of conflict between residents and be aware of good practice in resolving disputes
- 3.9. Understand the principles of community safety and crime prevention and be aware of good practice
- 3.10. Understand why customer service is important for social housing providers and be aware of good practice
- 3.11. Understand any relevant legislation governing the landlord and tenant relationship (e.g. Human Rights, Privacy, etc.) and the rights and responsibilities of tenants.
- 3.12. Understand the eviction process for tenants.
- 3.13. Understand the role of other agencies, including: the police, mental health agencies, government agencies, health services.
- 3.14. Understand the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationship with funding organisations
- 3.15. Understand how housing organisations, including trade associations such as REDAN and GREDA, can practically contribute to employment opportunities and economic development for their communities.

4. **Managing People and Organisations**

Typically, housing professionals are employees of the government, a government agency or a property management company or they are the sole practitioner responsible for overseeing contractors, dealing with suppliers and managing relationships within the housing provider and external relationships with other agencies. Other housing professionals, working in larger organisations, are less likely to be involved in everything but it is still important that they understand how their organisations function. In particular, a Certified Housing Practitioner will:

4.1 People and Relationship Management

1. Understand the concept of discipline at work and be aware of current good practice in managing staff performance
2. Be aware of the main components of employment law in Nigeria and/or Ghana.
3. Be aware of occupational health and safety legislation
4. Understand the principles of collective agreements and union relations where they exist
5. Understand the principles of negotiation and be aware of negotiation techniques
6. Be able to manage their own time
7. Have an understanding of how teams work effectively and be able to work as an effective team member

4.2 Financial Management

- B1 Understand the principles of financial management and be able to apply them to a housing provider
- B2 Understand funding agreements and reporting requirements (Municipal, State, Federal)
- B3 Understand how operating budgets are created and managed
- B4 Understand how capital budgets are created and managed
- B5 Understand the principles of organisational audit
- B6 Understand standard accounting practice and how it applies to housing providers (i.e. internal controls; receivables and payables; signing authorities)
- B7 Understand the principles of efficient procurement (tendering; contract awarding; code of ethics; accountability)

4.3 Asset Protection and Risk Management

- C1 Understand the role of insurance for housing providers including: testing insurance price; experience rating; insurance claim; insurance claim management; insurance claim risk assessment,
- C2 Understand the key elements of managing capital investment funding
- C3 Understand capital or building assessments

4.4 Governance/Board Relations Management

Understand the role of the governing board of a housing provider and the information that should be provided to them

Understand how to report to a board

4.5 Administration

E1 Understand the importance of a code of ethics for housing professionals and be able to manage conflicts of interest and confidentiality issues when they arise at work

E2 Understand the principles of contract law

E3 Understand the principles of marketing as they apply to housing providers, particularly brand management

E4 Be able to write business reports which set out a clear business case and make coherent recommendations

E5 Be able to communicate effectively with a wide range of people, including: tenants, other professionals, politicians and work colleagues

E6 Be able to organise and administer a housing office

E7 Have basic IT skills, including: word processing, use of spread sheets, the ability to access information from the internet, ability to set up and use a database

E8 Have the ability to plan own training and development needs

E9 Be able to plan, prioritise and manage own work time

E10 Have the ability to manage projects in accordance with time and budget constraints

Professional Status

Although the Certified Housing Practitioner will not have reached the full Chartered membership level this stage of membership will provide a strong foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills in housing management. It should also introduce practitioners to the fundamentals of professionalism and what this means in a practical setting; working to a code of professional conduct which implies honesty and integrity in the workplace, behaving in a way which does not bring the profession into disrepute, setting personal

development goals and carrying out continuous professional development in learning to maintain and develop up to date knowledge and expertise in housing.

Chartered CIH Member

Chartered CIH Member sets out the expectations of a fully qualified housing professional in West Africa. People who have achieved this level will be able to reflect on their own practice with a view to continuous improvement. They will understand how affordable housing works in Nigeria and/or Ghana and the relationship with other agencies. They will be eager to learn about alternative ways to deliver affordable housing and use this knowledge to challenge the way that their organisation delivers housing in a social context and be able to lead the strategic development of their organisation to maximise the benefits to the communities they serve.

The main expectations of what Chartered CIH Members should know and be able to do are set out below.

