



Compliance self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

1 Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
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>	✓		Included in the board of trustees approved policy (September 2020).
Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	✓		Policy - yes this is in the policy.
Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to tenants?			Policy - yes this is in the policy.
2 Accessibility	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Are multiple accessibility routes available for tenants to make a complaint?	✓		Policy – yes via phone, email or letter.
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓		Website search. Website needs policies and strategies section.
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?			In general, yes – everything we do is focussed towards people with a learning disability. But not a specific policy document.
Do we regularly advise tenants about our complaints process?	✓		In the past it has been on various tenant literature (Tenant satisfaction survey, Voices Together magazine and Annual report). We will be advising our tenants on the new policy in the next formal tenants information.

3 Complaints team and process	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓		Administration of complaints is in the job description for the office manager.
Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		✓	Policy and process - no. The officer to whom the complaint is allocated has autonomy to resolve the complaint and some guidance has been issued to the workforce around approaches to compensation which includes putting the issue right, apologising and where it is deemed appropriate providing monetary recompense.
Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	✓		Policy and process - the office manager will ask a senior colleague to investigate the complaint (investigating officer) and respond in the timeframe.
If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are tenants involved in the decision making?			Not applicable as there is not a third stage.
Is any third stage optional for tenants?			Not applicable.
Does the final stage response set out tenant's right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	✓		Policy and process and second stage final letter sets out that if the tenant remains unhappy with the response at Stage 2 they can go to the Housing Ombudsman.
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the tenant?	✓		Complaint log – the office manager keeps all correspondence, such as emails and letters. A unique reference number is given to each complaint, logged onto the master complaints spreadsheet and logged on to the property management system against the property it relates to.
At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Complaints log - Stage 1.
4 Communication	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Are tenants kept informed and updated during the complaints process?			Policy and process – if the matter is not capable of being put right straight away an acknowledgement email or letter is sent within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, telephone calls or emails are sent via the investigating officer to understand the nature of the complaint if additional information is needed.

4 Communication (continued...)	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Are tenants informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓		Letters give an opportunity to respond and the investigating officer contact through the preferred mechanism. This will be made clearer in the policy and process.
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within 5 days?	✓		Complaints log - all complaint are logged on the master complaint spreadsheet and on the property management system within 5 working days.
Are tenants advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?			Standard letter – yes.
What proportion of complaints are resolved at Stage 1?	✓		Complaints log - 99.17% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1.
What proportion of complaints are resolved at Stage 2?	✓		Complaints log - we have only had one complaint that escalated to Stage 2 within the last 5 years.
<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within code timescales?</p> <p>Stage 1 Stage 1 (with extension)</p> <p>Stage 2 Stage 2 (with extension)</p>	✓		<p>Stage 1 decision – 10 working days from receipt of complaint – if this is not possible, an explanation and a date by when the Stage 1 response should be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.</p> <p>Stage 2 response – 20 working days from request to escalate – if this is not possible an explanation and a date when the Stage 2 response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.</p>
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	✓		Complaints log - mainly due to receiving information back from a third party.
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the tenant informed?	✓		Complaints log - tenants advised by email, telephone call or letter.

4 Communication (continued...)	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to tenant's satisfaction?	✓		Policy and process – the investigating officer will generally ask for their confirmation that the complaint has been resolved and they are satisfied with the outcome via letter or email. We would then look to close the complaint if no response/feedback has been received. There is not a specific data set of dissatisfied tenants. However, only one Stage 2 complaint and none escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.
5 Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?			No complaints proceeding to the Housing Ombudsman in the past year.
Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Housing Ombudsman informed?			Not applicable.
6 Fairness in complaint handling	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Are tenants able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓		Policy - if you cannot make a complaint yourself we can accept a complaint from someone you have appointed such as a friend, relative, advocate, appointed deputy or legal representative.
If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?			All communications are designed to be understood by the tenant or person representing them. The aim is to be as accurate as possible.
How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?			We did not refuse to escalate any complaint.
Did we explain our decision to the tenant?			Not applicable.
7 Outcomes and remedies	Yes	No	Evidence relied upon and remedial action
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓		Policy and process - try to resolve the complaint by telephone on the day we receive it. If we need time to look into it we will write to say so within 5 days. The entire process is geared towards putting right things that have gone wrong or providing the service that should have been given.

8 Continuous learning and improvement

Yes

No

Evidence relied upon and remedial action

What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?

✓

Repairs is the largest source of complaints and we realised this stemmed from some of the contractors we used. As such we introduced and the expanded the in-house repairs team, Resolve Solutions to reduce contractor complaints.

The Tenant satisfaction survey also gives us themes of tenant dissatisfaction, this can help us understand our tenant's needs and what's important to them.

We also created the post of involvement officer and the More Voices, More Choices tenant group.

How do we share these lessons with:

✓

- a) tenants?
- b) the board of trustees?
- c) in the Annual report?

- a) Via our Tenant satisfaction survey, Voices Together newsletter and other tenant literature and the Golden Lane Housing website.
- b) Reported at the board of trustees annually.
- c) Details of complaints are in our annual report that we produce for tenants and other stakeholders.

Has the code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?

✓

It has shaped the new policy and process and there is more emphasis on putting things right as soon as we can. All colleagues will need to undergo training on complaints handling and the process.

What changes have we made?

New policy and process - to do:

- 1) New policy and process put on the website and intranet.
- 2) Terminology and the language of complaint letters to be reviewed with tenants.
- 3) Neighbour nuisance complaints, such as complaints not about the landlord will be recorded elsewhere.
- 4) Training for all staff on complaints handling and dispute resolution via the training modules available through the Housing Ombudsman.