

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No
	<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> <p>This definition is contained within point 5.1 of the policy.</p>	✓	
	<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p> <p>This is referenced in point 14 of the policy.</p>	✓	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p> <p>The policy contains explanations where this is the case and references alternative policies and procedures and lead officers or departments where appropriate. In circumstances where a complaint will not be considered the individual will receive a written explanation.</p>	✓	
2	Accessibility		
	<p>Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?</p> <p>Point 6 of the policy details routes available including email, telephone, in writing, in person or via Trident Group's website.</p>	✓	
	<p>Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?</p>	✓	
	<p>Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?</p> <p>Our commitment to ensuring reasonable adjustments is implied within the policy, these are person-centred and may include accessible formats, utilising employees in our care and support services, involving representatives or advocates, ensuring a single point of contact, adapting our communications.</p>		✓
	<p>Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?</p>		

	The complaints process is available on our website, discussed as part of the sign-up process and referenced in our customer publications.	✓	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? There is a designated complaints administrator that acknowledges and logs all complaints received, ensuring timescales are met and the process is followed.	✓	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? Complaints are allocated to a Responding Officer to effectively investigate the complaint.		✓
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes? The Responding Officer has the authority to compel engagement with any other member of staff or department who can assist with the investigation and outcome of a complaint.		✓
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	n/a	
	Is any third stage optional for residents? There is no third stage within the policy. If the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint, the policy references external bodies.		✓
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service? The right to refer to the Housing Ombudsman Service is referenced in the final stage response letter.	✓	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident? All complaints are recorded on a case management system and given a unique reference. Any correspondence is saved on this and linked to the individual tenancy record within the housing system.	✓	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? Most complaints are resolved at Stage 1.		
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓	

	Complainants may need to be interviewed as part of a stage one investigation to provide further information or clarification. At second stage, the review panel can invite the complainant to discuss the appeal.		
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	✓	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage? Letters sent to the complainant, at each stage, clearly details the escalation process. This is also illustrated in the complaints flow chart that is sent out to the complainant with the acknowledgement letter.	✓	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	97%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	3%	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one 58% <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Stage one (with extension)26% • Stage two 100% <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Stage two (with extension) 		
	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 residents' satisfaction	62%	
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?	✓	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents 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? 0 What was the reason for the refusal? N/A		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	n/a	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?		

<p>Training on the complaints policy was refreshed in 2021 and delivered across the organisation to ensure that the policy is understood, adhered to and a quality service is delivered.</p> <p>We ask about complaints handling in interviews when recruiting new staff.</p> <p>There is Compensation Policy in place.</p> <p>In April 2021 Complaint Review meetings were launched that include 'lessons learnt' and Responding Officers participate along with the Complaints Administrator and Senior Manager.</p> <p>We ask residents about complaints in our Resident's Survey and analyse results and identify improvements in our 'You Said, We Did' Action Plan.</p> <p>We have invested in a new system that will enable us to send short surveys to residents to measure satisfaction levels and receive additional feedback.</p> <p>Where we have seen trends across informal resolutions we have sought larger scale assurance, for example if there has been an increase in a particular area we have completed an inter-departmental estate walkabout.</p>		
<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents? We have a Resident Complaints Panel that meet at least annually. We utilise our website and publications. We have a 'You Said, We Did' Action Plan</p> <p>b) the board/governing body? Through KPIs and in Board Papers.</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</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>Improvements to the complaints policy and procedure. Greater focus on prevention and early intervention. Embedding a person-centred approach to complaint handling that incorporated reasonable adjustments. Commitment to on-going self-assessment via Complaint Review Meetings with 'Lessons Learnt' focus and system audits.</p>		

