

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

City of London Housing Complaints Service

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>	x	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	x	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If legal proceedings have started • If the issues have been previously addressed through the housing complaints policy • Disagreement with a city policy or procedure. Comments and feedback on policies are sought via consultation – comment received are considered when policies are reviewed • Appeals against allocations and tenancy decisions, they are dealt with under appeals processes • Disputes regarding services charges. These are dealt with under a separate legal process known as The First Tribunal (Property Chamber) • Complaints about other residents/neighbour disputes are managed through the Anti-social Behaviour policy. • Request for a service, information or explanation that has not first been asked of the relevant service area. Staff will first be given the opportunity to respond to the request/enquiry and to follow required procedures. 	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>x</p>	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	x	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	x	

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?		x
	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 complaint's procedure are residents involved in the decision making? City of London use Stage 3. There is no resident panel used.	x	x
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	x	
	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?	1	
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 and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	x	
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	x	
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	x	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	81%*	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	18%*	
	What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales? For Quarter Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 	81%* 100%* 92%* 100%*	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	x	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	x	

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction? The 1% refer to stage 3 complaints i.e. complaints not resolved at stage 1 & 2	99%**	
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? What was the reason for the refusal? 1. Repeat of the complaint that had already been investigated but the complainant had failed to escalate it in the time frame 2. Outside of the complaint time frame (it was about an incident that was 18 months ago)	2	
	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		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting complainants to ensure that we are clear what the complaint is about and what outcome is being sought., • We bring actions and investigations back to contract monitoring meetings to ensure our contactors are measuring performance based on the expected service standard. • We use complaints to update our service improvement plans • We have used complaints outcomes to improve communications with residents. • Training has been developed for staff following common themes identified in complaints and the outcome of 	x	

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

	investigations.		
	<p>How do we share these lessons with?</p> <p>a) residents? The Resident Newsletters, Surveys, Annual Report</p> <p>b) the board/governing body? 6-Monthly Housing Update reports to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee, through update to the Departmental Leadership Team meetings</p> <p>c) in the Annual Report? We provide complaints stats and learning outcomes information the service plan in the annual report</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	x	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <p>Increases the Stage 2 timeframe for investigation and response from 10 – 20 working days.</p> <p>We will be submitting a report to the Housing Management and Almshouses sub-Committee on the review of the Complaints Policy that a 2-stage process be implemented to adhere to the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code recommendation. This is for Committee approval. If approval is granted, we will then consult residents before any policy changes are implemented.</p>	<p>X</p> <p>x</p>	

*figures quoted are for Q2 2020/2021

**remainder escalated to S3