

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>X</p> <p>Following discussions with the Ombudsman, the Council will continue to use the Corporate Complaints definition for both Housing- and non-Housing related complaints as follows:</p> <p><i>An expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of our services; or lack of resolution by the council, its staff, contractors or volunteers that requires a response that you have been unable to resolve with the service directly in the first instance.</i></p> <p>Our reasoned view is that the above definition is inclusive of the requirements set out in the suggested universal definition, with an additional stage to establish whether the matter can appropriately be resolved as a service request in the first instance.</p> <p>The Ombudsman does recognise that an organisation may consider it has a valid reason not to adopt the</p>

			complaint definition set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Local authorities cover a broader range of areas (aside from housing) and also have to consider the definition set out by the LGSCO. It would be unreasonable to expect an organisation to have two complaint definitions running in tandem i.e. one for housing and another for the other service areas covered by its corporate complaint procedure.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?		X As explained above.
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	n/a	n/a
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	X As outlined in 3.1 of the Policy.	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	X https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/185841/corporate-complaints-policy-2019.pdf	
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	X https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/184953/corporate-equality-strategy-2018-2022.pdf	
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	X	
3	Complaints team and process		
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	X	

	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	X	
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	X	
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	n/a	
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	n/a	
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	X	
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	X	
	At what stage are most complaints resolved? Currently 1 st stage as part of the process of a complaints journey. This will be updated following implementation as new data becomes available.		
4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	X	
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond	Two-stage housing complaints policy adopted	

	<p>and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?</p> <p>Due to timeframes, the introduction of a 2nd stage around housing complaints gives the complainant an opportunity to respond and challenge the findings of stage one response.</p>	<p>with effect from 1st April 2021.</p>	
	<p>Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?</p>	<p>x</p>	
	<p>Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?</p>	<p>x</p>	
	<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?</p> <p>Currently all complaints are resolved at stage one.</p>		
	<p>What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?</p> <p>Once stage two is implemented from March 2021 information will be provided.</p>		
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one 97% Stage one (with extension) 3% • Stage two N/A Stage two (with extension) N/A 		

	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	x	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	x	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction Currently no reporting around this.		
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	x	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	x	
6	Fairness in complaint handling		
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	x	
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	x	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? None – we would ensure all escalations are informed to senior management level and relevant responses are sent. What was the reason for the refusal? N/a		

	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	x	
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	x	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being proactive to tackle personal injustice: typically, the customer wants to be listened to, offered an apology and an opportunity to appeal or request a review of their case. These represent opportunities to mitigate a complaint, usually over the phone. • Recommendations for service improvements arising from complaint investigations: a review of policies, change to practices, training staff, better communication between teams and with the customer, improve record keeping, system changes and raising awareness of issues within the authority and to the public. • Continue with Service Improvement meetings with the services that receive the largest proportion of complaints. This is an on-going development to improve 		

	complaint handling and deliver meaningful customer focussed service improvements.		
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents? Published report following Risk and Audit Committee</p> <p>b) the board/governing body? Annual report</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report? Section of report covers lessons learned and future changes.</p>		
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in policy to include second stage for housing complaints which includes 		

	<p>senior management involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved direction around social media complaints and how we will handle these.• Acknowledgement emails to complainants provide an overview of what will be investigated, referral process to Housing Ombudsman and link to our Complaints policy.		
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