5 Housing Policy

Housing professionals work within a broader social, political and economic environment. They need to understand how this framework has shaped the nature of housing and related services so that they can operate effectively within it. In particular, a CIH Chartered Member will:

- 5.1 Know the main stages in the history of federal and state level housing policy in the last 20-30 years and understand how this has helped to shape the current provision of housing.
- 5.2 Understand the demography and needs profile of the country/state/region they work in.
- 5.3 Understand the relationship between housing policy and wider social policy development.
- 5.4 Know how to access information about the major current issues in housing policy in Nigeria and/or Ghana.
- 5.5 Understand the relationship between affordable housing and other forms of housing and how this is reflected in housing policy options

- 5.6 Understand the relationship between the policy framework and the formulation of housing legislation
- 5.7 Understand how slums can be transformed into affordable housing for those who cannot participate in the open housing market
- 5.8 Understand the nature of homelessness and the range of potential policy responses
- 5.9 Be aware that housing policy and housing provision is not the same in all countries and be able to make comparisons with other countries
- 5.10 Be able to analyse financial and other data and interpret trends and research findings
- 5.11 Understand how micro and macro economic policy can contribute to developing sustainable communities
- 5.12 Understand the role of financial institutions in supporting the development of affordable housing options

6 Asset Management

Housing professionals are responsible for the development, maintenance and redevelopment of a substantial capital asset. A fully qualified housing professional needs to understand how to manage this asset. In particular, a CIH Member will:

- 6.1 Understand the process of property development and redevelopment, including: the roles of other professionals, the acquisition of land, planning regulations and other relevant legislation
- 6.2 Understand the options for (re)development of affordable housing
- 6.3 Know the major types of housing design in West Africa
- 6.4 Understand the urban and regional planning process in Nigeria/Ghana
- 6.5 Understand the geography, climate and economy of Nigeria and/or Ghana and how they relate to regional variations in the housing market.

7 Housing and Society

Social housing provides a wide range of affordable accommodation and support services to residents. Housing professionals need to understand the social, cultural and economic processes that have shaped the lives of social housing residents so that they can

develop an informed and sensitive approach to the delivery of affordable housing in their localities. In particular, a CIH Chartered Member will:

- 7.1 Understand the diverse economic and cultural backgrounds reflected in the composition of housing residents
- 7.2 Understand the extent of poverty in West Africa and be aware of poverty initiatives
- 7.3 Understand the ethnic and cultural diversity in West Africa and the implications for the delivery of housing services
- 7.4 Understand the main demographic trends and settlement patterns in Nigeria and/or Ghana and the implications for future housing needs
- 7.5 Understand community development needs and understand the nature of possible conflicts in communities
- 7.6 Understand the processes that lead to the development of “problem neighbourhoods”
- 7.7 Understand the nature of social problems (such as, drug dependence, alcohol, mental illness, prostitution, domestic violence, transient lifestyles) and the implications for service delivery
- 7.8 Understand why/how people become homeless and be able to tie that understanding to the formulation of municipal community housing and homelessness plans
- 7.9 Understand human rights and accessibility laws.

8 Organisational Strategy

Affordable housing provides an important service to local communities across West Africa. Housing professionals manage significant physical and human resources to deliver this service. It is important that these resources are well managed and used to provide the maximum benefit to improve localities. To do this, housing professionals need to challenge themselves and lead their organisations to be the best that they can be. In particular, a CIH Chartered Member will:

- 8.1 Demonstrate ability to manage work in teams, including a dispersed workforce
- 8.2 Understand the principles of workforce planning and succession planning for employees and boards of directors
- 8.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the main provisions of employment law and how they impact upon housing providers

- 8.4 Understand the principles of managing and leading change in housing organisations
- 8.5 Understand the importance of developing and fostering leadership at all levels within housing organisations, among residents and within communities
- 8.6 Be aware of different styles of leadership and be able to apply them within a housing context
- 8.7 Understand the principles of risk management and be able to manage organisational risk resulting from, for example, fire, flood, power outages, explosions, labour strife/disruptions; pandemics and be able to develop a business continuity plan
- 8.8 Understand the concept of professionalism and what it means to be a housing professional
- 8.9 Be able to develop effective working partnerships with other agencies, such as, hospitals, police, emergency medical services, voluntary organisations, public health and community health
- 8.10 Be able to develop and implement a strategic plan that drives performance improvement through efficient use of resources.
- 8.11 Understand the importance of management accounts and be able to use them as a tool for managing organisational performance
- 8.12 Understand the principles of financial management and be able to apply them to the development of an organisational strategy for housing organisations
- 8.13 Understand business strategy options (including, mergers, outsourcing, group structures or shared service mergers, group structures or shared service arrangements) for housing providers
- 8.14 Understand the principles of performance monitoring and be able to develop appropriate key performance indicator measures of, for example, arrears, vacant days, on-call/after-hours usage, response times, tenant satisfaction, work orders, financial measures, human resource measures
- 8.15 Understand the importance of community involvement (including, tenant engagement, capacity building, improving community facilities) for housing organisations
- 8.16 Be able to interpret key data sources and commission others to conduct housing research in their localities
- 8.17 Be aware that operating agreements will come to an end, understand the impact that this will have on the viability of

housing providers and be able to evaluate the strategic options available to affected housing providers.

Continuing Professional Development

A Chartered member of CIH must maintain their professional development through a process of planning a professional development programme and recording their achievement in meeting their learning objectives. In addition a Chartered member of CIH will continuously reflect on their professional development to ensure that they are maintaining a high level of knowledge and understanding of housing practice. Chartered members of CIH will also actively contribute to the profession by participating in professional body activities and supporting those who are working towards chartered status in housing.

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