

We have recently completed a Self-Assessment of our Complaints Policy & Procedure against the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

We have identified minor improvements that we can make to our Complaints Policy & Procedure. The amendments will be made before 31/03/21

The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code:

Self-assessment form for Chartford Housing Limited November 2020

Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code					
1	Definition of a complaint	Yes	No	Notes/comments	Action required
	Does the complaints process use the following definition of a complaint? <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>		✓		We shall add this definition to our Group Complaints Policy & Procedure. Timescale: 31.03.21.
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?		✓		No action required.
	Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents? Evidence relied upon	-	-	Not applicable.	No action required.
2	Accessibility				
	Are multiple accessibility routes available for residents to make a complaint?	✓			No action required.
	Is the complaints policy and procedure available online?	✓			No action required.

	Do we have a reasonable adjustments policy?	✓			We have has an 'easy read' version of the Group Complaints Policy & Procedure and an Accessible Information Standard Policy. We shall add a link in the Group Complaints Policy. Timescale: 31.03.21.
	Do we regularly advise residents about our complaints process?	✓			No action required.
3	Complaints team and process				
	Is there a complaint officer or equivalent in post?	✓		Services Director.	No action required.
	Does the complaint officer have autonomy to resolve complaints?		✓	The Services Director has autonomy but other managers are involved in the investigation of complaints and decision-making. The Code makes provision for different ways of working in some instances.	We shall amend the Group Complaints Policy to define what we mean by a complaint officer or team. Timescale: 31.03.21.
	Does the complaint officer have authority to compel engagement from other departments to resolve disputes?		✓	Ditto.	Ditto.
	If there is a third stage to the complaints procedure, are residents involved in the decision making?	✓		This is the review stage.	No action required.
	Is any third stage optional for residents?	✓			No action required.
	Does the final stage response set out residents' right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service?	✓			No action required.

	Do we keep a record of complaint correspondence including correspondence from the resident?	✓			No action required.
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?				Stage 1- Informal
4	Communication				
	Are residents kept informed and updated during the complaints process?	✓			No action required.
	Are residents informed of the landlord's position and given a chance to respond and challenge any area of dispute before the final decision?	✓		All complaint outcome letters offer the right to appeal which moves the complaint to review stage.	No action required.
	Are all complaints acknowledged and logged within five days?	✓			No action required.
	Are residents advised of how to escalate at the end of each stage?	✓			No action required.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage one?	-	-	90%	No action required.
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	-	-	9%	No action required.
	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) 	-	-	96% 100%	We do not currently distinguish between extension periods as part of our monitoring process. If extension is required and the complainant is informed of the reasons, then this is counted as a response within timescale. We shall include additional monitoring

					categories. Timescale: 31.03.21.
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	✓			No action required.
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	✓			No action required.
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	-	-	99%	No action required.
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service				
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	-	-	Not applicable	No action required.
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	-	-	Not applicable	No action required.
6	Fairness in complaint handling				
	Are residents able to complain via a representative throughout?	✓			No action required.
	If advice was given, was this accurate and easy to understand?	✓			No action required.
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate? What was the reason for the refusal?	-	-	'0' Not applicable	No action required.
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?	-	-	Not applicable	No action required.
7	Outcomes and remedies				
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	✓			No action required.
8	Continuous learning and improvement				
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	-	-	We conduct an annual review of complaints and set an action plan to address any identified improvements. This is	No action required.

				shared with the Boards and shared with clients. A summary of the current findings and action plan is in our client newsletter and website.	
	How do we share these lessons with: a) Residents? b) The board/governing body? c) In the Annual Report?	-	-	a) 'Here at Horton' - Client Newsletter b) Annual report to the Board c) Published on our website as an addendum to the Annual Report 2020	We shall include the lessons in the 2021 Annual Report.
	Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?	✓			No action required.
	What changes have we made?	-	-	See actions noted above. We have also checked and improved the complaints functionality on our website.	