

<b>Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>A complaint must be defined as:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<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>	<b>x</b>	
	The resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	<b>x</b>	
	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	<b>x</b>	
	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	<b>x</b>	
	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	<b>x</b>	
	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	<b>x</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility and awareness</b>		
	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	<b>x</b>	
	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	<b>x</b>	
	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website	<b>x</b>	
	<p>Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs.</p> <p>Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.</p>	<b>x</b>	

	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	x	
	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.  <b>We will be adding this to the back page of our tenant’s magazine where it gives contact information. This magazine goes out twice a year. It will also be featured in our annual report which goes out towards the end of this year, to all tenants.</b>		x
	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord’s complaints process is exhausted.  <b>We will be amending this moving forwards.</b>		x
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaint handling personnel</b>		
	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the “complaints officer”.	x	
	the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	x	
<b>4</b>	<b>Complaint handling principles</b>		
	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord’s audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident’s concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as ‘stage 0’ or ‘pre-complaint stage’) as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure <b>within five days of receipt</b>	x	
	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	x	
	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	x	

	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits</li> <li>• act independently and have an open mind</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</li> <li>• consider all information and evidence carefully</li> <li>• keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.</li> </ul>		
	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	x	
	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out their position</li> <li>• comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made.</li> </ul>	x	
	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	x	
	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	x	
	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	x	
	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.	x	
<b>5</b>	<b>Complaint Stages.</b>		
	<p>We don't manage expectation from the start. If the desired outcome was deemed unreasonable/unrealistic then this would be covered at the end of the process. This is because we currently follow the corporate policy rather than a housing complaints policy.</p> <p>Whilst we try to response to complaints within 10 working days, the current policy sets out at a response within 15.</p>		x
	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	x	

	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	x	
	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer	x	
	If all part or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies. In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	x	
	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.  <b>On receipt of escalation request an acknowledgment is sent to resident, nothing else at this stage.</b>  <b>However, if any aspect is unclear then clarification and/or further evidence will be requested, this is due to following the corporate policy.</b>		x
	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	x	
	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	x	
	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	x	
	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> </ul>	x	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three</li> <li>•if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>		
	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	<b>x</b>	
	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied</li> </ul> <p><b>We don't have a stage 3 complaints procedure.</b></p>		<b>x</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Putting things right</b>		
	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	<b>x</b>	
	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	<b>x</b>	
	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	<b>x</b>	
	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	<b>x</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Continuous Learning and Improvement</b>		
	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint	<b>x</b>	

	handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.		
<b>8</b>	<b>Self-Assessment and compliance</b>		
	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	<b>x</b>	
	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.	<b>x</b>	
	<p>Following each self-assessment, a landlord must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members</li> <li>• publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance</li> </ul>	<b>x</b>	
	Policy Review date : 01/10/2024.		