

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE

HOUSING SERVICE

QUALITY MANUAL

QUALITY IN SOCIAL HOUSING

Document Issue and Revision Statement

Responsible Officer	Head of Housing						
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Amendment and Authorisation Record

Date	Author	Paragraph ref	Nature of change	Authorised by
26/06/2003	CM	Page 3 / Paragraph 1	Remove reference to hard copies	CM
26/03/2003	CM	Page 4 / Paragraph 3	Remove references to Service Manager Operational Services	CM
04/05/2006	DLT	All paragraphs	Document format upgraded / various paragraphs reworded (Plain English, etc)	CM
05/05/2006	CM	Introduction Section	Exemptions paragraph removed. No longer applicable.	CM
06/06/2006	DLT	Page 11 / Paragraph 7.6	.. "housing officers" amended to read .. "housing and technical officers".	HMT
06/06/2006	DLT	Page 15 / Appendix 1	Staff structure diagram qualified as Indicative only , as it is a CHRIS System & not an accurate representation.	HMT
12/06/2006	DLT	Page 10 / Paragraph 7.1d	HMS database specified as automated means of adopting legislative/regulatory requirement changes.	CM
19/06/2007	ARC	All paragraphs	References to Community Services Department removed. Job titles updated. Organisational chart updated.	CM
12/02/2008	LS	12.1 General	The following sentence added to the bottom of this section: The procedure for Corrective actions is detailed in QP04.	CM

27/01/2009	MH	All paragraphs	References to Executive Services Department removed and replaced with Department of Education and Social Care and new organisational charts	CM
23/2/2009	MH	All paragraphs	All references to ISO 9001:2000 changed to ISO 9001.	CM
18/01/2010	MH	Introduction 9.0 Appendix 1 Appendix 2	One reference to Fort Road changed. Replaced reference to OP13 to OP42 Updated the Staff Charts Updated Management Chart to include Single Outcome Agreement.	CM
26/1/2010	MH	Introduction	All references to ISO 9001:2000 changed to ISO 9001:2008 following the SGS audit on 25/1/2010.	CM
27/06/2011	MH	Appendix1	Update to the Staffing Structures	AMJ

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DISTRIBUTION OF CONTROLLED AND UNCONTROLLED QUALITY MANUALS

All housing staff will have access to the housing Intranet site and should refer to this site for the controlled version of the Quality Manual.

All hard copies (printed copies) should in whole or in part be considered as uncontrolled.

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Service is based at 6 North Ness Business Park, Lerwick and delivers the housing service for Shetland Islands Council, as part of the Development Directorate.

The management structure is set out as an organisation chart in **Appendix 1** to this manual.

A Head of Service leads the Housing Service. The Service Manager - Business Support and the Service Manager - Housing and Property assist the Head of Service. The service is divided into six functional areas.

The Quality Management System (QMS) covers the activities of each section within Housing. Interfaces with other departments and sections are described within the QMS.

Shetland Islands Council, of which the Housing Service is part, is an Equal Opportunities Employer and any reference in the QMS to a single gender is incidental. It does not exclude a person from either sex holding the job or position referred to.

The Quality Manual describes the way in which the Housing Service has established the QMS to meet the needs of its customers and for the provision of services within Shetland Islands Council. It is based on the requirements of the British Standard EN ISO 9001:2008. **Appendix 2** to this manual sets out the Management System used to meet these needs.

1.0. QUALITY POLICY

The quality policy of the Housing Service is to provide a housing management service, which meets all of the specified requirements of Shetland Islands Council and its tenants, applicants and the general public. To achieve this policy, the Housing Service has identified and defined the following quality objectives:

- To adhere to all SIC corporate policies,
- To provide a first class service to its customers in terms of timely response, accurate information, courtesy, best value and a “right first time” approach,
- To work as a team, motivated and focused on the expectations of our customers, in providing the best possible housing available to meet the needs of our customers,
- To treat sub-contractors and suppliers as part of the quality team in order to ensure that customer needs are met in full,
- To treat staff as a valuable resource and provide the training and support necessary to conduct their duties efficiently and conscientiously,
- To achieve and maintain the standards as set out in this Quality Manual,
- To adhere to all legal and statutory requirements imposed by the various regulatory bodies,
- To display this policy in public and abide by its objectives.

It is the duty and responsibility of all housing personnel to understand this policy and ensure that it is reflected in the quality of their daily work and activities.

