

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				Comments
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	
A	<p>Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?</p> <p><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></p>	✓		
B	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	✓		
C	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon:</p>	✓		The complaints process is on the Council's web pages and has exclusions where a complaint will not be considered, these exclusions are reasonable and fair to residents and take into account other existing processes. They are also in line with the Complaint Handling Code
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓		Yes, including in person or via a representative, in writing via email, letter social media and the website.

	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓		Accessibility for all Policy
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		✓	Information regarding the Council's Complaints Process can be found on our website and hard copy at the Civic Centre. However further work will be undertaken to review how we can increase promotion amongst residents on both compliments and complaints. Specifically for housing, this will include articles in a quarterly tenant publication.
3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓		The Housing Management Team have taken on the Complaint Officer role.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	✓		
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	✓		
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		✓	A third stage is currently included within the policy to ensure the service had the opportunity to review and put the matter right. The third stage of a complaint is dealt with by the Chief Executive Officer. Consideration will be given to how we can include tenants in the complaints process and whether a 'Tenant Panel' could operate as the Designated Person should a tenant wish to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		✓	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	✓		
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	✓		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Stage 1

4	Communication			
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓		Residents are contacted initially to discuss their complaint and are then kept in contact during the duration of the complaint until the outcome has been determined. The resident is then written to formally with the outcome of the complaint and the options for taking this further, if dissatisfied.
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓		The resident is written to formally with the outcome of the complaint at each and the options for taking this further, if dissatisfied. As part of reviewing the self-assessment form, work will be undertaken in how we can increase the resident's involvement as part of resolving a complaint.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	✓		
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	✓		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			89% of complaints were resolved at stage one.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			11% of complaints were dealt with at stage 2
	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) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one -64% Stage one (with extension) -16% • Stage two- 63% Stage two (with extension)- 17%
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	✓		
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	✓		

	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			Currently not applicable as not specifically measured but consideration will be given to introducing this going forward.
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	✓		
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	✓		
6	Fairness in complaint handling			
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓		Covered within policy however greater promotion of this will be made via the usual resident communication channels.
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?			N/A
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?			None
	What was the reason for the refusal?			N/A
	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?	✓		
8	Continuous learning and improvement			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Individual staff training needs and implementation. Introduction of clear transparent policies, for example, Repairs & Maintenance Policy. Lessons learned database in use and regularly team meetings to discuss complaints. Performance monitoring of complaints.

				Workflows improved where issues have been identified.
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>		✓	Going forward these lessons will be reported to the Housing Committee on a yearly basis and to residents via the Council's website and Your Home publication.
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?		✓	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p>The Code has led to a review of the Complaints Policy/ Procedure and will also help shape how we can improve the policy and process going forward to assist our residents going forward.</p>			<p>The Social Housing White Paper was published on 17 November 2020 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The white paper makes seven key promises to tenants in social housing, some of which focus on an improved complaints process.</p> <p>The Code has led to a review of the Complaints Policy/ Procedure and will also now help shape how we can improve going forward and assist with meeting the commitment of the white paper.</p>