

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form January 2021 – 31 December 2021

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code 2021			
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><i>The exclusions are set out clearly in section 3.2 of the policy with examples of how the communication will be assessed and treated and the reasons for this approach</i></p>	✓	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon <i>The policy has defined what will not be registered as a complaint. These are situations such as: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An initial request for information or an explanation.</i> • <i>An appeal against action resulting in court proceedings or matters subject to ongoing court proceedings.</i> • <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> • <i>Appeals against policy decisions.</i> • <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> • <i>Complaints which are submitted anonymously (although we may still investigate).</i> • <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> • <i>Any matter where the complaint constitutes a refusal to accept a rule of law with which HHA is complying.</i> <p><i>The policy was approved by the Customer Liaison Committee, whose membership is predominately customers.</i></p>		

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2	Accessibility	
	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>Contained in section 4.2 of the policy</i>	✓
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? <i>Last done in Summer 2020, will be done in Summer 2022</i>	✓
3	Complaints team and process	
	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?	✓
	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>	

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4	Communication	
	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 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 there were 11 complaints in total with 73% (8 complaints) resolved at stage one</i>	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? <i>The 3 complaints not resolved at stage 1 were resolved at stage 2</i>	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one 100% Stage one (with extension) N/A • Stage two 100% Stage two (with extension) N/A 	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason? <i>None of the complaints received in the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 have required an extension to the timescale, all were responded to within time</i>	N/A
	Where timescales been extended did we keep the resident informed?	N/A
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction <i>91% of customers (10 out of 11) were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint</i>	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service	
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? <i>For the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 no complaints received have been passed to the Ombudsman</i>	N/A
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A

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6	Fairness in complaint handling	
	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 January 2021 to 31 December 2021</i>	
	What was the reason for the refusal? N/A	
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	N/A
7	Outcomes and remedies	
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓
8	Continuous learning and improvement	
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <i>We will carry out a visit to the customer's home who has complained or meet with them if they prefer so that we can thoroughly understand the issue and how this has affected them. This visit, will be aimed to be carried out within 2 working days of the complaint being received by us and advise the customer of what we are going to do, this will be followed in the normal response times of our complaint policy</i>	
	How do we share these lessons with: <i>a) Customers? The customers on the Customer Liaison Committee are informed of complaints received and the outcome. Reporting complaints performance was included in the Summer 2021 Newsletter which was posted to customers and included on our website</i> <i>b) the board/governing body? Through the Operational Report provided to Board each quarter. The Operational Report covers all elements of performance in respect of housing management to the Board and this includes complaints/complaints performance</i> <i>c) In the Annual Report? Commentary on complaints will be included in the Annual report to customers which is due in July 2022. Reference will also be made to complaints in the Board report in the annual accounts.</i>	
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓

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	<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. Staff are encouraged to own a complaint and resolve the matter as soon in the process as possible</i></p>		
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