

# Appendix B – Self-Assessment Form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and discussed at the landlord’s governing body annually.

Evidence should be included to support all statements with additional commentary as necessary.

Explanations must also be provided where a mandatory ‘must’ requirement is not met to set out the rationale for the alternative approach adopted and why this delivers a better outcome.

## Section 1 - Definition of a complaint

### Mandatory ‘must’ requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <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	Our Complaints Policy defines a complaint as 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.
1.3	The resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must still be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	Residents do not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as one. A complaint can be made about our standard of service, actions or lack of action by us, or anyone working for us (ie contractors).  We will also accept a complaint to be considered by a designated person, which includes MP’s or Councillors, who can assist in advocating and resolving complaints in line with our Complaints Policy.

1.6	... if further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the resident requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.	Yes	If RHS cannot immediately resolve the complaint or the resident requests for a complaint to be logged within valid reason, the issue is logged as a complaint.
1.7	A landlord must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.	Yes	RHS accepts all complaints unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Section 5 of our Complaints Policy outlines where we are unable to consider a complaint and the alternative solutions to this.
1.8	A complaints policy must clearly set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered, and these circumstances should be fair and reasonable to residents.	Yes	Section 5 of our complaints policy contains a list of matters excluded from our complaints service. The Complaints Policy clearly outlines what can and cannot be considered under the Council's complaints process. The circumstances are fair and reasonable and in line with the Housing Ombudsman guidance.
1.9	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	If a complaint is not to be considered, the resident will still receive a response containing the detailed reasons why the complaint cannot be considered, and the response will include escalation rights.  We will also let our customers know that they can immediately refer any decisions about exclusions to the Housing Ombudsman Service and provide them with the Service's contact details.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
1.4	Landlords should recognise the difference between a <b>service request</b> , where a resident may be unhappy with a <b>situation</b> that they wish to have rectified, and a <b>complaint</b> about the <b>service</b> they have/have not received.	Yes	Section 4 of our policy contains the following definition: "A service request is defined as a request from a customer that requires action to be taken to put something right. It will usually be the first time we have been contacted about an issue and have not previously had the opportunity to investigate the concerns and agree what action we will take to resolve the issue." We record all service requests.

1.5	Survey feedback may not necessarily need to be treated as a complaint, though, where possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue their dissatisfaction as a complaint if they wish to.	Yes	We include this in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys, which are undertaken by phone, email or in person so we can confirm residents know how to complain. All survey feedback is monitored, and any comments made by a customer that require further review are passed to the appropriate team for investigation. In contacting the customer, appropriate advice and signposting will be provided. We will also signpost customers to our complaints service during any wider surveys about our performance.
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## Section 2 - Accessibility and awareness

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which residents can make a complaint such as in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. While the Ombudsman recognises that it may not be feasible for a landlord to use all of the potential channels, there must be more than one route of access into the complaints system.	Yes	<p>Complaints can be raised via email, in person, by telephone or using the online form or portal. They can also be submitted via a Councillor or directly to officers if the resident asks for an issue to be processed through the complaints process. We accept all forms including verbal, written or online.</p> <p>We also recognise that sometimes when making complaints customers will let us know that they are vulnerable, or that the concerns they are reporting are making them feel vulnerable. We will make sure that any requests for reasonable adjustments made during the complaints process are taken into account and appropriate action taken</p>
2.3	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.	Yes	Our complaints policy is published on our website, together with details of the Housing Ombudsman Service and Complaint Handling code. We also include signposting within our complaint acknowledgment letters.

