



**Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code**  
**Self-Assessment**  
**December 2020**

### Key for Compliance Column

	Compliant
	Partial – action required
	Not compliant
	Not applicable

1 Definition of a complaint	Response	Evidence
<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>		This is in the revised Complaints Policy that will be accessible on the website
Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?		This is in the revised Complaints Policy that will be accessible on the website
Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?		Based on the HOS code of practice and use of Equality Impact Assessments when exclusions are made
		The revised complaints policy (on the website)
		The revised complaints policy (on the website)
		C&C complaint information provides where exclusions have happened

<b>2 Accessibility</b>			
Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?		This is made clear in the Policy with various routes available to make a complaint.	The revised complaints policy (on the website)
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?		It is on the website and will be updated following SSP and Board approval	This will be updated following Board approval (on the website)
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		Set out in the policy and assessed through use of Equality Impact Assessments	C&C complaint information provides where reasonable adjustments have occurred and evidenced in reporting
Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		Revised handbook in 2020, re-launched website and at schemes	Handbook and Website (on the website)

<b>3 Complaints team and process</b>			
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		Office and Feedback Manager	Within Organisation chart
Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		Delegated Authority in place	Complaint information provides evidence when this occurs and available through reporting
Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		Responsible across the business and liaises across all departments	Complaint information provides evidence of cross organisational working
If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		Not applicable. We have a two-stage process in line with Code of Practice	Complaints policy
Is any third stage optional for residents?		Not applicable. We have a two-stage process in line with Code of Practice	Complaints policy
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?		Standard response letter used based on HOS best practice	Example letter
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?		Linked to our IT system and complaint handling reporting	Complaint information is stored on CX with a reference number linked back to the specific complaint
At what stage are most complaints resolved?	√	Most are resolved at stage one (92%)	Complaint information in annual report

<b>4 Communication</b>			
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?		Process in place to record and track contact	Monthly reporting provides evidence of tracking and updating residents
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?		Feedback team in dialogue and often make calls to discuss before issuing outcome	Complaint information provides evidence of regular contact
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?		Two-day target	Reporting systems show performance
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?		Residents are advised within procedure and template letters	Example letters
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		92%	Monthly report provides update
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		50%	Monthly report provides update
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>		Specific Reporting not yet in place	This will be worked upon and produced within the monthly reporting
Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason?		We always explain if we are not going to meet the timescale	Individual examples provide evidence of time extension and reason
Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the resident informed?		We always inform residents if we are not able to meet our original timescale	Individual examples provide evidence
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		Satisfaction not currently being collected	Part of the complaints action plan will set out this proposal
<b>5 Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>			
Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		One missed due to staff illness All other timescale met	Monitoring reports
Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?		Extension granted once reason became clear.	Evidence on file

<b>6 Fairness in complaint handling</b>			
Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?		This is set out in the Complaints Policy	The revised complaints policy
If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?		This is set out in the Complaints Policy	The revised complaints policy
How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?		We always permit escalation when it is clear there is a proposed resolution to the complaint.	We have only had one case when the complainant did not provide a desired outcome so we were could not escalate
Did we explain our decision to the resident?		We would always explain if we were not going to escalate	Evidence on file
<b>7 Outcomes and remedies</b>			
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?		Learning outcomes provided	Evidence of meetings and changes in process due to complaint feedback

**8 Continuous learning and improvement**

<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>		<p>Trained frontline staff in complaints process.                  We have improved how we handle the opt out service for residents under GDPR.                  We have addressed concerns with relevant contractors in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Revised policy has shortened turnaround time of investigation stage</p>
<p>How do we share these lessons with:                  a) residents?                  b) the board/governing body?                  c) In the Annual Report?</p>		<p>Through Annual Report, Service Scrutiny Panel</p>	<p>Annual report and frequent SSP meetings</p>
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>			
<p>What changes have we made?</p>		<p>New draft policy and procedure to incorporate recommended information, and a reduction in response timescales.</p>	<p>Revised Complaints policy</p>