

Draft Service Improvement Plan for Complaints following Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code

Code Provision	Code Requirement	Improvement	Actions (Due dates)	Current Status
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Add into the survey sent to customers how a complaint can be made along with a link to the complaints process.	September 2024	Completed 14 June 2024, ready for survey to be sent later this year.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Training to be provided to all staff along with briefings to create a culture of learning from complaints and ensure staff understand the importance of complaints.	December 2024	

5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Create a single complaints process with contractors.	April 2025	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Create a method for measuring complaint performance for third parties.	April 2025	

5.6	<p>When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.</p>	<p>Online complaint form to be updated to include the expected outcome for the customer.</p> <p>Acknowledgement responses to customers will detail what their complaint is and their expected outcome.</p>	<p>September 2024</p> <p>September 2024</p>	
5.9	<p>Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring will take place and reported to management for oversight to ensure that customers are notified when complaints fall outside of the timescales, so appropriate action can be taken.</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	
6.4	<p>Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of</p>			

6.15	<p>the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident</p> <p>Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.</p>			
5.10	<p>Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well</p>	<p>Complaint form to be updated to ask the customer how they would like their complaint communicated back to them.</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	

	<p>as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</p>			
<p>6.3</p> <p>6.14</p>	<p>Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.</p> <p>Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.</p>	<p>Close monitoring of all complaints by management through weekly meetings and weekly reporting to improve response rates to complaints.</p>	<p>January 2025</p>	
<p>7.4</p>	<p>Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.</p>	<p>Create a compensation and redress policy that gives consideration to Ombudsman guidance.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	

8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.• a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;• any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;• the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;• any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and	All points listed to be included in the next annual report.	June 2025	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 			
8.2	<p>The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.</p>	<p>Report to be published on the council's website, along with governing body's response.</p>	<p>July 2024</p>	
9.3	<p>Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as</p>	<p>Learning will be taken to Resident Engagement Panel quarterly, to staff at service meetings and to committee annually.</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	

	residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.			
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9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;• regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;• regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman’s investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and• annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	All the required information will be sent to the MRC on a quarterly basis.	August 2024	
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9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;• take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others;and• act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.	<p>There will be a standing item on team agendas to discuss complaints and any learning from these, along with team objectives for handling complaints.</p>	September 2024	