

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-assessment form December 2021

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>	Yes. The new Customer Feedback policy was launched in May 2021	
	Does the policy have exclusions where a complaint will not be considered?	Yes	
	<p>Are these exclusions reasonable and fair to residents?</p> <p>Evidence relied upon</p>	<p>Yes. Exclusions listed within the Customer Feedback policy have an alternative process or published policy.</p> <p>The Customer Feedback policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Examples of what is not considered a complaint include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial request for a service • Asking for an explanation of a policy or an information leaflet • An appeal against a decision • A neighbour dispute which is dealt with through terms outlined in a tenancy agreement or the Anti-Social Behaviour policy. • Where a complainant is taking legal action against GPHG on the same issue or GPHG is taking legal action against the complainant on the same issue for which GPHG is not responsible 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints submitted six months or more after the issue occurred • MP, Councillor and Citizen Advice enquiries (handled by the CFT) • Complaints relating to rent increases (driven by government guidance/ regulation) • Reports of fly tipping or vandalism • Complaints about the actions of an organisation that is not working for, or supported by GPHG • Where the expectation of the customer is beyond the services the Group is able to provide <p>Although we do not treat these issues as a complaint under this policy, we are committed to dealing with them in the appropriate manner.</p>	
2	Accessibility		
	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		
	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?		N/A
	Is any third stage optional for residents?		N/A
	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	Yes	

	including correspondence from the resident?		
	At what stage are most complaints resolved?	Stage One	
4	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?	81%	
	What proportion of complaints are resolved at stage two?	19% of Stage One complaints were progressed and investigated at Stage Two of our feedback process	
	<p>What proportion of complaint responses are sent within Code timescales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one Stage one (with extension) • Stage two Stage two (with extension) 	<p>Stage One: 89%</p> <p>Stage Two: 80%</p>	
	Where timescales have been extended did we have good reason?	<p>Yes and this is communicated to the customer. Time scales for a response to be provided to a customer may be extended for a number of reasons. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting for third parties (e.g. builders) to respond. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completion of repair work, to resolve a complaint may extend beyond the 10 working day timescale. • Colleague absence impact – e.g. a case recently, whereby the Property Services Officer was unavailable to carry out an inspection on a property within the timeframe. • The Covid pandemic has created challenges in relation to colleague resources and restrictions in our approaches. Communication has been vital to ensure this is managed properly. <p>Customers may also change appointments made with a view to resolve or understand a complaint due to other commitments.</p>	
	Where timescales have been extended did we keep the resident informed?	Yes	
	What proportion of complaints do we resolve to residents' satisfaction	We are satisfied that we resolve complaints to customer satisfaction and in order to monitor the service we are offering, we are piloting a new end of complaint satisfaction survey. Feedback will be reviewed to identify learning and any necessary improvements. We will review the Customer Feedback policy in February 2022 to ensure that learning outcomes are considered within the policy and associated procedures	
5	Cooperation with Housing Ombudsman Service		
	Were all requests for evidence responded to within 15 days?	All responses were provided within the timescales specified by the HOS and those that required an extension were responded to within the allowed extension timescale	
	Where the timescale was extended did we keep the Ombudsman informed?	Yes	
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?	Yes	
	How many cases did we refuse to escalate?	We have not refused to progress any complaints to the next stage of our complaints process	

	What was the reason for the refusal?		N/A
	Did we explain our decision to the resident?		N/A
7	Outcomes and remedies		
	Where something has gone wrong are we taking appropriate steps to put things right?	Yes. We have introduced a Service Improvement Tracker to allow us to capture learning outcomes following complaints. This is continually monitored to ensure continuous improvement following complaint handling. This will be reported to a formal Customer Experience service meeting once a quarter and is included in our Customer Experience Dashboard which is reported to Board and Audit & Assurance Committee.	
8	Continuous learning and improvement		
	What improvements have we made as a result of learning from complaints?	<p>Learning from complaints is paramount and as part of our new Customer Feedback Policy we are tracking complaints in a systematic way.</p> <p>Some learning examples from feedback include:</p> <p>Reflecting the voice of the customer in service reviews through our business transformation process. This involves surveying customers about what is important to them for particular services, and comparing this to how satisfied they are with this element of the service and then putting improvements in place to address the gaps.</p> <p>Complaint Case Reviews We have held a number of complaint case reviews in 2021 which have influenced the actions raised on the Service Improvement Tracker. Examples of improvements made include plans to offer specialist training around autism to front line; clearer guidance</p>	

		<p>on housing management systems relating to customer disabilities, customer referrals to the Tenancy Coach service. Other examples include clearer guidance for customers around fire safety at the sign up stage of a tenancy, clearer signage at schemes relating to fire safety and evacuation processes. Further to complaints relating to a recent fire door replacement programme we will introduce a robust Customer Involvement toolkit to support teams around consulting with customers in relation to investment and improvement works</p>	
	<p>How do we share these lessons with:</p> <p>a) residents?</p> <p>b) the board/governing body?</p> <p>c) In the Annual Report?</p>	<p>Yes, we inform residents about specific improvements in relation to their complaint via direct communication</p> <p>Great Places includes improvements in our quarterly Customer Voice reports and in our annual report, which is presented to the Board</p> <p>A revised Customer experience dashboard was included in Board reporting in 2021 and includes lessons learnt from feedback</p>	
	<p>Has the Code made a difference to how we respond to complaints?</p>	<p>Yes, the Code has informed the new Customer Feedback Policy and Procedures for Great Places</p>	
	<p>What changes have we made?</p>	<p>Great Places Customer Feedback team has undergone a thorough process of redesign as part of the merger with Equity Housing and incorporating feedback from the review by TLF in 2019. The changes implemented encompass the alignment of policy, take on board guidance issued as part of the new Ombudsman Code of Practice and include a new central team and reduced resolution times. We have recently expanded the Customer Feedback team to include an additional Complaints Co-ordinator and have created a new Customer Feedback Team Leader role. The introduction of a Team Leader allows additional support with overseeing, reporting and tracking during all stages of complaint case management. The Team Leader also carries out regular case reviews which allows Great Places to continually learn and implement improvements following customer feedback</p>	