			For customers who are unable to access digital channels, a printed version of the complaints policy will be provided. Our policy sets out the details of each stage of our process and timescales.
<b>2.4</b>	Landlord websites, if they exist, must include information on how to raise a complaint. The complaints policy and process must be easy to find on the website.	Yes	Our website has a dedicated complaints page which is easy to find on our website and through its search function. We also have a dedicated Policies page.
<b>2.5</b>	Landlords must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual's needs. Landlords must satisfy themselves that their policy sets out how they will respond to reasonable adjustments requests in line with the Equality Act and that complaints handlers have had appropriate training to deal with such requests.	Yes	We'll take resident preferences into account when communicating with them and we'll make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010. We recognise some people who wish to complain may need support in doing so. We accept complaints made by advocates on behalf of a complainant. We take steps in line with our Data Protection Policy to make sure the complainant is in agreement.
<b>2.6</b>	Landlords must publicise the complaints policy and process, the Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme in leaflets, posters, newsletters, online and as part of regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	Our Complaints Policy, the Housing Ombudsman details, a copy of our self -assessment of the code and the Code itself are all publicised on our website pages. At every stage of our complaint process, we signpost residents to the Housing Ombudsman should they remain dissatisfied.
<b>2.7</b>	Landlords must provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman as part of its regular correspondence with residents.	Yes	We provide residents with contact information for the Ombudsman in complaint responses, online and in correspondence where appropriate. These details are also found within our publications page on our website and also on our dedicated Complaints page.
<b>2.8</b>	Landlords must provide early advice to residents regarding their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout their complaint, not only when the landlord's complaints process is exhausted.	Yes	Details for the Housing Ombudsman are available on our webpages and a direct link to the Ombudsman website and contact details are also provided. The Complaints Policy details a complainant's right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service throughout each stage of their complaint.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
2.2	Where a landlord has set up channels to communicate with its residents via social media, then it should expect to receive complaints via those channels. Policies should contain details of the steps that will be taken when a complaint is received via social media and how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.	Yes	We have limited use of social media but where a complaint was received through social media, the complainant will be contacted through direct message to supply details so that the complaint can be logged on the on our systems and be investigated. Details of the process is included in the Complaints Policy.

### Section 3 - Complaint handling personnel

#### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling to ensure complaints receive the necessary attention, and that these are reported to the governing body. This Code will refer to that person or team as the "complaints officer".	Yes	As a small housing provider, our Directors and Managers have overall responsibility for investigating and responding to complaints. Our strategic lead for all complaints is our Operations Director.  All our complaints are subject to scrutiny from our Resident Scrutiny Panel and summarised to our Leadership team and also to our Board.
3.2	...the complaint handler appointed must have appropriate complaint handling skills and no conflicts of interest.	Yes	Our Managers and Directors have sufficient and relevant training in handling complaints. All complaints are treated with sensitivity and transparent to the complainant with outcomes.

#### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
3.3	Complaint handlers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be able to act sensitively and fairly</li> <li>• be trained to handle complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents</li> </ul>	Yes	All our complaint handlers receive training on dealing with complaints. They have autonomy to resolve complaints. and approve compensations pay. There is also direct

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have access to staff at all levels to facilitate quick resolution of complaints</li> <li>• have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.</li> </ul>		access to senior staff to facilitate quick resolution.
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## Section 4 - Complaint handling principles

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
4.1	Any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken in agreement with the resident and a landlord's audit trail/records should be able to demonstrate this. Landlords must ensure that efforts to resolve a resident's concerns do not obstruct access to the complaints procedure or result in any unreasonable delay. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'pre-complaint stage') as this causes unnecessary confusion for residents. When a complaint is made, it must be acknowledged and logged at stage one of the complaints procedure <b>within five days of receipt.</b>	Yes	If a complaint can be resolved at first point of contact, the resident will be asked whether they are in agreement for that particular action to be taken. They will be told in writing that after the action is taken, if they are still dissatisfied, they can progress their complaint through our complaint procedure. All complaints at stage 1 and 2 are logged and acknowledged within five working days providing timescales and a named officer's contact details.
4.2	Within the complaint acknowledgement, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	Complaint acknowledgements include a brief summary of the area of complaint and officers dealing with the complaint will promptly contact the complainant to request clarification if any aspect of their complaint is unclear or should the outcome the resident is seeking also not be clear.
4.6	A complaint investigation must be conducted in an impartial manner.	Yes	All complaints are investigated in an impartial manner. Any complaints relating to a particular staff member will be investigated and responded to by their line manager or a Director. At stage 2 an alternative Director can be appointed to investigate complaints to ensure impartiality. These requirements are also stated in the policy and in complaints training to staff.

