

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: 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>Complaints do not cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting a new service: When a customer informs us of a problem they may use the word 'complaint' but are actually requesting a service for the first time e.g. repair, ASB. • An issue that is more than 6 months old: A complaint must be made no later than 6 months after the date the event occurred. The time limit will not apply if Midland Heart is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances involved. • Closed complaints: Customers will have the right to speak with their MP/Councillor or relevant Ombudsman (see External Review box in diagram 4.7) about closed complaint outcomes they are not satisfied with. • Complaints that refer to statutory or other external obligations (i.e. things we must do by law): In these circumstances, where the facts are clear, the issue cannot be changed so investigating the complaint would not offer resolution. An explanation of such obligation will be provided to the Customer. • If a complaint refers to a legal disrepair claim, legal defect claim or personal injury claim: These will be dealt with by our Insurance Team and Legal Advisors. 	X	
2	Accessibility		
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	X	
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	X	
	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 complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making? Our complaint policy only has two formal stages – before completion of our Formal Review (Stage 2) a Customer or representative moderation panel will sign off the outcome of the review.	N/A	
	Is any third stage optional for residents? Our complaint policy only has two formal stages – before completion of our Formal Review (Stage 2) a Customer or representative moderation panel will sign off the outcome of the review.	N/A	
	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?	First Stage Formal - Investigation	
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?	91%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	5.5%	
	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) 	99% 1% 60% 40%	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	X	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	X	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not currently undertake post-transactional Satisfaction Surveys in respect of Complaint Handling. 	N/A – consider the merits to reinstate satisfaction surveys	
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? Each escalated case is reviewed by a Functional Director What was the reason for the refusal?		0
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?		
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	X	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p> <p>Headline Improvements</p> <p>A report submitted to our Operations Committee following a scrutiny review by our engaged Customers to ascertain 'Can we demonstrate that we improve our services as a result of upheld informal & formal complaints?' concluded they were assured that we have made improvements as a result of complaints, evidenced across a number of service enhancements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of end to end repair completion times from 28 days to 14 days • Widening our choice of repair appointment slots to include Saturdays and evening visits • Improved operative van stock (parts) to ensure increased repair fix at the first visit • Change of repair operative salary structure to focus on improving quality of work to reduce volumes of recalls • Change in working practices to improve our investigation and response to Damp & Mould problems • Enhanced contract specification for suppliers of our Grounds Maintenance service • Improving our Retirement Living schemes to modernise the communal areas • Increased our range of lifestyle activities to enhance Customer wellbeing and social engagement. • Enhanced our catering menu and pricing systems, marking a wide improvement in the dining experience • Improving our lettings policy to improve a balanced community to reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour • Review of Service Charge implementation for Mutual customers <p>They also indicated other initiatives being developed:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention scheme pilot across General Needs making improvements to our blocks, to help customers feel safe in their homes. • Review of our CCTV policy to enhance coverage in support of making our properties a safe place to live • Development of our self-serve repairs service via our online service 																						
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) Residents? b) the board/governing body?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="280 674 1177 960"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Main Board</th> <th>Operations Committee</th> <th>Customer Engagment Groups</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Customer Insight Dashboard</td> <td>X</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customer Annual Report</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Complaints Dashbaord / Commentary</td> <td></td> <td>X</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customer Newsletter</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>X</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Main Board	Operations Committee	Customer Engagment Groups	Customer Insight Dashboard	X			Customer Annual Report	X	X	X	Complaints Dashbaord / Commentary		X	X	Customer Newsletter			X		
	Main Board	Operations Committee	Customer Engagment Groups																				
Customer Insight Dashboard	X																						
Customer Annual Report	X	X	X																				
Complaints Dashbaord / Commentary		X	X																				
Customer Newsletter			X																				
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>		X																				
	<p>What changes have we made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for change of definition and if a specific standalone reasonable adjustment policy is required. • Housing Ombudsman details now included in all letters, even those not at final review to ensure transparency for Customers. 																						