The Head of Housing Services is ultimately accountable for the effective operation of the Quality Management System and thereby the quality of the service provided by housing staff.

Signed: Date:
Head of Housing Services

Signed: Date:
Tenant Representative

Signed: Date:
Member Representative

2.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Organisation and Resources

The organisation chart shown in **Appendix 1** indicates the interrelation of personnel within housing. Personnel assigned to their tasks and activities are all qualified on the basis of formal qualification, training, or appropriate experience. Records of training are maintained.

2.2 Responsibility and Authority

The responsibilities and authority required of all personnel are documented and defined, if appropriate, within the relevant Quality or Operational Procedure or within this Quality Manual.

The service managers have overall delegated responsibility and authority for:

- Day to day operation of the housing service,
- Initiating actions to prevent non-conformity of service to customers,
- Ensuring that service problems and non-conformity are properly recorded,
- Providing solutions, with the help of staff, to overcome service problems and non-conformity,
- Verifying that solutions to problems are effective and permanent,
- Controlling work activities until the non-conformity or the problem has been corrected,
- For further clarity, each member of staff has been issued with a job description defining their job purpose and their principal accountabilities. Copies of these job descriptions are held on each personal file.

2.3 Management representative

The Head of Housing Services is the appointed management representative and irrespective of other duties, has responsibility and authority for the housing service. Senior Officers are responsible for operational management of their own section and for:

- Ensuring that the Quality Management System (QMS) is maintained.
- Ensuring that the performance and effectiveness of the QMS is properly reported at the periodic management reviews and improvements to the system are made on the basis of these reports.

2.4 Management Review

The operation of the quality manual is to be subject to an annual management review. This review is to be convened by the Head of Housing Services to a prepared agenda. The method for conducting a management review is detailed in Quality Procedure - Management Review (QP1).

3.0. QUALITY SYSTEM

The Quality Management System (QMS) is operated by the Housing Service and is maintained by the Head of Housing Services.

The purpose of the QMS is to ensure that the organisation is operated in such a manner as to meet the requirements of Shetland Islands Council and its customers. The system has been designed to facilitate internal and external audit review.

The QMS is based upon the following five levels of documentation:

Level 1 Quality Procedures (QPs), which give specific procedural guidance on the named subject.

Level 2 Operational Procedures (OPs), which provide detailed instruction on specific tasks related directly to the service provided by housing staff.

Level 3 Policy Guidance Notes (PGNs), which relate to specific issues that arise and require a policy decision. The note is intended to be brief and used to provide a high level of consistency.

Level 4 Best practice guides (BPGs). These documents are referred to in Operational Procedures and are not regarded as “controlled documents”.

Level 5 Forms and reports.

The complexity of documentation has deliberately been minimised, due to the relatively small size of the organisation, effective internal communications, and the high skills and experience levels of its staff.

The SIC Housing Service is committed to providing the highest possible standard of service to its customers. To enable this high standard to be achieved and maintained it is crucial that work activities are planned and co-ordinated.

Where detailed planning of activities is considered essential, flow charts have been developed and included in Operational Procedures to ensure timing, cost effectiveness and quality of service are delivered to the clients and customers.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the QMS, certain records are prepared and maintained in accordance with the relevant Quality Procedures.

The Housing Service does not produce a “product” and considers the use of quality plans and other manufacturing controls as inappropriate to the organisations’ business activity.

4.0. DOCUMENT & DATA CONTROL

4.1 General

Documents used by the Housing Service that affect the quality of service include:

- This Quality Manual.
- Quality Procedures.
- Operational Procedures.

- Drawings & Sketches.
- Codes & Standards.
- Forms, leaflets and information booklets.
- Computer databases.
- Manufacturers catalogues and data.

4.2 Document Approval and Issue

All documents produced by or on behalf of the organisation are reviewed and approved by the Head of Housing Services, or their nominated deputy, prior to issue.

Controls are exercised to ensure that documents are made available to all personnel who need them and that such information is current and valid.

Documents that, by way of their nature, cannot be controlled or updated are automatically obsolete and suitably identified as such.

4.3 Changes

Amendments and changes to documents are reviewed and approved by the Head of Housing Services, or their nominated deputy. Changes are suitably identified to ensure that all personnel are aware of them. The methods for controlling documents are detailed in Quality Procedure - Document and Data Control (QP02).

