

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? <i>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.</i>	Yes	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon: <i>Our complaints policy has procedures to deal with persistent and unreasonable complaints. These are dealt with on a case by case basis</i>	Yes	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	<i>Our complaints policy details the alternative formats available and how to request these</i>	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Yes	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		<i>No - not currently</i>

	Is any third stage optional for residents?	Yes	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1	
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	<i>Tenants are able to ask for a review of a decision made under level 1 and 2 of the procedure, with the final level 3 decision taken by the Executive Head on behalf of the Chief Executive</i>	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	<i>The Majority of complaints are resolved at stage 1</i>	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	<i>Any complaints escalated to stage 2 or 3 are resolved with a very small number being referred to the Housing Ombudsman (in 2019/20 this amounted to 1 referral)</i>	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 	<i>Stage 1 - majority (small minority required extension, all responded to within extension deadline) Stage 2 - majority (with extension – all)</i>	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	<i>Majority, with only one being referred to the Housing Ombudsman in 2019/20</i>	

5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	0	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	<i>Any improvements identified by complaints officer are actioned</i>	
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?	<i>Plans to share through annual report to residents</i> <i>Shared with Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel</i> <i>Plans to share through annual report being developed</i>	
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Yes	
	What changes have we made?	<i>Enhancing the role of the Ombudsman throughout procedure</i>	