

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form (December 2020)

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><i>Our revised policy mirrors this definition: 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></p>	Yes	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	Yes	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon <i>The majority of situations where a complaint will not be considered are covered with the complaints policy that is tenant approved</i></p>	Yes	
2	Accessibility		
	<p>Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?</p> <p><i>Complaints can be raised by phone, e mail, on the web site, via social media, face to face and through the self service portal</i></p>	Yes	
	<p>Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?</p>	Yes	
	<p>Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?</p> <p><i>Forms part of the Equal Opportunities policy and the complaints policy</i></p>	Yes	
	<p>Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?</p> <p><i>This aspect to be strengthened through use of social media, ezines and articles on the website</i></p>	Yes	
3	Complaints team and process		
	<p>Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?</p> <p><i>Customer Experience team dedicated to complaints handling</i></p>	Yes	
	<p>Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?</p> <p><i>Early resolution is promoted and monitored as a Key Performance Indicator</i></p>	Yes	
	<p>Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?</p> <p><i>This is part of the complaints procedure</i></p>	Yes	

	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making? <i>Emh has a 2 stage process and residents are part of the panel at stage 2</i>	Yes	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		No
	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? <i>CRM & Complaint Management system used to manage process and correspondence</i>	Yes	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? <i>Concerns- 93% resolution, stage 1 87%.</i>		
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?	Yes	
	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>Based on the number of complaints at stage one in 19/20</i>	87%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? <i>Based on the number of complaints that proceed to stage 2 in 19/20</i>	88%	
	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) 	100%	
	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>Figure based on number of complaints resolved at stage 1 =87% New Satisfaction surveys to be introduced in 2021</i>	87%	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		

	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? <i>No cases in 2019/20 & One case in 2020 was extended due to it being a complex Anti-Social Behaviour case involving multiple external agencies</i>		No
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed? <i>Ombudsman was happy with reasons and timescales</i>	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? <i>Not aware of any. Monitoring system to be set up in 2021</i>		
	What was the reason for the refusal? <i>It would be very rare that this would happen and would only be if the complaint had previously exhausted our complaints process</i>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right? <i>Investigating officers and Stage 2 panels record lessons learned from complaints and use it to shape services via service improvement groups.</i>	Yes	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <i>Many improvements have been recorded with these being listed in our annual report to tenants available via our website.</i>		
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? <i>Newsletters, social media, Service improvement groups, customer dashboard, co-ordinating committee, scrutiny panel & ezines.</i> b) the board/governing body? <i>Annual report on complaints and customer services. Quarterly report to be made to Board moving forward</i>		

	<p>c) In the Annual Report? <i>Lessons from complaints included in the annual report to tenants</i></p>		
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? <i>Yes – It has been useful as a tool to review and improve processes and communication working with residents and staff from various teams</i></p>	Yes	
	<p>What changes have we made? <i>Better communication, sophisticated reporting to include average days to respond, changes in department processes, improved collaborative working between departments.</i></p>		