5.0. PURCHASING

5.1 General

Purchasing of sub contract services is controlled to ensure purchasing requirements are specified and complied with by suppliers and subcontractors. Various methods of procurement are used for different types of work e.g. Repairs, Programmed Maintenance, or Major Works. These methods are detailed within procedure Quality Procedure - Purchasing (QP03).

5.2 Evaluation of Suppliers and Subcontractors

Subcontractors approved by Shetland Islands Council provide works and services. The Housing Service does not use unapproved organisations.

The Housing Service advises on the selection of sub contractors and suppliers, and also on the periodic review of such providers. The Housing Service also reports to the Council on the performance of sub contractors and their ability to meet the needs of the Housing Service and its customers.

Purchasing documents vary depending on the type of work required, ranging from full JCT contracts to single works or purchase orders. All orders and contracts are reviewed and authorised before being released to a sub contractor or supplier.

5.3 Verification of Purchased Suppliers & Services

Where the Housing Service proposes to verify work, materials and services at the supplier's premises, this shall be specified in the contract documents.

The Council, Members and customer representatives are afforded access to all information relevant to the contract.

6.0. IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

Identification and traceability of a specific product or sub component is not relevant to the business of the Housing service. However, identification of customers and Council assets and traceability of accounts and other records is required.

The use of customer files, computer databases and Operational Procedures help to ensure that full use is made of the Council's property in providing the most appropriate housing to prospective tenants.

7.0. PROCESS CONTROL

7.1 General

The process of providing a Social Housing service directly to the public on behalf of the Shetland Islands Council is complex and disparate. There are many different aspects involved.

The scope of this quality manual applies to all Shetland Islands Council, Housing Service staff, without any exclusions. This is to include provision of a housing administration, construction – design, new build development and maintenance service to the Shetland Islands Council.

Having many diverse operations incorporated within one service makes it almost impossible to identify and plan for every conceivable eventuality. However, certain controls have been provided which help to provide a quality service. These controls include:

- a. A comprehensive set of Operational Procedures defining the manner and method of operation to follow, where it has been found that the lack of such procedures may compromise the quality of service provided.
- b. A comprehensive set of Risk Assessments defining hazards, risks and precautions to carry out procedures that meet the requirements of the service.
- c. Provision of a good working environment, suitable office furniture and fittings, and an up to date computer system to facilitate efficiency and consistency.
- d. Compliance with current legislation and reference standards is aided by the provision of automatic updates to the Housing Management System database.
- e. Where practicable, service criteria are stipulated in the Operational Procedures in order to promote consistency and set minimum acceptable standards.

7.2 Public Service

A reception area is provided where members of the public can call in person, telephone, or write regarding all kinds of housing matters. All communications are recorded and processed so that the customer's needs are met.

7.3 Homelessness and Housing Advice

Customers are advised of their legal rights and responsibilities, and their eligibility for help under the Council's obligations. Dealing with people under these circumstances can sometimes be difficult and stressful.

7.4 Property Maintenance and Building Management

This includes carrying out the survey duties and contract management of the SIC Capital Program, and cyclical maintenance and response repairs to Council housing. Also Included are adaptations of Council housing for disabled persons, estate surveys, compensation claims and insurance claims.

7.5 Rent Setting, Collection and Accounting

The Housing Service is responsible for advising SIC on the setting of rent levels and charges. The collection and posting of rent payments and adjustments to rent accounts is the responsibility of SIC Finance Services. The timeliness and accuracy of information depends on effective communications between both services.

7.6 Tenancy Management/Estate Management

The Housing Service is responsible for the provision of Council Housing within Shetland. The service includes housing applications, registering applicants, allocating properties, letting agreements, and providing advice and help with transfers, swaps and exchange properties. Also included is providing housing advice and information to tenants, applicants and the general public.

As with all areas of human activity and interaction there will be illegal acts committed, disputes, complaints, nuisance, and wanton damage to property. These problems are dealt with mainly by housing and technical officers who are responsible for the enforcement of tenancy conditions/tenancy management (as stipulated in SST agreements).

7.7 Consultation and Information to Tenants

The Housing Service must comply with all statutory requirements and obligations, such as providing information and consulting on a wide range of housing matters, including notification of major works, etc. The Housing Service must also provide annual reports to its customers in line with legal requirements.