4.7	<p>The complaint handler must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deal with complaints on their merits</li> <li>• act independently and have an open mind</li> <li>• take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest</li> <li>• consider all information and evidence carefully</li> <li>• keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>All complaint handlers receive relevant training on complaints handling.</p> <p>Annual Data Protection training is also a mandatory training requirement for all staff members.</p>
4.11	Landlords must adhere to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication	Yes	At the point of complaint acknowledgement, we will ask the complainant what they're preferred method of communication is.
4.12	<p>The resident, and if applicable any staff member who is the subject of the complaint, must also be given a fair chance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out their position</li> <li>• comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>Where a complaint is made and a staff member or a resident is subject of the complaint, they will be given the opportunity to provide their account of events and provide any comments before a decision is made and a final response is issued.</p> <p>This must be in accordance with any GDPR limitations.</p>
4.13	A landlord must include in its complaints policy its timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint	Yes	Escalation timescales are outlined within our Complaints Policy under Section 8 and Section 9.
4.14	A landlord must not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure and must have clear and valid reasons for taking that course of action. Reasons for declining to escalate a complaint must be clearly set out in a landlord's complaints policy and must be the same as the reasons for not accepting a complaint.	Yes	We do not refuse to escalate a complaint through its complaints procedure unless there is a valid reason. Reasons why a complaint is outlined within our Complaints Policy under Section 8 and 9.
4.15	A full record must be kept of the complaint, any review and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties and any reports or surveys prepared.	Yes	<p>All records of the complaint are logged on our case management system. This includes dates, complaints and responses, relevant correspondence and documentation, any compensations and corrective actions/service improvements and outcomes.</p> <p>Corrective or follow up actions and service improvements are separately monitored by the service to ensure actions are carried out. We also record issue types and root causes of complaints.</p>

<p><b>4.18</b></p>	<p>Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives when pursuing a complaint.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>If a complainant has made unreasonable complaints in the past, we will not assume that their next complaint is unreasonable. Each complaint will be considered on its merits and all relevant correspondence will be evaluated to consider the circumstances, including:</p> <p>Whether a complainant has made persistent or unreasonable demands.</p> <p>Whether there is a strong likelihood complaints are being made to intentionally cause harassment, divert resources or to disrupt our operations</p> <p>Whether the complainant or their representative has been abusive or threatening to staff, or has produced excessive correspondence</p> <p>Whether the complainant displays vexatious behaviour.</p> <p>We separately have an Aggression at Work Policy.</p>
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**Best practice ‘should’ requirements**

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p>Landlords should manage residents’ expectations from the outset, being clear where a desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>We will always aim to be explicitly clear at the start of the complaint process as to what outcomes are within scope and what may not be achievable. There may be some circumstances where the complaint is better dealt with outside this complaints process. If this is the case, we’ll provide an explanation setting out why and the action the resident can take at section 5 in our Complaints Policy.</p>



