

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form



Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code		Yes	No	Additional information
1	Definition of a complaint			
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? <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>	✓		
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	✓		
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon	✓		Accent's National Scrutiny Group have reviewed the exclusions and deem these fair to residents.
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓		Complaints can be made via our website, by telephone, in person, via social media and in writing.
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓		
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?		✓	Our complaints policy is easily accessible to our residents and we are currently working on developing an area of the website to feature complaints learning and sharing, targets and performance figures. This work remains in progress currently.
3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		✓	All our customer-facing colleagues are responsible for handling complaints and resolving complaints to the customer's satisfaction. We are also reviewing our approach to complaints oversight to ensure that appropriate resource is allocated to support the existing learning lab'
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	✓		Customer-facing colleagues are fully trained and empowered to resolve customer complaints.
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	✓		
	If there is a third stage to the complaint's procedure, are residents involved in the decision making?	✓		

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Is any third stage optional for residents?			✓	
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?		✓		
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?		✓		
At what stage are most complaints resolved?		Early Resolution Stage (Informal)		
4	Communication			
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?		✓		Reporting demonstrates that this is happening in the majority of cases, however, there remains room for improvement. A survey to our customers is sent on closure of a complaint case to understand how satisfied they are with our complaint handling.
Are residents 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 residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?		✓		
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		94% are resolved at Early Resolution Stage (Informal) 4% are resolved at Manger Investigation Stage (Stage 1)		
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		1% are resolved at Director Investigation Stage (Stage 2)		
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 		Stage 1 – 94.3% (based on 10 working days) Stage 2 – 5.7% (based on 20 working days)		
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?		We have no option for extension with response timescales.		
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		We have no option for extension with response timescales.		

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What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		We currently achieve 3.94 out of 5 in customer satisfaction for complaint handling.		
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?		N/A		
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?		N/A		
How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?		We would not refuse to escalate a complaint. Once it completes our internal process, we would advise of the Housing Ombudsman Service.		
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>From January 2021, we introduced our 'Learning Lab'. This group will meet on a monthly basis and will be responsible for uncovering themes from complaints and driving change to improve services. Lessons learnt will be shared with residents and stakeholders via our website, and our annual report.</p> <p>Outputs from the learning lab, complaints key themes, and organisational changes are reported to the Customer Experience Committee and Board on a quarterly basis.</p>		
How do we share these lessons with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> residents? the board/governing body? In the Annual Report? 				

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Has the code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓		
What changes have we made?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive and ongoing training for colleagues to enable effective management and resolution of complaints • Updated our complaints policy to include a clear definition of what a complaint is, how customers can complain and what service they should expect to receive (our complaints process) • Adding additional measures so we can monitor whether we are cooperating with the Housing Ombudsman by responding to requests within the 15 day timescale • Introduced a customer satisfaction survey on complaints handling • Introduced a 'Learning Lab' which is dedicated to learning from complaints as well as other channels of customer feedback such as satisfaction surveys • Review of the compensation policy