7.8 Management of Sheltered Housing

The Housing Service employs a number of Housing Support Workers (HSW) working in sheltered complexes. HSWs are supervised by a Senior Housing Officer – Supported Accommodation, who periodically visits complexes to ensure that they are run properly and efficiently. Other areas of activity include alarm systems, cleaning, TV licenses, etc: all services that are vital for the wellbeing and quality of life of residents.

7.9 Financial Management

Budget Responsible Officers within the Housing Service are accountable for the satisfactory functioning of the organisation by holding responsibility for procurement, payments and invoicing as appropriate. They are also responsible for monitoring the budgets and identifying corrective action as required.

8.0. INSPECTION AND TESTING

8.1 General

The Housing Service is not involved in or responsible for checking, inspecting or testing products. As a general principle, Operational Procedures and / or best practice guides are provided where it is considered necessary, and inspection records are maintained. Reports of inspections are available to all auditors.

8.2 Staff Responsibility

All staff are responsible for checking the quality of their own work in terms of accuracy, clarity, completeness and “getting it right first time”.

8.3 Surveyors Duties

Part of a surveyor’s duties is to carry out certain building inspections to establish the condition of buildings, and to satisfy themselves that subcontractors are complying with contractual obligations.

8.4 Inspections

Inspections may be carried out during building work in the case of a new contract, or in a percentage of post work inspections for repair contracts. In some instances properties may be inspected prior to any work being started, such as insurance work or remedial work to void properties, etc.

To ensure customer cases and reports are satisfactorily progressed at all times, including staff absence / holiday’s etc, it is important to know their status. Where such identification of status is required it is specified within the relevant Operational Procedure by a flow diagram. Alternatively, the person on the case may simply include a memo or a file note to describe the progress, date and future actions required if an absence is anticipated.

9.0. CONTROL OF NON CONFORMITY

9.1 Control

The term non-conformity can have several different meanings, and for the purposes of the Housing Service it includes the following:

- a. Buildings and properties which, for whatever reason, do not conform to minimum standards and are either unlettable or causing difficulties for customers.

Operational procedures exist to ensure that problems are dealt with as soon as possible.

- b. Non-conformity to the Quality Management System. This may take the form of non-adherence to procedures and instructions, or the procedures themselves may be obsolete, deficient or otherwise inadequate. This type of non-conformity should be found during periodical internal quality audits that are performed under QP06 – Internal Quality Audits.
- c. Non-conformity in the services provided by the Housing service. This type of problem may manifest itself following a customer suggestion, a complaint or a Council complaint. OP42 – Customer Feedback specifies the action to be taken in the event of complaint.
- d. Sub-contractor non-conformity, where a sub-contractor does not comply with contractual or specification requirements. Various operational procedures exist which define the method for dealing with such non-conformities.

10.0. CORRECTIVE ACTION

10.1 General

The Housing service recognises that to continuously improve its quality of service it is not enough only to rectify non-conformities. It is also necessary to eliminate causes or potential causes of non-conformity.

10.2 Corrective Action

Minor errors and discrepancies occur occasionally in most organisations. The following indicators are known to show that corrective action may be required:

- a. Customer complaints and dissatisfaction.
- b. Supplier and sub-contractor non-conformity.
- c. Problems with communication, understanding and reviewing customer's needs and requirements.
- d. Deficiencies in the Quality Management System.
- e. Negative comments from internal audits, external auditors and other assessors.

Officers must be vigilant to ensure that corrective action is taken when there is a legislative, corporate or organisational change, and ensure that Quality and Operational Procedures, and other documents, are amended to reflect change.

Changes may be made to the Quality Management System as a result of identified corrective actions. Such changes are recorded. QP04 - Corrective Action has been produced to control corrective actions.

11.0. CONTROL OF QUALITY RECORDS

11.1 General

The Housing service has identified the need to maintain quality records, to demonstrate and verify effective service provision and the functioning of the Quality Management System.

Procedure QP 5 – Control of Records has been developed to provide for effective control of quality records, including relevant sub-contractor records. Such controls include location, filing method, storage, retention time and final disposal. All records are kept in such a way as to prevent deterioration.

12.0. QUALITY AUDITS

12.1 General

The Housing Service produces a schedule of planned internal quality audits based on the importance of the activity involved. The purpose of audits is to verify that work and quality activities comply with Operational and Quality Procedures, and to maintain the effectiveness of the Quality Management System.

