

## Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form January 2023 – December 2023

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code 2023			
		Yes	No
<b>1</b>	<b>Definition of a complaint</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>	✓	
	<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"> <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> <li>• <i>Any matter where the complaint constitutes a refusal to accept a rule of law with which HHA is complying.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The policy was approved by the Customer Liaison Committee, whose membership is predominately customers.</i></p>		

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		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<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>Contained in section 4.2 of the policy</i>	✓	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? <i>Last done in November Newsletter 2023, Permanently on the HHA Website and on Facebook Posts January, March and November 2023.</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 Neighbourhood Officer or Assistant Neighbourhood Officer</i>	✓	
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? <i>The Neighbourhood Officer and Assistant Neighbourhood 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 complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision making? <i>The Customer Liaison Committee members volunteer to visit complainants if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Review Stage</i>	✓	
	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>  <i>Our approach also means some expressions of dissatisfaction never reach the formal complaints stage.</i>		

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		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<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? We also logged 5 Expressions of Dissatisfaction, and all were resolved	✓	
	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 January 2023 to December 2023 there were 8 complaints, 4 of which were disrepair related from solicitors, 2 of these remain unresolved. There was one complaint brought forward from 2022 resolved in the year. Of the 7 resolved complaints in the year, 5 (71%) were resolved at stage one.</i>		
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? <i>Of the 7 resolved in the year, 2 (29%) were resolved at stage 2.</i>		
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage one 100%</li> <li>• Stage one (with extension) 100%</li> <li>• Stage two 100%</li> <li>• Stage two (with extension) N/A</li> </ul>		
	Where timescales have been extended did, we have good reason? <i>There was 1 complaint that required extension – this was due to the customer being on holiday and the Association not being able to contact her to resolve the case. In this instance an extension was required.</i>	✓	
	Where timescales have been extended did, we keep the resident informed? <i>The resident was informed of the extension</i>	✓	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction  <i>100% of customers (7 out of 7) were satisfied with the outcome of their completed complaint</i>		
<b>5</b>	<b>Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service</b>		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? <i>For the period January 2023 to December 2023 no complaints received have been passed to the Ombudsman</i>	N/A	
	Where was the timescale extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	N/A	

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<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 January 2023 to December 2023</i>		
	What was the reason for the refusal? <i>N/A</i>		
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	<b>N/A</b>	
<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>		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? We made it easier for customers to access services out of hours by providing options on the answer machine message. This also means that the Association picks up the cost of the calls and not the customer.		
	How do we share these lessons with: <i>a) Customers? The customers on the Customer Liaison Committee are informed of complaints received and the improvement to our ways of working.</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 and this includes complaints/complaints performance</i> <i>c) In the Annual Report? Commentary on complaints is included in the Annual report to customers which is due in July 2024. Reference will also be made to complaints in the Board report in the annual accounts where appropriate.</i>		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓	
	What changes have we made? <i>Staff are taking ownership to resolve issues as soon as possible and lessons learned are regularly discussed in housing management huddles</i>		