

Self-assessment form – Advance Housing and Support

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Actions/ Notes (proposed changes highlighted)
	<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>		no	Slight amendment to our policy definition
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?		No	Does include vexatious complainants but does say we will investigate complaints made
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>			n/a
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	yes		Phone, in person, online, email, etc, as described in the Policy
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?		no	Website 'Comments, compliments and complaints' section currently includes video, written guide (plain English and Easy Read) and online form. Full Policy doc to be added.
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?			Include a brief section on this in the Complaints Policy

	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	yes		House meetings, sign ups, scheme visits etc, website, newsletters, annual report
3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		no	Complaints are investigated in department. Ombudsman FAQs have clarified that restructuring is not required. In the Policy, we should simply designate the Complaints Panel as the 'Complaints Team' in this context, with a lead role for complaints.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?			n/a –proceed as above and reflect this in the policy
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?			n/a –proceed as above and reflect this in the policy, with reference to escalating to EDoH as Chair of the Panel.
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?			N/A. Stage Three covers any form of external redress should the customer still be unsatisfied with any resolution. Proposal to give an option (to the complainant) to include the customer rep from the Complaints Panel on any stage 2 appeal hearing; change policy accordingly.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	yes		
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	yes		
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	yes		EDRM, attached to complaint in OH
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?			Most are resolved at Stage 1 (figures reported in annual review).

4	Communication		
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	yes	Complaints procedure refers to this and staff are also encouraged to make regular contact with residents
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	yes	Residents informed of next stage if unhappy with outcome
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	yes	Advance Policy states 24 hours- 91% in 2019/20
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	yes	Standard wording in letter templates.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?		>95%
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?		<5%
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 		<p>We currently measure within 15 working days, for which performance in 2019/20 was 64%. 15 working days gives a little longer to work with our customers, taking into account their communication and support needs. Discussion on this point to date (including our customer rep on the Complaints Panel) has indicated that it is better to take a little longer if needed to investigate thoroughly, often liaising with contractors, other third parties such as families, support providers or other professionals, rather than rushing to meet a shorter timescale.</p> <p>The important thing is to provide a Decision response within the timescale. If necessary and the complainant wishes, the complaint can be kept open for longer to see actions through to Completion, pending possible Appeal and then Closure.</p>

			<p>Ombudsman has stated 'If landlords have a process in place which is working effectively, with time frames which vary slightly from those prescribed by the Code, they may consider this to be a valid reason not to make any alterations to their existing response times.'</p> <p>If we were to change to 10 working days (+10 extension), we would also need to amend policy, procedures, system, reporting and communications. For this to represent good value for money, we would need to be convinced there was a material benefit to our customers.</p> <p>Our assessment is that the current process and timescales are appropriate and the change to 10 days + 10 days extension is not justified.</p>
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	yes	Full notes to be included on OH contact management system
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	yes	In policy
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction		68 % in 2019-2020
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	We have always provided info to Ombudsman within timescales. Unfortunately the response timescales of The Ombudsman themselves are often very lengthy – many months.
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?		N/A

6	Fairness in complaint handling			
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	yes		We encourage representation due to the needs of some of our residents
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	yes		Can provide different formats , easy read, pictures etc
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?			We do not refuse to escalate complaints.
	What was the reason for the refusal?			
	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?	yes		Complaints discussed at Complaints panel and learning outcomes completed
8	Continuous learning and improvement			
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?			Themes and learning from complaints report- examples in Annual report for 2019/20
	How do we share these lessons with: a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?			(a) Annual report, newsletters, Advance Customer Partnership, customer rep on the Complaints Panel (b) Complaints annual report goes to Board (c) Yes, the Annual report includes complaints learning
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	Yes		TBC dependent on confirmation of this self-assessment

	What changes have we made?			Changes to policy etc. as highlighted in this self-assessment. To a large extent our existing policy and practice was already consistent with the Code. Plus recent change made to co-opt a customer rep to the Complaints Panel.
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