# **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:**

# **Self-assessment form**

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| **Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code** | | | |
| **1** | **Definition of a complaint** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?  *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*.  **This will form part of our updated complaints policy. See action plan.** |  | **X** |
|  | Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered? | **x** |  |
|  | Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  **We will review these when we update our complaints policy. See action plan.** |  |  |
| **2** | **Accessibility** |  |  |
|  | Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint? | **x** |  |
|  | Is the complaints policy and procedure available online? | **x** |  |
|  | Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?  **This will be included in our updated equality and diversity policy. See action plan.** |  | **X** |
|  | Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? | **x** |  |
| **3** | **Complaints team and process** |  |  |
|  | Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?  **We are looking to improve and strengthen this. See action plan.** | **x** |  |
|  | Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? | **x** |  |
|  | 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** |
|  | 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** |  |
|  | At what stage are most complaints resolved?  **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, we resolved most of our complaints at stage one (‘Making it Right’).** |  |  |
| **4** | **Communication** |  |  |
|  | Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process? | **x** |  |
|  | Are residents informed of the landlord’s position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?  **This is not currently part of our process but will be include in our updated complaints policy. See action plan.** |  | **x** |
|  | Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days? | **x** |  |
|  | Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage? | **x** |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?  **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, 90 per cent of all complaints were resolved at stage one (‘Making it Right’). This is 252 complaints out of a total of 279.** |  |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?  **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, 8 per cent of all complaints were resolved at stage two (‘Complaint Review’). This is 21 complaints of a total of 279.**  **Our current policy is a three-stage process, and we also completed six (two per cent) at stage three (‘Complaint Appeal’).** |  |  |
|  | What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  **We are not currently working to the code timescales within our current complaint policy.**    **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, the following proportion of complaints were resolved within our current policy’s timescales:**   * Stage one: **165 (65 per cent) of 252 complaints**   Stage one (with extension) **87 (35 per cent) complaints**   * Stage two: **eight (38 per cent) of 21 complaints**   Stage two (with extension) **13 (62 per cent) complaints**  **We currently have a third stage to our process of which two (33 per cent) were resolved within our timescales and four (67 per cent) were completed with an extension.** |  |  |
|  | Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason?  **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, we had a good reason for 51 per cent of the 104 complaints which were extended.**  **We will be looking to improve this in 2021. See action plan.** | **X** |  |
|  | Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the resident informed?  **During quarter one to quarter three 2020, we kept the resident informed for 51 per cent of the 104 complaints which were extended. The resident was informed for all complaints which were extended with a valid reason.**  **We will be looking to improve this in 2021. See action plan** | **X** |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents’ satisfaction?  **We do not currently monitor residents’ satisfaction with complaints. See action plan.** |  |  |
| **5** | **Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service** |  |  |
|  | Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? | **x** |  |
|  | Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed? | **x** |  |
| **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?  **One**  What was the reason for the refusal?  **The complainant contacted us six months after the complaint had been through the first stage of our complaints process. The first stage response was reviewed and deemed to be appropriate and further review would not change the outcome. The customer was directed to the Housing Ombudsman Service if they wanted to escalate their case.** |  |  |
|  | Did we explain our decision to the resident? | **x** |  |
| **7** | **Outcomes and remedies** |  |  |
|  | Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right? | **x** |  |
| **8** | **Continuous learning and improvement** |  |  |
|  | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?  **Defects**  **We changed the information we give to customers about the NHBC guarantee to make it clearer.**  **Staff training**  **Staff across the organisation completed additional training on wide range of area including defects, complaint-handling and customer service skills.**  **Bin stores**  **We are trialling the use of key safes for bin stores that are lockable.**  **Compensation**  **We reviewed our levels of compensation and changed our internal guidance for staff about how to determine the level of compensation to offer.** |  |  |
|  | How do we share these lessons with:   1. residents?  * **Complaint performance information and details of our Ombudsman cases is provided in our residents’ annual report** * **Complaint performance information is provided on our website** * **Information around complaints learning and improvements was provided as part of our resident scrutiny group session on complaints last year.**  1. the board/governing body?  * **Bi-annual reporting on complaint trends and outcomes is provided to our communities and housing committee as part of customer service trend reporting** * **Quarterly reporting on complaint trends and key lessons is provided to our operational management team** * **Monthly reporting on complaint performance is provided to our senior leadership team.**  1. In the Annual Report?  * **Complaint performance information and details of our Ombudsman cases is provided in our residents’ annual report.**   **We will strengthen our approach to sharing complaint information, including learning and improvements in 2021. See action plan.** |  |  |
|  | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?  **We are not currently working in line with all elements of the Code. An action plan is in place to bring us in line by end March 2021. We will also review annually.** |  | **x** |
|  | What changes have we made?  **We are not currently working in line with all elements of the Code. An action plan is in place to bring us in line by end March 2021. We will also review annually.** |  |  |