

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: CHS Self-assessment form October 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code				
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Notes
	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>	Yes		Amended in draft Complaints Policy to be confirmed 4 th November 2020.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes		
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?	Yes		Evidence relied upon : <i>Guidance in Complaint Handling Code and seminars held by Ombudsman</i>
2	Accessibility			
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	Yes		
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	Yes		
	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	Yes		Added in draft policy to be confirmed 4 th November 2020.

	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	Yes		Included in handbook, website, myCHS, customer annual report. Next Newsletter will signpost new policy and Ombudsman Code.
3	Complaints team and process			
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?		No	The majority of complaints are handled in the Property Services and Housing Management teams with a named officer responsible for each complaint. Given the low numbers of formal complaints, the two Heads of Service personally handle or monitor each formal complaint.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?	Yes		The Heads of Service have sufficient autonomy or may occasionally seek advice from the Operations Director.
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?	Yes		The two Heads of Service handling most formal complaints would escalate issues to the Operations Director if necessary.
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?		N/A	The Complaints Panel may be asked to handle a Complaint at the second formal stage (Review)
	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?	Yes		
	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	Yes		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Informal		In 2019/20 there were 204 informal complaints, 21 formal complaints. In 2019/20 one formal complaint was escalated to Formal Review (two in 20/21 YTD).
4	Communication			

	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	Yes		
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	See note		Areas of disagreement are usually responded to in the written formal complaint reply, with the option to escalate the complaint.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes		Formal complaints are all acknowledged in writing.
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes		Letter templates have been agreed with the Customer Complaints Panel including this advice.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	90%+		<i>To be included in annual complaints report</i>
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	90%+		<i>To be included in annual complaints report</i>
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 			Formal complaints since October 2019 have been audited; this shows all but 3 formal complaints had a written reply within policy timescales. The records indicate the customer was advised of the reason for a time extension in these 3 cases (due to requirement for property inspection / discussion with contractor).
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes		See above
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes		See above

	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	60%		Source – Call2Survey follow up call after formal complaint closed (April – Oct 2020). New STAR question shows 49.3% satisfaction with all complaints made in previous 12 months. Operations Committee on 4.11.20 to agree an Actin Plan to further improve satisfaction including complaints handling.
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service			
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes		Ombudsman communication in September/October all replied to within 5 days. Previous Ombudsman request was in 2018.
	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		
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	See note		Not reviewed yet. Role for Complaints Panel to review cases.
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	Not reported		<i>To be included in annual complaints report</i>
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes		
7	Outcomes and remedies			
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes		This should be monitored by the Complaints Panel with more detailed reporting.
8	Continuous learning and improvement			

	<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>		<p>Recent examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked contractor to improve communication with customer when they know they will arrive early for an appointment. • More training for contractors' out of hours call handlers • Established monitoring system for complex repairs to improve communication. • Monitoring the monthly updates provided for customers reporting anti-social behaviour to assure them we are taking action even where long timescales.
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>		<p>Annual customer report</p> <p>Customer Feedback dashboard</p> <p>Statistics, lessons learned, case studies</p>
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>		<p>The main change to date is to the CHS Policy. Further change will follow workshops with staff teams.</p>
	<p>What changes have we made?</p>		<p>Revised Policy; planning more staff guidance and virtual complaints team.</p>

