

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

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>	x	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon ASB and safeguarding	x	
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?	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?	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 complaint's 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?	Stage 1	

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?	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? This relates to stage 1 of Ability's current complaints policy (28-day response time)	69%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	50%	
	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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% • 0% 	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	X	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?		X
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	69%	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	N/A	
	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?	x	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	x	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	0	
	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?	x	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IHM being investigated and procedure being adapted to allow better recording • Contractors being reviewed • ASB- communication 		
	How do we share these lessons with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents? N/A at this time b) the board/governing body? Get complaints analysis and learnings c) In the Annual Report? Share stats but not lessons 		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	N/A	
	What changes have we made? Currently reviewing policy and procedure		

We have completed the self-assessment of our current complaints policy and procedure, benchmarked against the New Housing Ombudsman Code, which came into effect on 1st of January 2021.

The process has highlighted that Ability should make some changes to ensure we are compliant with the new code.

Following the customer consultation process the new complaints policy and procedure will be rolled out across the organisation in spring 2021.