

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

Self-Assessment Form – December 2020

Reporting Period – April 2020 to November 2020

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>	Yes and stated in our policy	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes, and stated in our policy	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	<p>Yes and stated in our policy</p> <p><u>Exclusions:</u> Reports of anti-social behaviour, insurance claims, defects in a warranty</p>	

	Evidence relied upon	period or where legal action has been instigated will be dealt with by the relevant teams outside of this policy. Customers may make a complaint in line with this policy about the way the above have been handled.	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes. The routes are: face to face, on-line, letter, phone, email, and via social media.	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes. They are on a dedicated section of our website.	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Yes. We have a reasonable adjustment statement. The policy will be live in March 2021.	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes. We publish regular articles in our customer magazine. We have a complaints page on our website.	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	Yes. We have a dedicated Customer Resolution team.	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement	Yes	

	from other departments to resolve disputes?		
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		No. We removed a third as encouraged by the handling code. This supports a faster resolution for our customers.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		No
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	Yes	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes. All correspondence is stored on our housing systems QL and Orchard.	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	96% of our complaints were resolved at stage one.	
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute	Yes	

	before the final decision?		
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	96% of our complaints were resolved at stage one.	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	4% of our complaints resolved at stage two.	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?	<p>100% of complaints were acknowledged within the timescale.</p> <p>71% of stage one complaints were resolved within 10 days.</p> <p>29% of stage one customers had their complaint response extended with reasonable explanation.</p> <p>60% of stage two complaints were responded to within 10 days.</p>	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	



	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	<p>We attempt to survey each customer after the complaint is closed to understand how satisfied they were with the way the complaint was handled.</p> <p>Our customer satisfaction score year to date is 52% This figure only includes those customers who were surveyed.</p>	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
	<p>How many cases did we refuse to escalate?</p> <p>What was the reason for the refusal?</p>	<p>Since October 2020, we have been recording complaint refusals</p>	

		No cases have been refused from October to December 2020.	
	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?	Yes	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?		<p>We haven't recorded our improvements.</p> <p>We are designing our lessons learnt and continuous learning framework. It will ensure that lessons are captured, shared with business and most importantly that action is taken to eradicate root causes.</p> <p>A pilot will be in place in February. We will go live in March, ahead of the 30 March timeline when the Handling Code should be fully implemented by landlords.</p>
	How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents?		<p>We will share the results of our self-assessment with the Executive Team and the Board.</p> <p>We will share the results with customers and publish them on our website from February 2021.</p>

	<p>b) The board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>		<p>We will share the lessons learnt with our customers via our website and the customer magazine.</p> <p>We will include any organisational learning in our 21/22 annual report and share learnings to the Executive Team and the Board.</p> <p>The customer complaints scrutiny panel who will scrutinise a sample of closed complaints, our performance and offer recommendations for service improvement will hold their first meeting in April 2021.</p> <p>We have designed a new dedicated section on our website for complaints. Customers can find all the information they need of how to make a complaint, our complaint process and view our performance. We will also include results from self-assessments and continuous learning outcomes.</p>
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
	<p>What changes have we made? –</p>	<p>Key changes made to the Policy</p> <p>We will accept complaints for any service failure within six months.</p> <p>Easy access for customers to make a complaint.</p>	



		<p>A two-stage approach to complaint handling, with the final stage being an appeal only.</p> <p>The final stage of the complaints procedure (appeal) will be carried out by a manager or above who has not been previously involved in the complaint.</p> <p>Customers have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any given point. The procedure allows customers to use the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout the life of a complaint.</p> <p>All stage one and two complaints will be handled by a centralised Resolution Team.</p> <p>Policy now available to customers in an easy to read format.</p> <p>Easier ways, more accessible for customers to make a complaint – multiple channels.</p>	
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