Audits are carried out by trained personnel who are independent of the area or activity being audited. Such personnel are drawn from staff, members, tenants or other agency as directed by the Council. The Head of Housing (or delegated officer) is responsible for planning and co-ordinating quality audits.

All quality audits are recorded. Where deficiencies are noted, timely corrective action is taken by the personnel responsible for the task, area or system.

A summary of audit reports, findings, Corrective Action Forms (CAFs) and follow up activities are included in periodic management reviews.

The procedure for Quality audits is detailed in QP06 – Internal Quality Audits.

The procedure for Corrective actions is detailed in QP04.

13.0. TRAINING

13.1 General

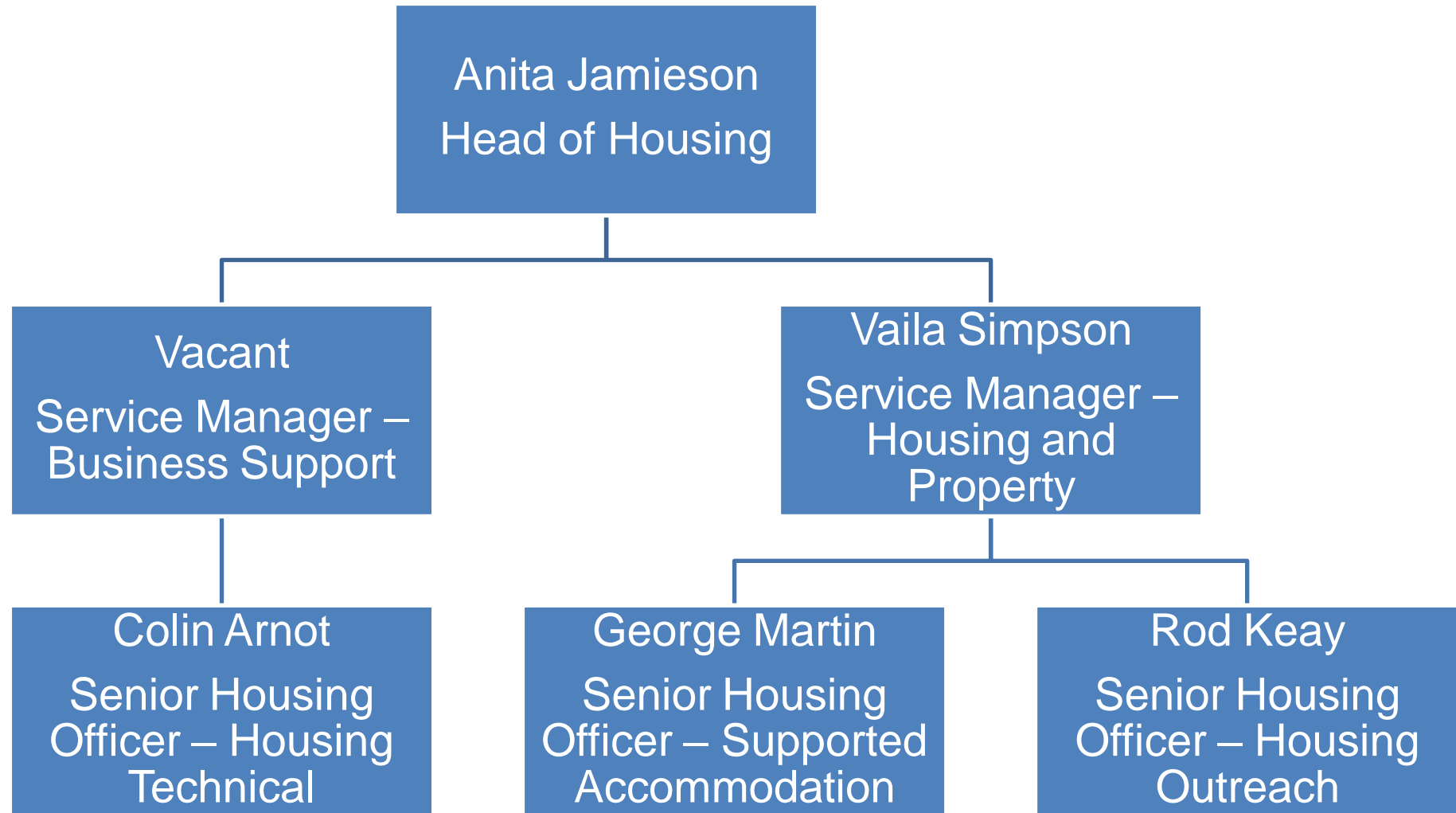
It is recognised that the success of the Housing Service depends upon maintaining a competent work force, with the necessary skills and experience to meet specified requirements and customer expectations.

