**Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code**

In September 2020, the Housing Ombudsman launched the Complaints Handling Code. Compliance with the code forms part of our member obligations as a Registered Social Landlord for Foundation.

The code aims:

**Operational staff -** the Code supports excellent complaint handling and engagement with the Ombudsman. If the requirements of the Code cannot be delivered this should prompt discussion about what needs to change.

**Chief executives and senior managers** – the Code supports learning from complaints and promotes the open and transparent use of information to assess performance and risks.

**Boards** - the Code supports culture setting and intelligence for assurance exercises, using complaint data alongside other management information on stock, services and customer feedback to provide insight into their organisation. It is important for governance to understand the complaints their organisations are receiving and the impact of their complaint handling on residents.

**Residents** - the Code will act as a guide for residents setting out what they can and should expect from their landlord when they complain. The requirements in the Code also provide residents with information about how to make a complaint and how to progress it through the landlord’s internal complaints procedure.

**To evidence** our compliance, we were required to complete a self-assessment by the 31st December 2020. Sharing our results with our board, on our website and other social media channels.

As of the 30th June 2021, we have updated our self-assessment as below.

**Key:**

Green: Compliant/Completed

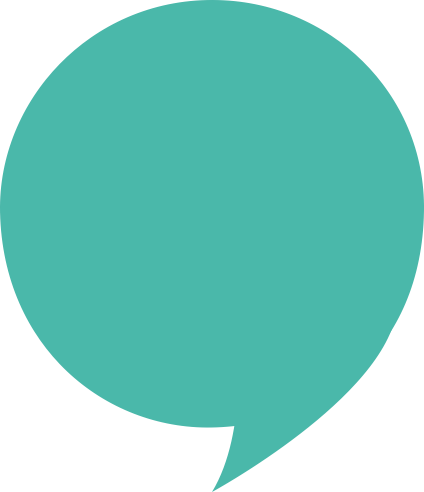
Amber: To Action

Grey: Not applicable at this stage

**Completed Self-Assessment Form**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code** | | | |
| **1** | **Definition of a complaint** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint?  *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*. | Yes |  |
|  | Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered? |  | No but this means we are compliant |
|  | Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? | N/A | N/A |
| **2** | **Accessibility** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | 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 |  |
|  | Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process? | Yes |  |
| **3** | **Complaints team and process** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post? | Yes |  |
|  | Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints? | Yes |  |
|  | Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes? | Yes |  |
|  | If there is a third stage to the complaint’s procedure are residents involved in the decision making? | Yes |  |
|  | 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 |  |
|  | At what stage are most complaints resolved? |  | Stage one |
| **4** | **Communication** | **Yes** | **No** |
|  | 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? | Yes |  |
|  | Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days? |  | 2 complaints not acknowledged in time (10.53%)  1 was due to system issue with allocation of the complaint. When issue was identified the complaint was dealt with immediately.  1 was due to no complainant details being provided. |
|  | Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage? | Yes |  |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one? |  | 94.74% |
|  | What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two? |  | No stage two complaints in this period.  5.26% (Stage 3) |
|  | What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?   * Stage one   Stage one (with extension)   * Stage two   Stage two (with extension)*.* |  | 77.78% of stage one complaints completed in time  100% of stage three complaints completed in time |
|  | Where timescales have been extended, did we have good reason? | N/A | N/A |
|  | Where timescales have been extended, did we keep the resident informed? | N/A | N/A |
|  | What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents’ satisfaction? |  | 95% |
| **5** | **Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service** |  |  |
|  | Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days? | N/A | N/A |
|  | Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed? | N/A | 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? | N/A | N/A |
|  | How many cases did we refuse to escalate?  What was the reason for the refusal? | N/A | N/A |
|  | Did we explain our decision to the resident? | N/A | N/A |
| **7** | **Outcomes and remedies** |  |  |
|  | Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right? | Yes |  |
| **8** | **Continuous learning and improvement** |  |  |
|  | What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints? |  | See ‘You Said We Did’ |
|  | How do we share these lessons with:   1. residents?   **Implemented:** Annual Review to includeYou Said We Did based on the Lessons   1. the board/governing body?   **Implemented**: reported quarterly via Operations and Development Sub-Committee   1. In the Annual Report?   **Implemented**: reported in 20/21 Annual Report | Yes |  |
|  | Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints? | Yes |  |
|  | **What changes have we made?**   * Updated complaint definition to universal Housing Ombudsmen definition * Published current feedback policy and procedure on our websites * Updated response timeframes of *‘All complaints will be completed within 10 working days from the receipt of the complaint’* in line with the Housing Ombudsmen * Included the Housing Ombudsmen in the client leaflet and complaints publications * Published Information For All Policy on our websites * Client Board implementation in progress * Quarterly board Complaint report * 6-month audit schedule of the self-assessment * Updated Self-Assessment as of the 31st March 2021 published on our website * 21-22 ‘You Said We Did’ shared with residents bi-annually. These to be published in Services, Website and Social Media etc. |  |  |
|  | **Actions we need take once we have prepared the reports:**   * 20-21 Annual Review to include stats on complaints as above including achieved timescales, improvements made and lessons learnt inc. ‘You Said We Did’ |  |  |





**We Did…**

Training across the group is required for ‘How we respond to complaints’ to include:

* How we ensure we meet our deadlines
* The language we use in responses is accessible to all
* Address each point being raised in the complaint
* Clearly outlining the outcome of the complaint

**We Did…**

* Making changes to the process in Datix to go alongside the training mentioned above.
* Include key sections being mandatory fields so the information is completed correctly
* Enable complaints to be split by Housing and Service types to aid reporting
* Ensure proper access is available to complaints through Security Groups

**You Said…**

Datix can be leaner

**You Said…**

Complaints not handled right first time