

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form **DECEMBER 2021**

| Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code | | | |
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| 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> <p>Our policy includes the new full definition from June 2021.</p> | ✓ | |
| | <p>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p> <p>Our policy has been reviewed and includes where complaints will not be considered.</p> | ✓ | |
| | <p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p> <p>Our policy details where a complaint will not be considered and this has been discussed with our resident group T4R.</p> | ✓ | |
| 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 | | |
| | <p>Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?</p> <p>We have a centralised co-ordinator and a number of designated complaints officers around the country</p> | ✓ | |
| | <p>Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?</p> <p>Yes</p> | ✓ | |
| | <p>Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?</p> <p>Yes</p> | ✓ | |

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| | If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making? | N/A | |
| | Is any third stage optional for residents? | N/A | |
| | 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? Stage 1 | Stage 1 | |
| 4 | Communication | | |
| | Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process? Our policy requires us to do this. It happens in most cases but we are striving for greater consistency. | ✓ | |
| | Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision? Our policy requires us to do this. It happens in most cases but we are striving for greater consistency. | ✓ | |
| | 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? | 92% | |
| | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? | 8% | |
| | 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) | 54% 100% | |
| | Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason? | ✓ | |
| | Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed? | ✓ | |
| | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction There is no data available at this time. Transactional surveys with residents will be carried out as part of the new complaints handling process. | | |

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| 5 | Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service | | |
| | Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? The answer to this is No, but only because in one case we requested a time extension | X | |
| | Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed? | ✓ | |
| 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? | ✓ | |
| | 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? | ✓ | |
| 8 | Continuous learning and improvement | | |
| | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new complaints reporting and monthly monitoring system has been introduced - Guidance on how to manage complaints (Top 20 Tips) and Complaints Briefing sessions have been implemented - We have recognised that there is some inconsistency in case management and use of our housing management system. We are addressing this. - We have identified a need to increase and improve how we communicate with our customers. | | |
| | How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? Annual Report for Residents b) the board/governing body? Customer Feedback Annual Assurance Report c) In the Annual Report? Yes | | |

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| | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? | ✓ | |
| | <p>What changes have we made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reviewed the Policy and Procedure • We have improved the work flow process • We are implementing, monitoring and provide management reports to SMT. T4R and the Board • We have improved the website content to ensure complaints information is easily accessible • We have implemented designated Complaints Officers across departments • We have briefed Designated Complaints Officers on our Complaints process • We have trained colleagues on complaint handling • We have provided colleagues with a “20 Top Tips” for complaint handling guide • We have praised colleagues who have taken ownership of complaints and dealt with them well as a way to promote best practice • We are implementing a new Customer Strategy in 2022 and all colleagues will be informed and be aware of the importance of providing our customers with an excellent service. This includes complaints resolution. | | |