



Complaints self-assessment

Updated: December 2020





What is the complaints self assessment?

The assessment details our compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.








It shows how well we are performing against the code, the areas that we need to improve on, and evidence of the ways that we are doing this.

1. Definition of a complaint		
Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
<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	
<p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	 YES	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The following are not deemed to be complaints under the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Request for a service ● A report of Anti-Social Behaviour incident ● Raising a Safeguarding concern ● Complaints made by Look Ahead staff ● Complaints outside of Look Ahead's remit. E.g. a complaint about the service of another organisation ● Appeals against warnings, notices to quit or evictions ● Complaints that become part of a legal process, for example a legal disrepair case reported through a solicitor ● Complaints arising from incidents more than 6 months old unless there is a pattern of concern, a potential breach of the Equalities Act or linked to regulated activity.
<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p>	 YES	<p>Evidence:</p> <p>We have other policies that manage and cover these areas for example ASB policy. Failure to deliver a service including a request will be subject to our complaints procedure.</p>








2. Accessibility

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	 YES	Evidence: Section 7.1 of the policy sets out the available routes and these channels are fully operational and monitored
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	 YES	Evidence: Also available are- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service standards ● Link to Housing Ombudsman website ● Website - Complaint and Feedback form
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	 NO	Actions: We do not have a separate policy but the complaints policy removes the 6 month restriction unless there is a pattern of concern, a potential breach of the Equalities Act or linked to regulated activity. Enhanced guidance on vexatious and persistent complainants is set out in the policy We will update our Inclusion and Diversity policy to provide a clear reasonable adjustment framework.
Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	 YES	Evidence: We do this via- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tenancy sign-up ● Support Staff ● Leaflets ● Website ● Newsletter ● Tenant and Landlord Panel



3. Complaints team and process

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	 YES	
Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	 YES	
Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	 YES	
If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	 YES	Evidence: Customers are on the stage 3 panel
Is any third stage optional for residents?	 NO	Only attendance at the Panel meeting is optional
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	 YES	Evidence: All stage letters include reference to the Housing Ombudsman
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	 YES	Evidence: We do this on our Complaints Management system.
At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage 1	




4. Communication

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	 YES	Evidence: This has been enhanced in the policy and is subject to monitoring and quality assessment to improve performance.
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	 YES	Evidence: We have strengthened this in the policy <i>"In any event it is best practice to advise the complainant of the outcome of their complaint and actions to redress prior to a formal response. This enables the complainant to identify any omission, misunderstanding of their complaint, or obtain clear understanding of the reasons their complaint isn't being upheld before a formal and final decision is made"</i>
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	 YES	Evidence: The policy sets a target of 3 working days.
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	 YES	
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	99.5%	
What proportion of complaints is resolved at stage two?	0.5%	*Last 12 month period
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) 		Evidence: Stage 1 - 34% . This is an area of service improvement focus and we have introduced a monitoring framework. Stage 2 – 100% - based on the last 24 months Stage 3 – 100% - based on the last 24 months We have also introduced monitoring and recording of extensions and the reasons for this.
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	 NO	Actions: This has not been consistent. We have included additional guidance and authorisation protocols. We have introduced monitoring and recording of extensions and reasons.
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	 NO	Actions: This has not been consistent. We have included additional guidance and authorisation protocols. We have introduced monitoring and recording of extensions and reasons.
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?	See evidence	Evidence: Stage 1 - 34% . This is an area of service improvement focus and we have introduced a monitoring framework. Stage 2 – 100% - based on the last 24 months Stage 3 – 100% - based on the last 24 months We have also introduced monitoring and recording of extensions and the reasons for this.

5. Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
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

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
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? What was the reason for the refusal?	None	
Did we explain our decision to the resident?	 YES	

7. Outcomes and remedies

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	We have not had any remedy judgements	

8. Continuous learning and improvement

Question	Answer	Evidence/Actions (if applicable)
<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>		<p>Evidence: Improvements include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repairs and Maintenance performance and complaint case management ● Look and feel of rent statements ● New customer reward and recognition policy ● Improved ASB policy and framework ● Developed an investigations guide ● Reviewed out ending tenancy and evictions policy- improved oversight of process by senior managers and strengthened approval protocols ● Further improvements can be found on the performance page of our website and our service improvement plan
<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?</p>		<p>Evidence: We have a complaint service Improvement Plan which we report on to our Board, Senior Management Team and Customers. We have created a performance page on our website. We include learning in our customer “heads Up” newsletter. We are scheduled to share lessons in the March 2021 Customer annual report.</p>
<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	 YES	
<p>What changes have we made?</p>		<p>We have reviewed the policy against the Code. The majority of changes are in keeping with the changes identified previously in our Improvement Plan and a review of the end to end process and customer experience.</p> <p>Changes in direct response to the Code are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring on reporting on extensions and delays ● Clear reasonable adjustment framework ● Introduction of Key Performance indicators <p>Other changes as a result of customer experience and learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasis on putting things right and not passing customers onto other colleagues and departments ● Clear role of investigating manager and expectations ● Expectations to communicate with the complainant at all stages, including when complaint closed in terms of agreed actions ● Improved monitoring and follow up of agreed actions ● Enhanced guidance on vexatious and persistent complaints ● Enhanced monitoring, quality review and capturing feedback ● Clearer redress and expectations ● Customer satisfaction survey stage 1 – embedding this within the policy framework ● Case Management approach – joined up organisational approach to complex cases ● Options to review outcome at stage 1 and 2 in terms of case review. Mediation and restorative justice ● Enhanced information on our website and accessibility