<b>4.4</b>	A complaint should be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, having assessed what evidence is needed to fully consider the issues, what outcome would resolve the matter for the resident and whether there are any urgent actions required.	Yes	We do our best to resolve a complaint at the first point of contact. We will consider the issues and after full consideration will propose a reasonable solution. Any actions will be taken as soon as possible.
<b>4.5</b>	Landlords should give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord where this is reasonable.	Yes	We accept complaints from advocates, a representative or family member as long as consent from the complainant has been provided. Where reasonable they are also able to attend any meetings.
<b>4.8</b>	Where a key issue of a complaint relates to the parties' legal obligations landlords should clearly set out their understanding of the obligations of both parties.	Yes	We will clearly set out our understanding of any obligations of both parties and refer to any relevant legislation where available and incorporate legal advice if appropriate.
<b>4.9</b>	Communication with the resident should not generally identify individual members of staff or contractors.	Yes	Complaint responses will only mention individual officer names when necessary and where they have had direct involvement with the complainant.
<b>4.10</b>	Landlords should keep residents regularly updated about the progress of the investigation.	Yes	Our complaint handlers will keep residents updated with the progress of their investigation. Complainants are informed in advance on any rare occasion if there will be a delay in responding.
<b>4.16</b>	Landlords should seek feedback from residents in relation to the landlord's complaint handling as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.	Yes	We have Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys in place. We carry out post inspections in relation to some repairs so that feedback can be provided. We also ask at the end of every response for complainants to let us know if they have any remaining concerns.
<b>4.17</b>	Landlords should recognise the impact that being complained about can have on future service delivery. Landlords should ensure that staff are supported and engaged in the complaints process, including the learning that can be gained.	Yes	Staff are also supported and provided with complaints training and assistance on completing corrective actions or service improvements. We are a small housing provider, so any common learning of complaints is shared to our staff members
<b>4.19</b>	Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Restrictions placed following unacceptable behaviour and managed through the Aggression at Work Policy consider the Equality Act 2010 and impact on individual complainants. Only necessary restrictions are applied relating to specific

			issues. We always allow residents in these circumstances to access other services more generally. We also have review periods for restrictions.
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**Section 5 - Complaint stages**  
**Mandatory 'must' requirements**  
**Stage 1**

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.1	Landlords must respond to the complaint <b>within 10 working days</b> of the complaint being logged. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	We aim to respond to all complaints within 10 working days, where possible. There may be circumstances in which this is not possible, in which case the 20-working day timescale will be applied.  Complainants are advised of the likely response timescale in acknowledgements.
5.5	A complaint response must be sent to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue, are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned expeditiously with regular updates provided to the resident.	Yes	A complaint response is provided once an investigation has been completed and no later than the maximum timescale outlined in the Complaints Policy. Any actions required following the investigation will be logged with a timescale and tracked until completion
5.6	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	We will address all points raised in the complaint, clearly providing reasons for decisions and referencing any relevant law and good practice.
5.8	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage one in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the answer</li> </ul>		We follow each of these points provided in all Stage 1 complaint responses. We also have use of a template available for officers to use so that all the points are addressed.

## Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.9	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage one it must be progressed to stage two of the landlord's procedure, unless an exclusion ground now applies, In instances where a landlord declines to escalate a complaint it must clearly communicate in writing its reasons for not escalating as well as the resident's right to approach the Ombudsman about its decision.	Yes	<p>Section 9 of our complaints policy states that a customer who is not happy with our response can request a review of their complaint. Within 10 working days of receiving the stage 1 outcome letter, the customer is required to notify us of their intent to progress the complaint to stage 2 for a Director to further review.</p> <p>Where an exclusion ground applies, the complainant will still receive a formal response explaining the reasons as to why we will not escalate and be provided with the Ombudsman details should they wish to escalate.</p>
5.10	On receipt of the escalation request, landlords must set out their understanding of issues outstanding and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification and the full definition agreed between both parties.	Yes	As part of the investigation the complaint handler will ask for clarification or further details to establish any outstanding issues and desired outcomes if required.
5.11	Landlords must only escalate a complaint to stage two once it has completed stage one and at the request of the resident.	Yes	<p>Complaints are only escalated to stage 2 once a stage 1 response has been issued and at the request of the complainant.</p> <p>A complaint can be escalated, except for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there is no new evidence presented and no reason given for wishing to progress further</li> <li>• Where the reasons for escalation are unrelated to the original subject matter of the complaint</li> </ul>

