

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code

March 2021 review

	Yes	No	Comments
1 Definition of a complaint			
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>	X		Our approach is to accept anything as a complaint if the person says it is.
Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	X		These include service charge amounts, transfers, where subject of legal action, where subject of existing complaint, where other routes available.
Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon	X		At present they meet the Ombudsman guidelines. The policy states exclusions, but we will create a new, separate exclusions document to meet the Ombudsman's expectations.
2 Accessibility			
Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	X		Strategic Communications who manage and monitor social media will refer to the Service Resolution Team.
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	X		Yes.
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	X		Yes
Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	X		General complaints information is provided in the residents' newsletter and on our website. Changes to the complaints process will be featured in the next residents' newsletter.
3 Complaints team and process			
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	X		The Service Resolution Manager and Team.

Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	X	There will be some significant financial and policy decisions which by their nature are excluded but will be referred to the relevant Director.
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Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	X		
If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		X	Residents are involved in the process of learning from complaints but not in the decision making of individual cases.
Is any third stage optional for residents?		X	
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	x		
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	X		All official complaint correspondence is held centrally on our CRM system (Dynamics).
At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Stage 1
4 Communication			
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?		X	During Stage 1. Stage 2 is outside the Ombudsman's guidelines (20 working days), so we sometimes fail. All appeals received after 16 th February have gone through new process and are being responded to within 20 working days.
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	X		At stage 2 complainants see all papers on which a decision is made. This process is currently under review.
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	X		
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	76% 2020 figures		
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	24% 2020 figures		
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? 10 working days at stage 1 and 20 working days at stage 2			
• Stage one	90%		
Stage one (with extension)	10%		
• Stage two	0%		
Stage two (with extension)	100%		
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	X		Because the current system (pre-January 2021) relies on a second stage panel, preparing papers and convening means no cases could be dealt with within 20 days.
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	93%		

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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?		X X	This reflects the pre-January 2021 position.
6 Fairness in complaint handling			
Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	X		
If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	X		
How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	1		
What was the reason for the refusal?			Related to a very old matter – applied to actions over five years ago. (July 2020)
Did we explain our decision to the resident?	X		Yes.
7 Outcomes and remedies			
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?		X	Levels of compensation have been low and action to carry out works delayed however the compensation policy has now been reviewed and will be implemented as of February 2021...
8 Continuous learning and improvement			
What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Reviewed ASB policy to be more explicit on what we do/ don't do. Various aspect of complaints policy/practice.
How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents? b) The Board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?			In residents' newsletter and annual report. Discussed at Committee/Board and the Residents' Forum.
Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	X		A number of improvements and changes are proposed.

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What changes have we made?			<p>The following changes have been made :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separating Policy and Procedure. • A new stage 2 complaints process. • Level and frequency of publicity. • Content of standard letters - informing complainants at early stage. • Revisions to Compensation Policy. • Formalising Reasonable Adjustments Policy • A formal policy on vexatious complaints. • Establishing a formal learning process. • A formal exclusions document. <p>What still needs to be done – Formalising learning from complaint from Stage 1 complaints</p>