

## Complaints self-assessment form (Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code)

Below, you can find our responses to the complaints handling code from the Housing Ombudsman and what we are doing to improve our complaints handling.

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code – undertaken 3.11.20			
	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
1	<p>Does our 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> <p><b>Answer</b> This will be incorporated into the review of our Complaints policy and procedure which will be completed in January 2021 ahead of the 31.3.21 deadline as laid out in the new Code (in the interim all staff handling complaints have been made aware of this definition to ensure that all customer complaints are identified and recorded accordingly).</p>		√
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	√	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to customers?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon: Exclusions are clearly listed within our Complaints policy as detailed below to provide clarity to customers.</p> <p><b>Answer</b> All policies that directly affect customers are taken to our Customer Assembly for consultation and feedback prior to publication. This also applies to policies upon review where there are material changes that would impact customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An initial request for service</li> <li>• An initial request for information</li> <li>• Dissatisfaction with a *policy</li> <li>• Anti-social Behaviour (<i>reports of ASB are managed via our ASB policy and procedure</i>)</li> <li>• Allocation decisions by the local authority – (<i>complainant would be referred to the relevant local authority</i>)</li> </ul>	√	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insurance claims</li> <li>Complaints by staff in relation to terms and conditions of service</li> <li>General correspondence from Councillors &amp; MPs not directly related to a complaint</li> <li>There are legal proceedings concerning the matter</li> </ul>		
<b>Accessibility</b>			
2	Are multiple accessibility routes available for customers 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?	√	
<b>Complaints team and process</b>			
3	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 customers involved in the decision making?		√
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		√
	<b>Answer</b> N/A – two stage process		
	Does the final stage response set out customers' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	√	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the customer?	√	
At what stage are most complaints resolved?		N/A	
<b>Answer</b> Stage 1			
<b>Communication</b>			
	Are customers kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	√	
	Are customers 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 customers advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	√	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		N/A
<b>Answer</b> 2019-20 – 100%			

4	2020-21 – as of 3 November – 111 complaints received of which there has been one escalation to stage two which is currently under investigation.		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?  <b>Answer</b> Current escalation to stage two was made on 30 October and as such is currently under investigation	N/A	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <b>Answer</b> Stage one – 79% Stage one (with extension) – 2%  Stage two – n/a Stage two (with extension) – n/a	N/A	
	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 customers satisfaction?  <b>Answer</b> Year to date 20-21 – 80%	N/A	
	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
5	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?  <b>Answer</b> 19-20 no requests made 20-21 to date no requests made	N/A	
	Where the timescale was extended did, we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	
<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>			
6	Are customers able to complain via a representative throughout?	√	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	√	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? <b>Answer</b> None  What was the reason for the refusal? <b>Answer</b> N/A	N/A	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident? N/A	N/A	
<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>			

7	Where something has gone wrong, are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	√	
<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>			
8	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	N/A	
	<p><b>Answer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communication around repairs, including 'how' to videos for minor repairs</li> <li>• Review undertaken of shared boilers in Independent Living schemes due to number of breakdowns</li> <li>• Staff training to better diagnose repair at point of contact along within planners now within same management area to better facilitate a more joined up approach regarding the receiving and planning of repairs.</li> <li>• Identified need for further staff training in managing difficult conversations which has been included within Corporate training plan.</li> <li>• Introduction of 'customer voice' action plan incorporating learning from complaints to ensure organisational wide learning amongst service areas.</li> </ul>		
	How do we share these lessons with:	N/A	
	<p><b>Answer</b></p> <p>a) Customers? Via newsletter advising of 'you said/we did' and reporting to our Customer Assembly (strategic customer body) on a quarterly basis and utilising to assist them in determining Scrutiny topics.</p> <p>b) The Board/governing body? Complaints data forms part of information provided at quarterly Performance &amp; Assurance clinic and overview is included in quarterly Customer Experience report.</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report? – This is an area that we need to expand on within the annual report going forwards, since whilst numbers of complaints are reported, learning from them is not.</p>		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	√	
	What changes have we made?		
	<p><b>Answer</b></p> <p>Identified designated 'Complaints Officer' – this sits within the Customer Experience Managers' role.</p>		

	Formal complaint handling training undertaken November 2020 by Customer Experience Manager along with 3 service managers to ensure adequate resource, whilst also ensuring fairness and transparency along with support to customers during the complaints process.	N/A
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