The Housing Service has access to the Councils training resources and facilities. When training needs for staff are identified, suitable courses are arranged.

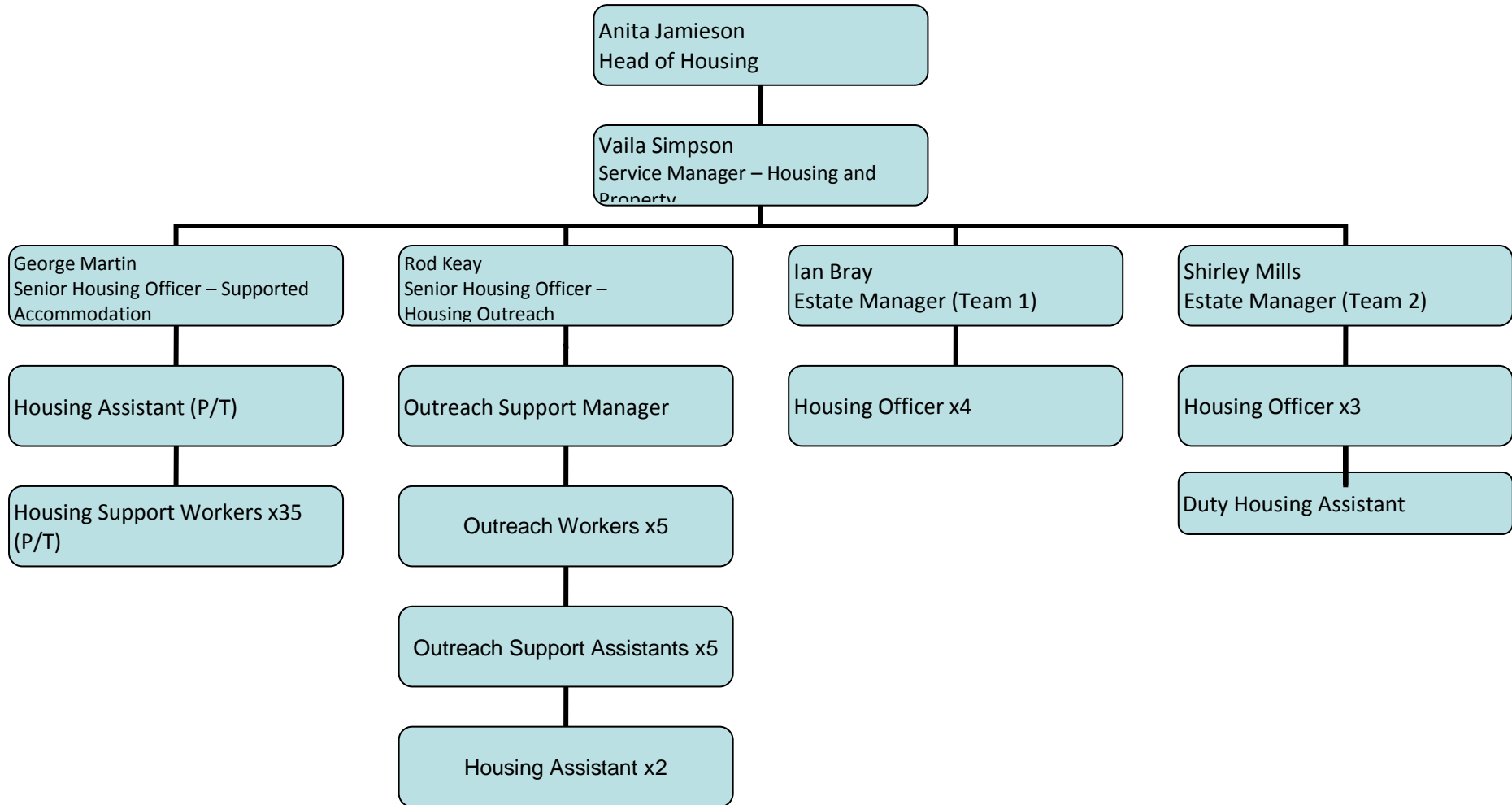
In-house training is also provided to ensure that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and job functions. All staff are appraised at least once per year to identify if training is required. Appraisals and training requirements are also discussed during management reviews. Training records are kept by the Housing Service. Procedure QP07 – Training details the current arrangements for staff training.

