

Housing Ombudsman Complaints code - self assessment - December 2021

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code	Yes	No	Comments	improvement required	Further action
1 Definition of a complaint					
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>	x		New definition added and approved by Exec July 20	N	
Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x		New jurisdiction guidance launched by HOS . Landlords to comply in 2022	Y	Following new Jurisdiction guidance need to redesign process around disrepairs and service charge complaints and change defintion in complaint policy
Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon			As above	y	Policy due for review June 2022
2 Accessibility					
Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	x		Accessibility referenced in complaint policy at 4.1	N	
Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	x		Policy, procedure and ability to raise complaint all on external website	N	
Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	x		Our Equality and Diversity plus Adaptations policies apply as these demonstrate that we give consideration to adapt to accommodate an individual's needs. Referenced in complaints policy at 4.2	N	
Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	x		Currently on website & staff advise customers of the process if they have an issue. Link has been embedded in quarterly customer newsletter . There are now also links to our determinations on the HOS website with a summry of how we've learnt from the feedback and resolved customer issues.	N	
3 Complaints team and process					
Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	x		Customer Success Team introduced in Sept 21, supporting the business to effectively resolve complaints and ensure compliance with complaints and compensation policies	N	
Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	x			N	
Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	x			N	
If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?			N/A	N	
Is any third stage optional for residents?			N/A	N	
Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	x		Resolution templates are embedded within the housing management system with HOS details as standard	N	
Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	x		All communications stored with the housing management system	N	
At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Frontline		
4 Communication					
Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	x		Our policy states that we'll provide updates once a week during the investigation, unless less frequent contact is preferred. Audit Data from Sept- Nov 2021, indicates customer kept informed of any delays in 89% of cases Introduced Customer Success Team to prompt managers to ensure customers kept updated- resulting in an increase of 17% since last self assessment . Aim to reach 100%	Y	Customer Success Team to work in partnership with complaint investigators to ensure customer are kept updated
Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area			Outcome calls prior to written resolutions are mandatory, allowing the customer opportunity to respond or challenge. Audit data from Sept- Nov 2021, 95% of outcome calls were carried out. A	..	Review and act on results from Managers' quality checks.

of dispute before the final decision?	x		19% increase since last self assessment Aim to reach 100%	Y	Continue to promote importance of outcome calls in training.
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	x		Internal acknowledgement target is end of next working day. Audit data indicate from Sept- Nov 2021, 91% completed in target. A 9% increase since last self assessment Aim to reach 100%	Y	Review and act on results from Managers' quality checks. Continue to promote importance of acknowledgement calls in training
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	x		All staff should be advising of the escalation steps at the end of each stage and it is detailed in our policy. Frontline: Training has been carried out to ensure CEX staff are aware of their responsibilities under the HOS scheme and not to prevent access to the complaint process Stage 1: Resolution templates are embedded within the housing management system with details to contact us if they remain dissatisfied plus contact details of Ombudsman. Success Team review all resolution letters for compliance Stage 2: Ombudsman details included in Stage 2 resolution template	Y	Monthly training introduced for CEX staff to ensure compliance with code and policy
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?			April - Nov 2021: 96% (38% at Stage 1, 58% at Frontline)	N	
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?			April - Nov 2021: 4% (as per 2020)	N	
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?			Apr - Nov 2021 79% 21% (12% decrease on previous year) 66% 34%(11% decrease on previous year)	Y	Reports sent regularly to encourage compliance within timescale . Most common reason for extensions are not being able to contact customer or delays in accessing and providing resolutions due to availability of parts /labour
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	x		We launched process of closing at 10 days on promise of works, late in 2020 but this has only been monitored and supported by Success Team since September which has resulted in volumes of cases over 10 days decreasing dramatically.	Y	Further work required to be enable investigators to provide resolutions or dates of resolutions within the 10 day or 20 day windows
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	x		Our Policy states we will make contact every 5 days during a complaint, subject to agreement with the customer. Audit Data from Sept- Nov 2021, indicates customer kept informed of any delays in 89% of cases- an increase of 17% since last self assessment Aim to reach 100%	Y	Customer Success Team to work in partnership with complaint investigators to ensure customer are kept updated
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction			Two measures: Not escalated to Stage 2 Apr- Nov = 96% . Customers scoring 7 or above for complaint handling Apr-Nov=41% (a 7% increase on last year)	N	
5 Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service					
Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	x		Yes - Customer Success team manage the relationship with the HOS and where deadlines are not met - usually due to inaccessibility of evidence requested- the HOS is kept updated	N	
Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	x		N/A - all evidence provided within timescales	N	
6 Fairness in complaint handling					
Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	x			N	
If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	x		Newly established Customer Success Team review all Stage 1 resolution letters to ensure letters are of good quality /tone	N	
How many cases did we refuse to escalate?			7- Under policy ground "solely seeks a resolution that's outside of our		

What was the reason for the refusal?			control, our policies or is unreasonable" or " Customer has not provided specific reasons for review "	N	
Did we explain our decision to the resident?	x		Decline letters sent with rationale and HOS contact details	N	
7 Outcomes and remedies					
Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	x		Action plans in place for all Stage 2 and Ombudsman cases . Launched new ' promises' app to ensure thatFrontline, Stage 1 and 2 and Ombudman outcomes are monitored and delivered as agreed with customers Compensation captured as part of complaints process. Compensation policy reviewed in line with Ombudsman 'remedies guidance' . We audit all complaints where compensation has been awarded.	Y	Exploring development of housing management system and reports to capture complaint outcomes to improve monitoring.
8 Continuous learning and improvement					
What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Preventative actions reviewed and discussed at 'Lessons Learnt' sessions to enable learning from complaints and action setting. Some of the changes we've made to improve our services following a complaint include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Updated Brochures for Shared Owners to ensure clarity on responsibilities •Completed a damp and mould process review •Developed elearning to develop staff knowledge of different tenures and responsibilities •Updated our Management Move letter so customers aware of what to expect •Updated information on our website and chatbot to raise awareness of restrictions on works around nesting seasons •Launched a new module for an improved Direct Debit System. • Agreed a new protocol for texting customers when lifts are out of order 	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Exploring development of housing management system and reports to capture lessons learnt to improve monitoring. • New process to deliver lessons learnt and preventative actions locally -direct to team- currently under development
How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?			Annual article on website Customer Service Committee twice yearly Yes	N	
Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x				
What changes have we made?			-Introduction of Customer Success Team to support business with effective dispute resolution -Compensation Policy reviewed in line with HOS ' remedies guidance' -Launched ' promises app' to ensure that outcomes are monitored and delivered as agreed with customers -Annual review of policy to ensure compliance with the code -Trialled centralised team to resolve informal dissatisfaction -Redesigned Training modules for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint investigators -Refreshing training to frontline staff to empower them to resolve customer dissatisfaction promptly at front line resolution		

Not a yes or no answer