

# Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code			
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>Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?</p>	✓	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? <i>The exclusions are set out clearly in section 3.2 with examples of how the communication will be assessed and treated and the reasons behind this</i></p> <p>Evidence relied upon: <i>The policy has defined what will <b>not</b> be registered as a complaint. These are situations such as:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>An initial request for information or an explanation.</i></li> <li>• <i>An appeal against action resulting in court proceedings or matters subject to ongoing court proceedings.</i></li> <li>• <i>Any matter in which there is an established internal or external appeals procedure allowing the complaint to be properly investigated and resolved by another route. Examples of this are service charge disputes with a homeowner and neighbour disputes (unless the complaint refers to our failure to deal with the disagreement appropriately).</i></li> <li>• <i>Appeals against policy decisions.</i></li> <li>• <i>Matters that are subject to an insurance claim. HHAL will not consider the matter under the complaints procedure until this route has been exhausted and will use its discretion in whether to log the matter as a complaint.</i></li> <li>• <i>Complaints which are submitted anonymously (although we may still investigate).</i></li> <li>• <i>Dissatisfaction expressed through satisfaction surveys (these will however be followed up and used to improve services as part of our wider response to responding to customer feedback).</i></li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any matter where the complaint constitutes a refusal to accept a rule of law with which HHAL is complying.</li> </ul>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>		
	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? <i>Section 4.2 Support of the policy</i>	✓	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? <i>Last promoted in the Summer Newsletter 2020</i>	✓	
<b>3</b>	<b>Complaints team and process</b>		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? <i>Due to the size of the Organisation a separate role does not exist. The Admin Officer logs and monitors response times, and when a complaint is received they inform more senior staff which is usually the Housing Officer or Assistant Housing Officer.</i>	✓	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? <i>The Housing Officer and Assistant Housing Officer have autonomy to investigate and resolve all complaints to achieve a reasonable outcome which resolves the complaint.</i>	✓	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes? <i>Due to the size of the organisation the resolution lies generally with the Housing Management team. Where required the team has the authority to involve others in its resolution.</i>	✓	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	✓	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	✓	
	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? <i>These are logged on the company computer network under Complaints and also on the Housing Management System</i>	✓	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? <i>Complaints in the main are resolved at the first stage - Resolution Stage, the Association has a low volume of complaints and the housing management team are able to work with the customer closely to resolve the situation.</i>		
<b>4</b>	<b>Communication</b>		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓	
	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? <i>In the period 1 April 2020 to the 31 December 2020 100% of our complaints have been resolved at stage one.</i>		
	What proportions of complaints are resolved at stage two?  <i>We have had no complaints in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 that have progressed to stage 2, all have been resolved at stage 1.</i>		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <i>In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one 100%</li> <li>Stage one (with extension) N/A</li> <li>• Stage two N/A – all complaints dealt with at stage 1</li> <li>Stage two (with extension) N/A</li> </ul>		
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason? <i>None of the complaints received in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 have required an extension to the timescale, all were responded to within time.</i>	✓	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed? <i>All complaints were responded to on time and none were extended</i>	✓	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction? <i>The complaints received in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 have all been resolved to residents satisfaction – so 100%</i>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? <i>There have been no complaints in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 that have been passed to the Ombudsman</i>	✓	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed? <i>No complaints in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020 have been passed to the Ombudsman</i>	✓	
<b>6</b>	<b>Fairness in complaint handling</b>		
	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? <i>None in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020</i> What was the reason for the refusal? N/A		

	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	✓	
<b>7</b>	<b>Outcomes and remedies</b>		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓	
<b>8</b>	<b>Continuous learning and improvement</b>		
	<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?  <i>Following a previous complaint in 2019 the recommendation from the customer has been updated in the policy to provide a flow chart of the process sent out on receipt of a complaint</i></p>		
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) Customers? <i>The customers on the Customer Liaison Committee are informed of complaints received and the outcome. This will extend to the Newsletter edition in Summer 2021 which will be circulated to all customers in our stock.</i></p> <p>b) the board/governing body? <i>Through the Operational Report provided to Board in each quarter. The Operational Report covers all elements of performance in respect of housing management to the Board and this includes complaints performance.</i></p> <p>c) In the Annual Report? <i>Commentary on complaints will be included in the Annual report to customers which is due in July 2021. Reference will also be made to complaints in the Board report in the annual accounts.</i></p>		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓	
	<p>What changes have we made?  <i>Through undertaking the self assessment process and attending various webinars on complaints we now encourage staff and customers to speak to the Ombudsman during the process. This has been reflected in our policy.</i></p>		