

Housing Ombudsman

Complaints Annual Self-Assessment 2025/26

Section 1 – Definition of a Complaint

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff or those acting on its behalf affecting a resident or group of residents”	Yes	Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy includes this definition.	
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them a choice to make a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	Residents’ are able to make suggestions regarding how we can improve our services, or raise their concerns regarding services provided and will be advised of the outcome of their suggestion/concern. Residents made aware of Complaints Policy through Residents Committee	

			meetings, full residents meetings, notices and Newsletters.	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from the residents to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Complaints policy invites residents to make suggestions regarding how we can improve our services or to raise a concern regarding services provided.	All suggestions, concerns and complaints recorded. Feedback given to residents regarding outcomes of their suggestion, concern or complaint.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Escalation processes included in Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy.	
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction of services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though, wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Residents surveys are anonymous. Results of surveys are issued to all residents. Questions around access to Complaints process and use of complaints processes included in residents surveys.	

Section 2 – Exclusions

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merit.	Yes	Residents advised of process for raising a complaint and issued with a copy of the Policy. All complaints accepted and investigated. We have, however, amended our Policy to include Exclusions as detailed in the Code.	
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable. - the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago - legal proceedings have started – this is defined as details of the claim such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. - matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.	Yes	Policy includes exclusions as detailed in the Code.	
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming	Yes	All complaints accepted and investigated. Details re exclusions detailed in policy.	

	aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.			
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that action to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Our Policy directs residents to the Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint or an exclusion.	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Each complaint will be considered individually.	

Section 3 – Accessibility and Awareness

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints Policy includes different channels in which a resident can made a complaint.	

3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Residents can raise their initial complaint with any member of staff. Complaints Policy states who the complaint should be referred to an Investigating Officer.	
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	We welcome complaints, suggestions or concerns regarding service delivery and see these as a positive way in which to improve services.	
3.4	Landlords must make their complaints policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the 2-stage process, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints Policy includes clear details regarding who will deal with the initial complaint and escalation processes should a resident not be happy with the initial outcome. Timeframes included in the Policy.	
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publish details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Relevant information included in Policy.	
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf and to be represented and accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Information provided within our Policy regarding local Advocacy services, local authority Social Work Services who can support with their complaint. Residents are invited to be accompanied or represented at meetings.	
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their rights to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Our Policy includes information regarding the Ombudsman service and how residents can access this.	

Section 4 – Complaint handling staff

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the “complaints officer”. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Relevant managers assigned as Investigating Officers for complaint handling.	
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Investigating Officers have access to staff at all levels and the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively.	Yes	Complaint handling is addressed as a priority and we have clear timescales for dealing with complaints.	

Section 5 – The complaint handling process

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by the Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Single Policy in place for residents.	
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage O' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	There is no reference to informal complaint in our Policy, however, the Policy does invite residents to make a suggestion regarding how services can be improved, or raise a concern regarding services.	
5.3	A process with more than 2 stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	A 2-stage process included in our Policy. Our Policy includes escalation to Ombudsman service where residents are not happy with the outcome of internal investigation.	
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (such as a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the 2-stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Where the complaint involves a contractor or an independent adjudicator this is included as part of the 2-stage approach to complaints handling.	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	We work with third parties to ensure that any complaints are handled in line with policy and will ensure that this is in line with Code.	

5.6	When a complaint is logged at stage 1, or escalated to stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	We request that residents are specific in their complaint so that we are clear what the issue is that we require to address.	
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspect of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	If there is any aspect of a complaint that we do not have responsibility for, we would make this clear to the resident making the complaint.	
5.8	At each stage of the complaint process, complaint handlers must: a) deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind. b) give the resident a fair chance to set out their position c) take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest. d) consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	All complaints are dealt with openly. If any item of a complaint is not clear, we would refer back to the resident for clarification. All evidence is considered and we would respond to the resident clearly stating which aspect of the complaint is being upheld and the actions we will take. If any aspect of the complaint is not being upheld, we would advise the resident of this and the reasons why.	
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident	Yes	Our Policy states clear timescales for response to residents. Where we require more time to fully investigate a	

	suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.		complaint, we will advise the resident of this in writing, with the expected timescales for completion of the investigation.	
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	We make all reasonable adjustments for residents as required.	
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reason to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with provisions set out in Section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Our escalation process is clearly detailed in our Policy.	
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	All records of complaints retained, including correspondence with residents and other relevant parties.	
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of	Yes	We would always endeavour to resolve a complaint for a resident at Stage 1 of our complaints process. Residents are made aware of the escalation process if they are not happy that the complaint has been resolved at Stage 1.	

	the complaints process without the need for escalation.			
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Policies and procedures in place to manage unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. We would advise residents of any restrictions in place and the reasons for these restrictions. Any restrictions would be reviewed regularly.	
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour are proportionate, and we would always demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	

