

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form (completed 16th Nov 2020)

| Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1 | Definition of a complaint | Yes | No |
| | 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 – <i>followed guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman when considering exclusions</i> | ✓ | |
| 2 | Accessibility | | |
| | Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents 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? | ✓ | |
| 3 | Complaints team and process | | |
| | 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? | ✓ | |
| 3.4 | If there is a third stage to the complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision making? | | ✗* |
| | 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? | ✓ | |

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| | Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident? | ✓ | |
| | At what stage are most complaints resolved? | 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? | ✓ | |
| | 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? | 87 | |
| | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? | 13 | |
| | 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) | 100% 100% | |
| | Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason? | n/a | |
| | Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed? | n/a | |
| | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction | 96% | |
| 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? | n/a | |
| 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 | |
| | How many cases did we refuse to escalate? | None | |
| | 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? | Yes | |

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| 8 | Continuous learning and improvement | | |
| | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? | Complaints centralised and Customer Relations Team created | |
| | How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? | Through interactions and via website Quarterly reporting Reference to complaints is included | |
| | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? | Yes | |
| | What changes have we made? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints centralised and a Customer Relations Team created • Timescales to respond to complaints have changed. | | |

2** We will adjust our approach to ensure that it is easy for customers to make a complaint. Complaints can be received via all formats and we are happy to make reasonable adjustments as necessary.

3.4* Having a 3-stage approach adds nothing to the process from the customer perspective, except for time. Reviewing Housemark Customer Excellence benchmarking, it is apparent that more social housing providers are moving to a more streamlined 2 stage complaints process.

The 2-stage process (as with THT) removes the need for a Board Member and Executive member to be involved. Instead, Stage 2 involves the Resolution Lead with the option of a Customer Panel Member (CPM), if customers wanted this. The option to have a Customer Panel Member review the complaint gives the customer confidence that their issues will be considered impartially and, on their merits, and that independent judgement will be made.