

Housing Ombudsman Service

Complaint Handling Code Self Assessment – November 2021

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Ombudsman Question	Home Group Response	Notes
Definition of a Complaint		
Does the complaints process use the specified definition of a complaint?	Yes	
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	Policy and process documents	

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	In our customer magazine, Home Life On the website Colleagues receive mandatory training to welcome and encourage complaints. On an ad hoc basis as needed
Complaints Team and Process		
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 complaints procedure are residents involved in the decision making?	Yes	Home Group adopt a 2-stage process. After this, customers can take their complaint to be reviewed by the

		Independent Complaint Review Panel. This is a resident led panel.
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 1	
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?	Yes	
Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	Yes	
Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	Yes	

What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	93%	We measure this through our Key Performance Indicators. As a large percentage of our complaints are related to repairs and maintenance, our performance was severely impacted by the ongoing issues with Covid and Brexit as many complaints are related to issues with suppliers.
What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	85%	
What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?	64%	This does not include those with extensions as per the code. We have also reported on a lesser figure following challenges as a result of a system change over in August.
Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	Yes	
Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	As above. Our customers have helped us to design training that addresses communication issues with our colleagues.
What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction?	24.8%	This is still a small sample size but the main reasons people say they are dissatisfied are; 24% - we haven't resolved the issue 23% - we didn't communicate during the process 21% - we took too long to process the complaint

Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
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Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	Yes	There are some challenges with new ways of working with the Housing Ombudsman: dates aren't always clear but where we are uncertain, we communicate this.
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Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
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Fairness in complaint handling		
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Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	Yes	
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If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	Yes	
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How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	One	
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What was the reason for the refusal?	It is being managed through our Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	
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Did we explain our decision to the resident?	Yes	
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Outcomes and remedies		
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Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes	
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Continuous learning and improvement		
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<p>What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?</p>	<p>We have a robust Lessons Learned process which records and shares what we learn from complaints. There is a quarterly colleague newsletter and a blog for customers.</p> <p>There are a wide range of examples but key ones are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Amendments to safeguarding processes to enable clearer working practices with contractors. -Review of Rechargeable Repairs processes. -Policy amended to include an action planning template to support organising and collaboration in our responses. 	
<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) residents? b) the board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report? 	<p>We have a Lessons Learned Accountability Framework co-created with customers. The framework shows how customer views and scrutiny feed in to everything we do and how we cascade the information throughout the organisation, including Board. We also share complaints information at Customer Viewpoint and Forum meetings and in our Home Life Magazine. Complaints Satisfaction is included in Key Performance Indicators we use to measure the success of our customer promise, for which there is a quarterly report. Customers write an annual report on their own views of the organisation, including complaints.</p>	<p>Accountability framework: complaints</p>