Appendix 1 Organisational Charts

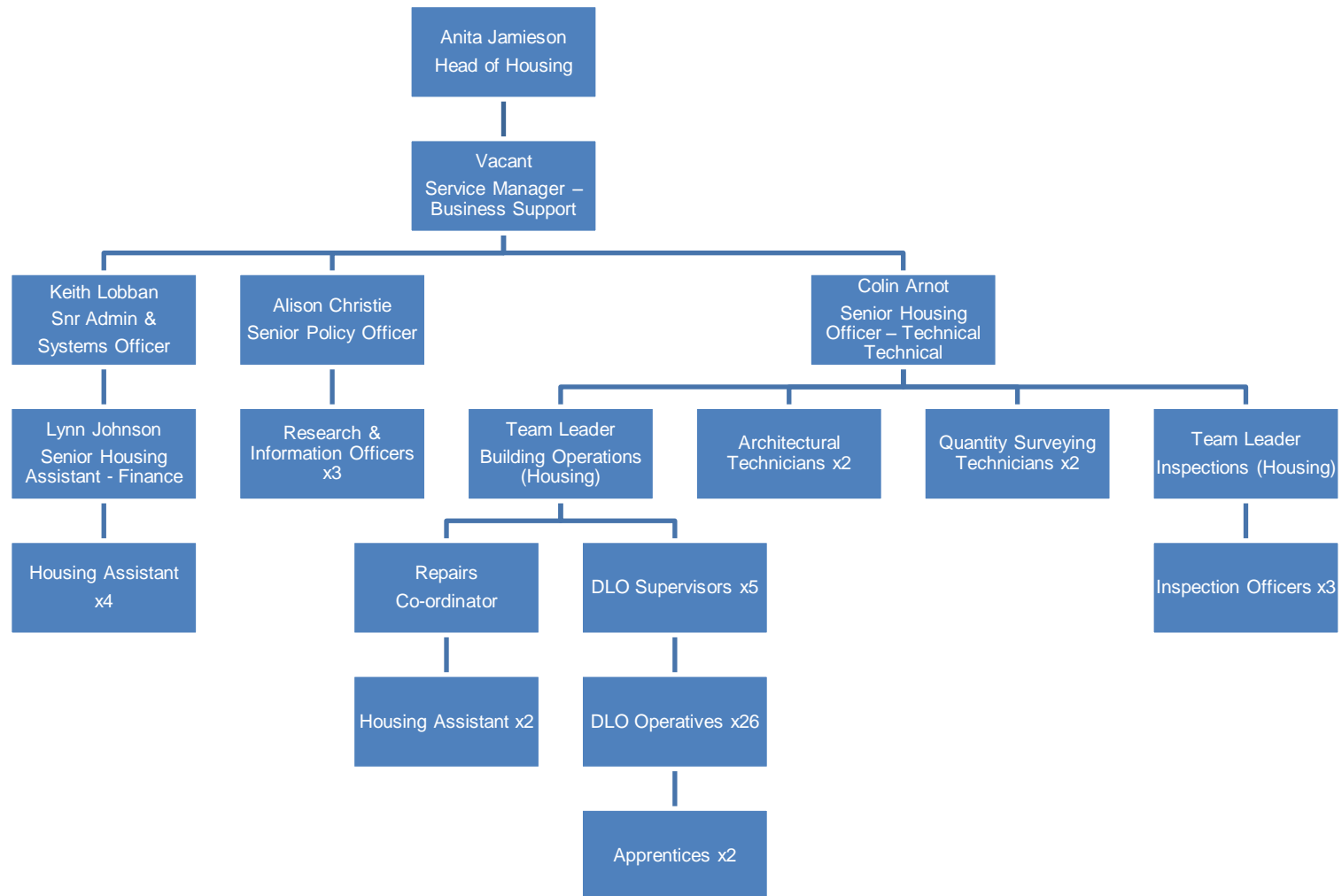
Shetland Island Council
Education and Social Care Department
Structural Diagram
Housing Management Team (HMT)