5.12	The person considering the complaint at stage two, must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage one.	Yes	Section 9.3 of our policy states that the complaint will be assigned to a different Manager or Director who will confirm their understanding of the complaint, and review the decision made at stage 1 as part of the complaint investigation.
5.13	Landlords must respond to the stage two complaint <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being escalated. Exceptionally, landlords may provide an explanation to the resident containing a clear timeframe for when the response will be received. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.	Yes	We aim to respond to all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days, where possible. There will be circumstances in which this is not possible, in which case we will seek to agree to an extension time and date with the complainant. Complainants will be advised of the likely response timescale in all further acknowledgements.
5.16	<p>Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage two in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> </ul> <p><b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the landlord has a third stage, details of how to escalate the matter to stage three</li> <li>• if this was the final stage, details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>At the completion of a stage 2 investigation, a response is issued which includes the points stated.</p> <p>The response includes a summary of the complaint, a chronology of any relevant events, the decision and reasons for it. It also includes any actions and learning with timescales for implementation and a reasonable remedy which may include compensation</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman details are offered at every stage and in every complaint response.</p>

### Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
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5.17	Two stage landlord complaint procedures are ideal. This ensures that the complaint process is not unduly long. If landlords strongly believe a third stage is necessary, they must set out their reasons for this as part of their self-assessment. A process with more than three stages is not acceptable under any circumstances.	Yes	We operate a two-stage complaint process.
5.20	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage three in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage</li> <li>• the complaint definition</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied</li> </ul>	Yes	We operate a two-stage complaint process

**Best practice ‘should’ requirements  
Stage 1**

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.2	If an extension beyond 20 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Where we require more time to investigate the issues and provide a response, this is agreed with the resident.
5.3	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman’s contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord’s plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord’s response.	Yes	At 9.5 within our Complaints Policy, if the resident is unhappy with the extension period and we are unable to agree a timescale, Ombudsman details will be provided, and we will continue with our investigation and provide a response as soon as possible.
5.4	Where the problem is a recurring issue, the landlord should consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident.	Yes	Where there is a recurring issue, we will review the relevant history and provide a remedy on all available evidence.
	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one	Yes	Where additional complaints are raised during the

5.7	response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.		investigation, these will be incorporated if relevant and if the response has not yet been issued. If the issues require significant time to be looked into and would delay the response, a new complaint will be logged, or new timescale will be agreed with both parties.
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## Stage 2

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.14	If an extension beyond 10 working days is required to enable the landlord to respond to the complaint fully, this should be agreed by both parties.	Yes	Where we require more time to investigate the issues and provide a response, this is agreed with the resident.
5.15	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached, landlords should provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details so the resident can challenge the landlord's plan for responding and/or the proposed timeliness of a landlord's response		At 9.5 within our Complaints Policy, if the resident is unhappy with the extension period and we are unable to agree a timescale, Ombudsman details will be provided, and we will continue with our investigation and provide a response as soon as possible.

## Stage 3

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
5.18	Complaints should only go to a third stage if the resident has actively requested a third stage review of their complaint. Where a third stage is in place and has been requested, landlords must respond to the stage three complaint <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being escalated. Additional time will only be justified if related to convening a panel. An explanation and a date for when the stage three response will be received should be provided to the resident.	Yes	We operate a two-stage complaint process.
5.19	Where agreement over an extension period cannot be reached.	Yes	We operate a two-stage complaint process.

## Section 6 - Putting things right

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.1	Effective dispute resolution requires a process designed to resolve complaints. Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Yes	We will always try to resolve the issues as soon as possible. If we are at fault, we will accept fault, offer an apology and provide a plan of action to put things right if the issues have not yet been resolved.
6.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A landlord must carefully manage the expectations of residents and not promise anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to other residents.	Yes	We follow the remedy guidance provided by the Housing Ombudsman. All remedies are considered on their own merit and in line with published guidelines. We will always do our best to manage expectations of what can and cannot be delivered.
6.5	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Any actions to be taken to remedy fault will be explained and clear timescales will be provided. Corrective actions will be monitored and tracked to completion through our case management processes. These tasks will be assigned to an individual until completion.
6.6	In awarding compensation, a landlord must consider whether any statutory payments are due, if any quantifiable losses have been incurred, the time and trouble a resident has been put to as well as any distress and inconvenience caused.	Yes	We follow the Housing Ombudsman guidance on compensation and considers payments that are required by law, any refunds or evidential losses, timeliness and inconvenience.

### Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
6.3	Landlords should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether anything needs to be 'put right' in terms of process or systems to the benefit of all residents.	Yes	We will always try to learn lessons from complaints and implement any service improvements to benefit residents. These will also be shared with our Resident Scrutiny Panel.
6.7	In some cases, a resident may have a legal entitlement to redress. The landlord should still offer a resolution where	Yes	We reserve the right to speak with our Solicitors where

	possible, obtaining legal advice as to how any offer of resolution should be worded.		there may be a legal entitlement to redress so that a reasonable offer of redress is provided.
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**Section 7 - Continuous learning and improvement**  
**Mandatory 'must' requirements**

<b>Code section</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes/No</b>	<b>Evidence, commentary and any explanations</b>
7.2	Accountability and transparency are integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints in their annual report and more frequently to their residents, staff and scrutiny panels.	Yes	<p>Learning from complaints is included in our Annual Report which is shared with our staff, Board Members and our residents.</p> <p>If some of the recommendations include training needs or reminders to staff, our Directors will communicate this. Residents are informed in complaints responses of any service improvements that will be implemented as a result of their complaint.</p> <p>Under the new tenant engagement strategy and model there is a clear commitment to respect resident feedback and how this is not only implemented in the service, but positive change is communicated back to the resident. To effectively embed a culture of respect for resident feedback, the service responsible for engagement will carry out training and briefings with individual teams and having a quality case management system is linked to our Strategic Plan, in line with the regulatory Consumer Standards.</p>



## Best practice 'should' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
7.3	A member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This role will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight to the governing body on the landlord's complaint handling performance.	Yes	Our Operations Director has oversight of all complaints within their portfolio. These are reported at every Leadership meeting, reported quarterly to our Board and any learning is shared with our residents annually.
7.4	<p>As a minimum, governing bodies should receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular updates on the volume, categories and outcome of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance including compliance with the Ombudsman's orders</li> <li>• Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling,</li> <li>• The annual performance report produced by the Ombudsman, where applicable</li> <li>• Individual complaint outcomes where necessary, including where the Ombudsman made findings of severe maladministration or referrals to regulatory bodies. The implementation of management responses should be tracked to ensure they are delivered to agreed timescales. The annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code for scrutiny and challenge.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>All complaints are summarised to all strategic groups including: Volumes, Performance, Outcomes, Compensation, Root Causes, and Ombudsman Cases.</p> <p>All Ombudsman decisions are circulated to Leadership Directors and our Board.</p>
7.5	Any themes or trends should be assessed by senior management to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They should also be used to inform staff and contractor training.	Yes	<p>Themes and trends are highlighted to senior management and corrective actions are issued to service areas to complete.</p> <p>Any learning is passed to officers and contractors and service improvements are implemented such as change in policy, etc</p>

7.6	<p>Landlords should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all employees that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments</li> <li>• take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints rather than blaming others</li> <li>• act within the Professional Standards for engaging with complaints as set by the Chartered Institute of Housing.</li> </ul>	Yes	We work collaboratively with teams across departments to achieve a joined-up approach to complaints. Our services collectively take responsibility and identify solutions to make things right.
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## Section 8 - Self-assessment and compliance

### Mandatory 'must' requirements

Code section	Code requirement	Comply: Yes/No	Evidence, commentary and any explanations
8.1	Landlords must carry out an annual self-assessment against the Code to ensure their complaint handling remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	We carry out a self-assessment of the Code on an annual basis.
8.2	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure and/or change in procedures.		If there has been a significant change in our services, we will carry out a self-assessment.
8.3	<p>Following each self-assessment, a landlord must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• report the outcome of their self-assessment to their governing body. In the case of local authorities, self-assessment outcomes should be reported to elected members</li> <li>• publish the outcome of their assessment on their website if they have one, or otherwise make accessible to residents</li> <li>• include the self-assessment in their annual report section on complaints handling performance</li> </ul>		The outcome of any self-assessment will be shared with our Board, published onto our website and included within our annual report.