

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Completed September 2020

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>	✓	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	✓	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon? <i>The reasons are clearly set out in the policy and often linked to external factors like legislation, services provided by other organisations, alternative appeals process available.</i>	✓	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	✓	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓	
	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?	n/a	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	n/a	
	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? Update: Included in new policy.	✓	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?		✓
	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?	This information is not readily reported across housing services at present.	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		
	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) <p><i>Update: A enhanced suite of performance indicators on complaint handling has been included in the new policy / recommendation report for adoption across all council services.</i></p>		
	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	This information is not readily reported across housing services at present.	
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?	✓
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	n/a
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	Nil
	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?	<i>Policy and procedural changes, staff training</i>
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? – These are shared within the complaint response. b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? <i>Update: Recording and reporting lessons learned has been included in the updated policy.</i>	✓ ✗ ✗
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓
	What changes have we made? 1) <i>Improved reporting and monitoring</i> 2) <i>Updated definition of a complaint</i> 3) <i>Revised process</i> 4) <i>Notification of Ombudsman at every stage</i>	✓