Shetland Island Council
Education and Social Care Department
Structural Diagram
Housing and Property Team

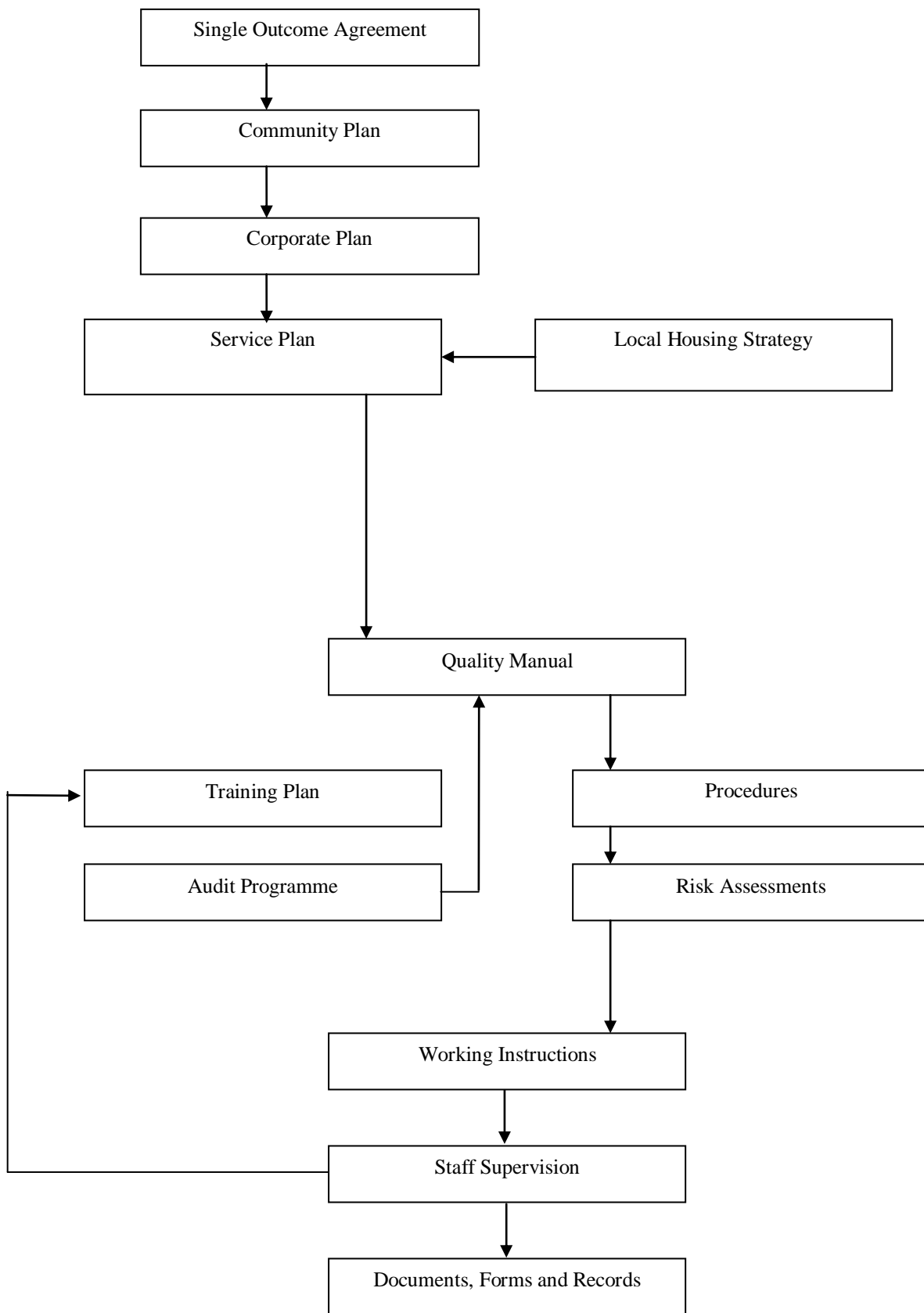


Shetland Island Council
 Education and Social Care Department
 Structural Diagram
 Housing Business Support



Appendix 2

Management Systems Chart – Housing Service



Issue No.	1	Revision No.	0	Status:	Draft / Active / Obsolete
Approval Date:	May 06	Approved by:	HMT	Doc Ref:	Man Systems Chart
	Jan 2010		AJ		Man Systems Chart