

# Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

## Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
<b>1</b>	<b>Definition of a complaint</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	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>	<b>Yes</b>	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?  <i>Evidence relied upon The Council will only be able to receive and process complaints, in relation to services it provides, or services delivered by an alternative provider on the Council's behalf. The Council will inform the customer if an item of feedback does not relate to a Council service, and where possible inform the customer of the responsible body or entity to whom the feedback relates, when this is known.</i>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint? <b>Yes – online, social media, email, letter, phone</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? <b>Yes – At stage 3 for both Housing and corporate matters</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? <b>No - These are determined by a panel of independent Senior management for housing matters and an Independent Senior Manager for corporate matters</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	<b>Yes</b>	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making? <b>Yes through TSP (Housing)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	

	<b>and a meeting is arranged with resident at stage 3 for corporate matters</b>		
	Is any third stage optional for residents? <b>It is preferred that tenants escalate complaints through all stages</b>	<b>No</b>	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Ombudsman Service?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	<b>Yes</b>	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? – <b>Stage 1</b>		
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days? <b>Within 24 Hours</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	<b>Yes</b>	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? <b>Housing – 80.71%</b> <b>Corporate – 91 %</b>		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? <b>Housing – 14.79%</b> <b>Corporate – 77.4 %</b>		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one - Housing 249 Corporate 378 Stage one (with extension) Housing 111</li> <li>• Stage two - Housing 66 Corporate 31 Stage two (with extension) Housing 30</li> </ul>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	<b>Yes</b>	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	<b>Yes</b>	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction – Housing 80.71% Corporate 91%		
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?		<b>No</b>

	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
	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? <b>Housing 4 Cases Corporate 2 Cases</b>  What was the reason for the refusal? <i>Did not meet criteria for escalation to Stage 3</i>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improving Communication &amp; Correspondence Workshops</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased referrals to the Tenancy Scrutiny Panel for Stage 3 complaints (TSP) Registered Designated Body</i></li> <li>• <i>Stage zero for repairs complaints that go direct to the contractor for rapid response</i></li> <li>• <i>Rant &amp; Rave surveys for every completed repair job that picks up any issues within 24 hours</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased staff resources at contractor level to deal with stage zero and other general enquiries to avoid escalation to formal complaints</i></li> </ul> <b>Training to all service areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Complaint handling sessions and use of complaints system</i></li> <li>• <i>Monthly meetings with each service area to identify lessons learnt from complaints</i></li> <li>• <i>Detailed quarterly complaints report taken to Governance</i></li> </ul>		
	How do we share these lessons with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents? – TSP, Annual Report,, Tenant and Leaseholder Panels and focus groups</li> <li>The board/governing body? – N/A – Housing’s performance is reported to Housing &amp; Community committee monthly via performance reports that monitor KPI’s and OBAs.</li> </ol>		

	<p><b>Corporate services are reported monthly to service areas and Quarterly to SLT.</b></p> <p><b>c) In the Annual Report? – Housing - As a Local Authority we publish a corporate annual report that includes performance related to Housing &amp; Community Services. This includes all housing related performance, not just repairs.</b></p> <p><b>Corporate – Customer Services produced an annual report for all services including those within Housing and Communities which is available on our website.</b></p>		
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p> <p><b>Not yet. We are already governed by Committee led scrutiny by our elected members and we already review our complaints, comments and compliments policy at least every 3 years. As a result of this self-assessment we will review our current policy in 2021.</b></p>		
	<p>What changes have we made? <b>We are already in the process of reviewing our resident engagement strategy that will include new ways of consulting with our tenants on performance and lessons learnt. This will also involve reviewing our current number of stages and our designated body. Any changes will require a service impact assessment and have to be agreed by the designated authority and by elected members through Committee. This will be included within our reviewed complaints policy.</b></p>		