Section 6 – Complaints stages

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	We have definitive timescales included in our Complaints Policy to ensure that we deal with complaints as early as possible. Where further investigation is required, residents would be advised of this and the expected timescale for completion. Where a resident is vulnerable or at risk, we would prioritise this and ensure that we take action to	

			reduce any risk as quickly as possible.	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1, within 5 working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Our Policy states that the complaint to be acknowledged and defined within 5 working days.	
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Our Policy states a response to stage 1 complaints will be provided within 10 working days. If further investigation is required we would advise the resident of this within 10 working days, and that we would complete our investigations within a further 10 working days.	
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reasons must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Our Policy states we will complete further investigation within 10 working days.	
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	We have included contact details for the Ombudsman within our Policy.	
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Following completion of investigation of a complaint, we advise residents of the outcome of the investigation and the actions that we will take to remedy the situation. Where	

			possible, we will give timescales for these actions to be taken.	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	We provide residents with a detailed response to their complaint, including clear reasons for our decisions and the actions we will take.	
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated in to the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issue must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Any additional complaints raised by a resident would be handled as part of the stage 1 response if we have not completed that stage of the complaint and the complaints are related. If the issues are unrelated, this would be logged as a new complaint.	
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage b. the complaint definition c. the decision on the complaint d. the reasons for any decisions made e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right f. details of any outstanding actions	Yes	Residents receive written notification of acknowledgement of their complaint. They would then be advised of the Investigating Officer dealing with their complaint. Residents are advised in writing of the decisions of the complaint, and the reasons for our decisions. The resident would also be advised of the actions we will take to remedy the complaint. This response also provides details regarding how the resident can escalate the complaint to stage 2 or our	

	g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.		process if they are not happy with the outcome of the stage 1 investigation.	
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	If a resident is not happy with the outcome of the complaint at stage 1, they are advised how they can escalate their complaint to stage 2 which would be our final response.	
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within 5 working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	All complaints escalated to stage 2 are acknowledged, defined and logged within 5 working days per our Policy.	
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	As part of a stage 2 response, we would identify why a resident was not happy with the response from the initial stage 1 investigation and identify what further action we can take to remedy the situation.	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person who considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Our Policy includes details of who the stage 2 complaint would be escalated to, which would be difference from the Investigating Officer who dealt with stage 1 of the complaint.	
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Our Policy includes 20 working days for final response for stage 2 complaints.	
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response.	Yes	These timescales are included within our Policy.	

	Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.			
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details for the Ombudsman.	Yes	Our Policy to includes contact details for the Ombudsman	
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident once the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issues are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Following completion of investigation of a complaint, we advise residents of the outcome of the investigation and the actions that we will take to remedy the situation. Where possible, we will give timescales for these actions to be taken.	
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate	Yes	We provide residents with a detailed response to their complaint, including clear reasons for our decisions and the actions we will take	
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage b. the complaint definition c. the decision on the complaint d. the reasons for any decisions made	Yes	Residents receive written notification of acknowledgement of their complaint. They would then be advised of the Investigating Officer dealing with their complaint. Residents are advised in writing of the decisions of the complaint, and the reasons for our decisions. The resident would also be advised of the actions we will take to remedy the complaint.	

	e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right f. details of any outstanding actions g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the individual remains dissatisfied.		This response will also provide details regarding how the resident can escalate the complaint to the Ombudsman if they are not happy with the outcome of the stage 2 investigation.	
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Stage 2 will be the our final response and will involve all suitable staff needed to issue the response.	

Section 7 – Putting things right

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
7.1	Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: • apologising • acknowledging where things have gone wrong • providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons	Yes	Where something has gone wrong, we would acknowledge this and advise the resident of the actions we will take to put things right. This would include an apology to the resident and details of the actions that we will take to remedy the situation. This may include a financial remedy where appropriate, changes to our policies and practices, changing decisions and correcting records.	

	• taking action if there has been a delay • reconsidering or changing a decision • amending a record or adding a correction or addendum • providing a financial remedy • changing policies, procedures or practices			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	We would agree any remedy offered with the resident, to reflect on the impact to the resident of any fault identified.	
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion	Yes	We would clearly set out in writing to the resident any remedy offered and the timescales for this.	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	We will consider the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding appropriate remedies.	

Section 8 – Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a) the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlords complaint handling performance – this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept. c) any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman. d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints. e) any annual reports about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman. f) any other relevant reports and publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord	Yes	We will produce an Annual Complaints Performance and Improvement report for scrutiny and challenge. The report will include our self-assessment against the code to ensure that our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. We will also provide an analysis of our complaint handling performance, including the types of complaints that we refused to accept, if any. If the Ombudsman were to find any issues of non-compliance with the Code, we will include this in our report. We will include improvements made to the service as a result of learning from complaints, and any annual reports or publications from the Ombudsman.	

8.2	The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing bodies' response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	We will submit our Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report to our governing body (Board) and publish it on our website.	
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following significant re-structure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	We will ensure that a self-assessment is completed following any significant re-structure or change in procedures.	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following on Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	We will review our self-assessment following the outcome of any investigation by the Ombudsman.	
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website. Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	If we were unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, we would inform the Ombudsman and provide information to residents and publish this on our website.	

Section 9 – Scrutiny and oversight: Continuous learning and improvement

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Comply Yes/No	Evidence	Commentary/ Explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	We consider any improvements that can be made to services following any complaint, suggestion or concern raised by a resident.	

9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	We promote a positive complaint handling culture and invite residents to make a suggestion, raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of the service that they are not happy about.	
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders; such as residents panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	We report back to residents, staff and Committees on any actions taken to improve services following suggestions, concerns or complaints raised.	
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	We have appointed a lead person to be accountable for ensuring that all complaints are handled appropriately and identify any themes, trends, systemic issues, risks and ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed appropriately.	
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC)	Yes	We have appointed an MRC to oversee complaint handling processes and culture.	
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body received regular information that provides insight on the landlords complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	All required information will be received by the MRC.	

9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a) regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling c) regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration finding d) Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report	Yes	The MRC receives regular updates on complaints, outcomes and complaints handling performance. The MRC will review issues and trends, and receive regular updates on the outcomes of any investigations carried out by the Ombudsman. The MRC will receive and review the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report.	
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a) have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments b) take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming	Yes	We demonstrate a collaborative and co-operative approach to complaint handling across the organisation and with third parties involved with the organisation.	

	others			
	c) act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body			