

## Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			Comments	Actions Pending
<b>1</b>	<b>Definition of a complaint</b>	<b>Yes</b> <b>No</b>		
	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 on	✓	They clarify what is not to be considered as a complaint  We have carried out a desktop review of peer complaint policies and our exclusions are consistent with those of our peers	
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓	Phone, email, letter, chat, portal	

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	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓			Website content to be enhanced to include graphics/user friendly guidance that manages customer expectations.  By end December 2020
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓			
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	✓			To be part of ongoing marketing campaign to obtain customer feedback (not just complaints)
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>				
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓		New post created	Appoint to Complaints and Escalation Officer post in 2020
	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?		✓	Two stage process	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		✓	Two stage process	
	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?	✓			Continue to check via monthly audits of closed complaints
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Stage 1 (89% in 2019/20 + 93% in April – September 2020)	

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<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>				
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓			Continue to check via monthly audits of closed complaints
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓		At the final stage of the complaints process	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	✓			Continue to check via monthly audits of closed complaints
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	✓			
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			2019/20: 89% 2020/21 (April – September): 93%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			2019/20: 10% 2020/21 (April -September): 7%	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one Stage one (with extension)</li> <li>• Stage two Stage two (with extension)</li> </ul>			Stage One/Stage One (with extension) 2019/20: 61%/75% 2020/21 (April - September): 22%/48%  Stage Two/Stage Two (with extension) 2019/20:100%/N/A 2020/21 (April – September): 100%/N/A	Performance improvement required
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	✓			Continue to check via monthly audits of closed complaints
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	✓			Continue to check via monthly audits of closed complaints
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			Responses to survey when complaints are closed are low in number, and not a representative	Review/introduce new approach to assessing satisfaction surveys on complaint closure by end 2020

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			sample on which to assess satisfaction	
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	✓		
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	✓		
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>			
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓	Customer Feedback Policy confirms	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	✓		Assess via satisfaction surveys on complaint closure (part of action at section 4 above)
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal?		None	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	✓	Standard part of closure letter	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>			
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓	The aim of reaching a resolution as quickly as we are able is set out in the Customer Feedback Policy	
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>			

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<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>			<p>April – September 2020:</p> <p>Improvements in meeting complaint response timescales required. Increased oversight from Heads of Service.</p> <p>Taking account of alerts on our systems and integrating warnings across Orchard and DRS (our appointment system) such as only making contact during certain hours. A revised briefing has been sent out to teams to cover this</p> <p>Ensuring the weekly service charge covers actual services provided; this will continue to be addressed by the annual service charge review by Neighbourhoods and Finance teams.</p> <p>Clarification should be sought from customer and/or contact centre prior to changing priority of repair</p> <p>Customer service training day delivered to all supervisors and both SA teams; looking to roll out training more widely.</p>	
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<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>			<p>Website/Home News</p> <p>Operations Committee</p> <p>Annual report to customers</p>	
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>✓</p>			
<p>What changes have we made?</p>			<p>Changes made/pending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Feedback Policy reviewed</li> <li>• Enhanced website content planned</li> <li>• Reasonable Adjustments Policy developed</li> <li>• Designated complaints officer post created</li> <li>• Complaints procedure reduced to 2 stages</li> <li>• To renew approach to satisfaction surveys for closed complaints</li> </ul>	

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To strengthen the enaction and sharing of lessons learnt from complaints</li></ul>	
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